

FOR THE POTENTIAL OF KIERKEGAARDIAN ANALYSIS IN SOVIET STUDIES
THROUGH THE STUDY OF SOVIET FILM

BY

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THESIS

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Abstract

This thesis will argue for the potential for the use of Kierkegaardian philosophy as a tool of analysis in the field of Soviet studies demonstrated through the character analysis of select Soviet films. From Danish, existential philosopher Søren Kierkegaard's model of faith, presented in his follow-up to *Either/Or, Fear and Trembling*, I will use the model and its parts, which are steeped in existential and religious philosophy, and will connect them to the Soviet Union through the study of the historical link and the philosophical link between them. They are historically connected through the link between Kierkegaard and early Soviet thinkers. The philosophical connection is discovered in the existence of the understanding of Communism as religion, which brings Soviet Communism to the religious realm of Kierkegaard's World. With a connection between Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union firmly in place, it becomes possible to demonstrate the possibility of Kierkegaardian philosophy through the film analysis. I divide the analysis between the four parts of Kierkegaard's model of faith. The ethical becomes reflected in Boris from *The Cranes are Flying*, Stalin from *The Fall of Berlin*, and Alyosha from *Ballad of a Soldier*. The aesthetic is found in the characters of Mark from *The Cranes are Flying*, Hitler from *The Fall of Berlin*, and Vadim from *The Forty-First*. The knight of resignation is found in Veronika from *The Cranes are Flying* and Maria from *The Forty-First*. And finally the knight of faith is found in Alyosha Ivanov from *The Fall of Berlin* and Klim from *Tractor Drivers*. By demonstrating the potential of Kierkegaardian analysis in these character studies, I show that Kierkegaard may have a future place in the field of Soviet studies after all.

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Introduction

On a first and second glance, it may appear impossible to draw any concrete connection between the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard, a seventeenth century Danish Philosopher who worked heavily on existential themes, faith, and Christianity, and the Soviet Union. On one hand, Kierkegaard himself lived his life almost solely in Denmark, rarely leaving his own hometown, so his experience of the World outside of Denmark was extremely limited and focused on his world, especially the world of the Danish National Church. On the other hand, the Soviet Union embraced Communism, and with it its atheistic stances on social and political implications of religion and religious institutions, the Soviet ideology would appear to stand in opposition to the philosophy of Kierkegaard, which was steeped in the religious. The study of Kierkegaardian philosophy and themes within the Soviet Union and Communism may seem misguided due to the dissimilarities between the two philosophies, but thanks to academics such as András Nagy and Lev Shestov, the Kierkegaardian analysis of the Soviet ideology and Communism is possible, at least with regard to the genesis of Soviet Communism. Due to Kierkegaard's shared anti-Hegelianism with Marx and Communism, some Russian thinkers and revolutionaries such as Nikolai Berdyaev and Sergei Bulgakov soon began to read Kierkegaard and were influenced by him. These connections between Kierkegaard and his writings and the Soviet Union and Communism will be explored to a greater extent in the second chapter, but for now, it is important to note that while there are some connections and analysis regarding both Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union, it is contained at the moment to early Soviet thinkers, and ends with most of them either being exiled in France, sent to the gulag, or killed. With further analysis, the aim of this thesis is to spread the potential of a Kierkegaardian analysis of the Soviet Union and Communism outside of those Soviet thinkers in the early twentieth century, and into the Soviet

Union that surpassed them, a Soviet Union where Kierkegaard is a bourgeois philosopher, and just an encyclopedia entry.

In order to attempt this sort of analysis, there are a number of factors that must be addressed, with the most crucial being the understanding of Kierkegaard, his relevant works, and his Philosophy. Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was born in 1813 in Copenhagen to Ane Sørensdatter Lund Kierkegaard and Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard, the latter a pastor of the Danish National Church. According to Daniel Conway, a professor of Philosophy and the Humanities at Texas A&M, “although influential today for his diverse contributions to the fields of philosophy, theology, rhetoric, literary theory, and depth philosophy, Kierkegaard was widely known in his own day as a provocative social critic” (Conway 2015, 1). He was highly critical of the church in his hometown, and the Danish National Church in general, in addition to Christianity and what it meant for one to have faith in the almighty. Thus, much of Kierkegaard’s work deals with faith and Christianity to some extent, as seen with *Fear and Trembling*, the work that will be most heavily sourced within this thesis. Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling* was written and published in 1843 under the pseudonym *Johannes de Silentio*. Kierkegaard often wrote and published his works under different pseudonyms, each often having some sort of significance to the work to which they were ascribed. The significance of the pseudonym of *Fear and Trembling*, according to the author of the Penguin Classics publication of *Fear and Trembling*, is derived from the Grimm fairy tales, specifically “The Faithful Servant”, as alleged by E. Hirsch in *Teologisk Tidsskrift for den danske Folkekirke (1931)* (Hannay 1985, 10). *Fear and Trembling* was published around eight months after the publication of *Either/Or*, the first of his main works to have been published in Denmark, and was followed by the publication of *Repetition*, all within the same year (Hannay 1985, 33). These works deal heavily with the spheres of existence and the

way in which people lived within the world, and as in the case of Abraham and the Knight of Faith, the ways in which someone can overcome the World. This thesis will focus on *Fear and Trembling*, and as mentioned before, *Either/Or*.

The specific use of Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* in this thesis is to establish a basic framework of his beliefs and philosophy and terms that can be understood separately from the abstract. More specifically, it is Kierkegaard's model of faith that will be important in the Kierkegaardian analysis. Kierkegaard's model, which can be dubbed his model of faith, in all contains four parts. In addition to the knight of faith and the knight of resignation, there are the ethical sphere and the aesthetic sphere. For Kierkegaard, the model exists in the World, that is, the social structures of society. This World, in Kierkegaard's life and philosophy, is the religious life. The aesthetic sphere, and the aesthetic way of life, for the individual refers to a self-fulfilling existence, a self-serving life within the World. The aesthetic can be understood as the individual that works only for themselves and their own purposes, thus ignoring the way of the World. The ethical sphere, and the ethical way of life, by contrast, works for the World. The ethical exists for the World, as "the ethical as such is the universal, and as the universal it applies to everyone, which can be put from another point of view by saying that it applies to every moment" (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 83). The ethical exists as an end in and of itself, whereas the aesthetic exists as an end towards a means. For Kierkegaard, the aesthetic would be someone who does not follow the religious life, and the ethical would be someone who follows the religious life.

The next two parts of the model of faith are the knight of resignation and the knight of faith. Before exploring the natures of the two knights, it is necessary to understand the double movement of faith from which the knights originate. The double movement of faith understood

by Kierkegaard was used to refer to the action of Abraham sacrificing his son, Isaac, as God demanded. The story goes that God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son, stating “Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There offer him up as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you” (Genesis 22:2, NABRE). Abraham does this of course, never seeming to question God’s will and takes his own son, Isaac, to Mount Moriah, as commanded. When he reaches the point where he was to sacrifice his son, Isaac inquires about the whereabouts of the sacrifice, in this case a sheep. To which, Abraham replies “‘My son,’ Abraham answered, ‘God will provide the sheep for the burnt offering.’ Then the two walked on together” (Genesis 22:8, NABRE). It is within this statement, along with the action that Abraham takes as he moves to sacrifice his only son, that the double movement of faith can be seen. The first part of the double movement is the movement towards infinite resignation, that is, the abandoning and sacrificing all that the individual holds dear for the sake of the eternal, in this case for God. This can be seen in the act of Abraham sacrificing his son, Isaac. The second movement, which is achieved simultaneously with the first movement, is known as the strength of the absurd. The strength of the absurd is the belief that all that has been given to the eternal will be returned to the individual by God himself. This can be seen in Genesis 22:8, when Abraham states that God will provide a sheep for sacrifice. Herein lies the nature of the double movement of faith; at the very moment Abraham believed that he was sacrificing Isaac for God, he also believed that God would save Isaac, but not in a way that made the first movement unnecessary and unbelievable on the part of Abraham. Thus, the movement of infinite resignation and the movement on the strength of the absurd occur simultaneously, creating the paradox of faith, as how can someone believe wholeheartedly that they are giving up

everything at the same time that they believe, just as wholeheartedly, that they will still be able to keep that which they are giving up.

Those who undertake both movements are considered knights of faith, an achievement that Kierkegaard believed to be near impossible. Those who are only capable of the first movement are the knights of resignation. The knight of resignation renounces everything for the ethical, leveling himself or herself with the living of the ethical life, expressing himself or herself in relation to the universal, someone synonymous to a tragic hero. “As soon as the single individual wants to assert himself in this particularity, in direct opposition to the universal, he sins, and only by recognizing this can he again reconcile with the universal” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 83), this refers to the double movement of faith, which the knight of resignation cannot complete, because as Kierkegaard states, they recognize that they have sinned by trying to attempt the double movement, as the belief in the strength of the absurd is the negation of the universal, the ethical. The knight of faith does not have this problem; they do not see their actions as sin against the universal. Take Abraham as example again, in relation to the universal, the act of killing your own son is a sin, yet by undertaking the double movement, believing in the strength of the absurd, he acts against the universal as a singular individual that “is higher than the universal” and as such “is justified before the latter, not as subordinate but superior, though in such a way, be it noted, that it is the single individual who, having been subordinate to the universal as the particular, now by means of the universal becomes the individual who, as the particular, stands in an absolute relation to the absolute” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 84-5). While these parts of the model of faith will be discussed and outlined in greater detail in the body, understanding what they are and how they exist in context of Kierkegaard’s World, that is, the

religious life provides the concrete themes and archetypes to be noticed in the Kierkegaardian analysis later on.

The next factor that must be established before the analysis can begin is the understanding of Communism as a religion. While this may seem far-fetched as well, noting the previous statements regarding the Soviet stance on religion, the analysis of Communism as a religion has been explored in great detail by researchers like Arthur Jay Klinghoffer of Rutgers University. Klinghoffer's *Red Apocalypse: The Religious Evolution of Soviet Communism* presents the arguments for the understanding of Soviet Communism as religion, as he states "Soviet Communism evolved as a secular religion bearing many institutional and doctrinal similarities to Christianity" (Klinghoffer 1996, 1). And while the third chapter will delve more into the argument of Soviet Communism as religion, the point here is not to argue for or against this view. The point is to provide a means for Kierkegaard's model to be translatable to the Soviet context and Soviet Communism. For Kierkegaard and his writing, the World is the religious life, an idea that on principle is incompatible with Communism and the Soviet's state mandated atheism. However, by referring to and understanding Soviet Communism as a religion itself, Kierkegaard's philosophy and writing are no longer incompatible, as the World for the Soviet Union, which is unarguably Communism, now can be understood as the religious life. Therefore, a Kierkegaardian analysis and understanding of the Soviet Union can be possible.

The Kierkegaardian analysis that will be attempted here, and will represent a bulk of this work, will lie in the realm of film analysis. Through the study of specific Soviet films, characters and their characteristics and actions will be looked at in detail, and through this analysis, I posit that these characters portrayed in the films may hold and represent characteristics and existences that are reflective of the parts of Kierkegaard's model of faith. Film study is the perfect area to

attempt such an analysis because of the accessibility of film, meaning that they are created for a large audience, and in the Soviet Union the films would have had to have been approved of and censored (if necessary) by a State institution. The significance of the influence and interference of the State is that these films have been acknowledged by the centralized State, thus meaning that the World, and the people who follow the World, the ethical, believe that these films represent the World, or in this case, Soviet ideology and ideals. This distinction allows for the films to act as representatives of the Soviet “religious life” of Communism. So, any analysis of these films will be analysis of an understanding that is accepted by the Soviet government. In this attempt for the Kierkegaardian analysis, five films will be analyzed: Ivan Pyryev’s *Tractor Drivers*, Grigori Chukhrai’s *Ballad of a Soldier* and *The Forty-First*, Mikhail Kalatozov’s *The Cranes are Flying*, and Mikheil Chiaureli’s *The Fall of Berlin*. These films span over twenty years of Soviet film, from pre-war Stalinism to the Khrushchev era. With these films, a Kierkegaardian analysis will be employed with the goal of demonstrating the possibilities of Kierkegaardian analysis in Soviet studies.

Chapter 1 will take a closer look into Kierkegaard’s model of faith through his works and the works of secondary authors responding and analyzing his model. This chapter will provide a better perspective on the breakdown of Kierkegaard’s model of faith, and explore further into Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling*. The second chapter will look at the current academic relation between Kierkegaard and Russia and the Soviet Union. Here the understandings of the Kierkegaardian philosophy will be studied, showing how it was depicted in Tsarist Russia, and then through the Soviet period, up through the early Stalinist period, where Kierkegaardian philosophy was considered materialistic, bourgeois, and thus highly criticized. In the third chapter, the understanding of Communism as a religion will be detailed and outlined,

establishing Communism as existing as a religion, placing it in a position where the religious life of Kierkegaard can be applied. This connection will allow for the analysis of the characters from these films to be seen as reflecting Kierkegaardian philosophy and his model of faith.

In the fourth chapter, the examples demonstrating the possibility of Kierkegaardian analysis begin with the film analysis of Stalin from *The Fall of Berlin*, Alyosha from *Ballad of a Soldier*, and Boris from *The Cranes are Flying*, finding that their portrayals in their films are reflective of the ethical. Chapter 5 will look at the characters and portrayals of Mark from *the Cranes are Flying* and Hitler from *The Fall of Berlin*, and Vadim Nikolaevich Govorukha-Otrok from *The Forty-First*, analyzing their portrayals and characteristics as reflecting the aesthetic. In chapter 6, Maria Filatovna from *The Forty-First* and Veronika from *The Cranes are Flying* will be studied, revealing that their characteristics and actions resemble those of the knight of resignation. And the final chapter will focus on Klim from *Tractor Drivers* and Alyosha Ivanov from *The Fall of Berlin*, revealing that they reflect the characteristics and the beliefs of the knight of faith.

Ultimately, the understanding of Communism as a religion and the analysis of the Soviet films and their characters will culminate as an exercise in the use of Kierkegaardian philosophy and themes for the analysis of Soviet Communism and Soviet reality. With this analysis, the use of Kierkegaardian philosophy in Soviet studies will be demonstrated. Thus, revealing the potential for the use of Kierkegaardian philosophy in the study of the Soviet Union in future research.

Chapter 1: The Kierkegaardian Model of Faith

Fear and Trembling, looks at the story of Abraham and God's call for him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, as an offering. The story of Abraham and Isaac has already been discussed at some length in the introduction, but it is important to note its significance in the book and in the development of the model of faith, from which the parts and themes for the analysis will be taken. From this model, Kierkegaard deals with the ethical sphere, the aesthetic sphere (concepts that he wrote about previously in *Either/Or*), and the knight of faith and the knight of resignation, two new pieces introduced through the story of Abraham and Isaac in *Fear and Trembling*.

In order to gather an understanding of Kierkegaard's model of faith, it is necessary to understand that this is in the World, as understood by Kierkegaard. The World, in no uncertain terms, can be understood in the Kierkegaardian context of the social norms of the time and place in which one lives (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 1996, 2016). Simply put the World is the world, and should be seen as such. This World, in Kierkegaard's understanding, is the religious life. It should be noted that the World in Kierkegaard's writing is synonymous with the universal, and by extension is what leads to the ethical. So, if the World is the religious life, then that means that the religious life carries a universality. For Kierkegaard specifically, the religious, as his practice of Christianity determines that the World is his case is that of the religious life. Kierkegaard's World can be seen in Judge Wilhelm in the chapter titled "Equilibrium Between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Composition of Personality," which is in the second part of *Either/Or*. Once the World is understood, and in Kierkegaard's case, understood to be the religious life, then the ethical sphere, the aesthetic sphere, the knight of

resignation, and the knight of faith can be placed within this World. It is within Kierkegaard's *Speech in Praise of Abraham* that a representation of the parts that exist within the World:

“No, not one shall be forgotten who was great in the world. But each was great in his own way, and each in proportion to the greatness of that which he loved. For he who loved himself became great by himself, and he who loved other men became great by his selfless devotion, but he who loved God became greater than all. Everyone shall be remembered, but each became great in proportion to his expectation. One became great by expecting the possible, another by expecting the eternal, but he who expected the impossible became greater than all. Everyone shall be remembered, but each was great in proportion to the greatness of that with which he strove. For he who strove with the world became great by overcoming the world, and he who strove with himself became great by overcoming himself, but he who strove with God became greater than all. So there was strife in the world, man against man, one against a thousand, but he who strove with God was greater than all. So there was strife upon earth: there was one who overcame all by his power, and there was one who overcame God by his impotence. There was one who relied upon himself and gained all, there was one who secure in his strength sacrificed all, but he who believed God was greater than all” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 50)

Here Kierkegaard depicts a viable image and character for each part of the model starting with the aesthetic sphere, then the ethical sphere and the knight of resignation, and finally ending with the knight of faith. The aesthetic is depicted as being selfish. The ethical and the knight of resignation are depicted as followers and practitioners of the World and its ethics. And then finally the knight of faith is depicted as one whose existence is devoted only to God. God can be understood here as the absolute, and that which is beyond the World.

The ethical sphere upholds the World and works in a way that the ethical becomes the goal while ignoring the self. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the ethical can be understood to include a number of conditions, including: “the necessity of choosing seriously and inwardly; commitment to the belief that predications of good and evil of our actions have a truth-value; the necessity of choosing what one is actually doing, rather than just responding to a situation; actions are to be in accordance with rules; and these rules are universally applicable to moral agents.” The ethical is serious in decision-making, looking

inwardly in the process, and as such, the ethical must signify the importance of the act of choice.

As Judge Wilhelm states in *Either/Or*:

“My either/or does not denote in the first instance the choice between good and evil, it denotes the choice whereby one chooses good and evil or excludes them. The question here is, under what categories one wants to contemplate the entire world and would oneself live. That someone who chooses good and evil chooses the good is indeed true, but this becomes evident only afterwards, for the aesthetic is not evil but indifference, and that is why I said that it is the ethical that constitutes choice.”
(Kierkegaard [1843] 1992, 486-7)

The ethical is aware of the both spheres, the ethical and the aesthetic, and because of this it has the choice to choose between good and evil or their exclusion, this is why the ethical looks inward. The ethical, while one would seem to believe they would be bound by the rules of the World, chooses to comply with the rules, recognizing that they would be following the universal. It is also due to this that the difference between good and evil are chosen are existent in the ethical, as the ethical is aware of that is universally good or evil, and the aesthetic is blind to such concepts as they do not care about these concepts like good and evil, they are only concerned with the self. To provide an example of the ethical, one can look at Kant’s categorical imperative. In Kantian ethics, the categorical imperative is the command, as marked by the denotation as the imperative in the conceptual understanding. At the same time, the categorical imperative is an unconditional and a universal, as denoted by the use of “categorical,” meaning that the categorical imperative is universalized, and must be unconditional. Thus, when put together, Kant’s categorical imperative must be chosen, and the choice involved must therefore have the capacity for universalization that is the choice must be practical and possible if expanded into every aspect of life (Kant [1785] 2012, 27-8; 33-4). It is for these reasons that the categorical imperative of Kantian ethics exists as an example, if not the key example, of the ethical in the world, as it represents the universal. In looking at the ethical in the World of

Kierkegaard, the religious life, then the ethical sphere takes the shape of a devout believer and follower of their religious creed.

The aesthetic can best be summed up in Kierkegaard's writing by looking at Kierkegaard's "The Seducer's Diary" in *Either/Or*. In "The Seducer's Diary," Kierkegaard, under the moniker of "A," uses Don Giovanni, the lead character of the Mozart opera of the same name, to depict the image of the aesthetic. In this form, the aesthetic becomes the very image of a man who lives as he fancies, disregarding the thoughts of others, living by his instincts and desires rather than the World and the universal. This is what Kierkegaard meant in "Equilibrium Between the Aesthetic and the Ethical," from *Either/Or*, that the aesthetic does not choose, only the ethical chooses. The aesthetic does not choose his desires nor does he choose to follow them, he just acts according to his desires. The aesthetic is completely unaware of the ethical, blinded by their desires, the aesthetic is unaware of the World. As "A," referred to here by the lover as Johannes, takes his role in the seduction game he set up in "The Seducer's Diary," his actions and thoughts portray his reality and by proxy the reality of the aesthetic. Johannes chases after a girl that he is attracted to, yet he does not love her, nor does he desire any sort of relationship with her, instead

"I still cannot decide how she is to be understood. I wait therefore as quietly, as inconspicuously – yes, as a soldier in a cordon of scouts who throws himself to the ground to listen for the most distant sound of an approaching enemy. I do not really exist for her, not in the sense of a negative relationship, but of no relationship at all. Still I have not dared any experiment. To see her and love her were the same – that's what it says in romances – yes, it is true enough, if love had no dialectic; but what does one really learn about love from romances? Sheer lies that help to shorten the task."
(Kierkegaard [1843] 1992, 284)

Throughout the diary, Johannes greatly details his pursuit of this woman, and in the end when he "wins" her over, he no longer cares about her. Johannes only cared about the gratification of the catch and the chase, and never had any intention of choosing to love her. As he states, there is

“no relationship at all,” thus pointing towards the idea of the aesthetic as indifferent, and not someone who contains the capacity for choice. Thus, the aesthetic, just like Johannes, has only his or her desires and passions, and is unable to choose as these desires and passions drive them rather than give them any sort of choice. As Kierkegaard stated in *Fear and Trembling*, “he who loved himself became great by himself” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 50).

The final two parts of the model are the knight of resignation and the knight of faith. Before touching on the former, the double movement of faith in *Fear and Trembling* should be recalled. The double movement of faith, represented by the sacrifice of Isaac, involves the simultaneous actions of the act of infinite resignation and the strength of the absurd. In the first act, Abraham throws away everything, knowing that he will sacrifice his son. At the same time, in the second act, Abraham believes that God will provide a lamb for the slaughter, a new sacrifice, and his son will be returned to him one way or another. Abraham did not hesitate, he did not reflect on his actions, and he never doubted that it was indeed God with whom he had spoken, and that it was indeed God who commanded him to sacrifice Isaac (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 54-56). It is this lack of doubt and belief in God that allowed Abraham to become the poster child for the knight of faith.

While Kierkegaard may have labeled Abraham a knight of faith, Kierkegaard himself found it easier to understand the knight of resignation, as “the hero I can *think* myself into, but not Abraham” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 63). The knight of resignation is able to commit the first act of the double movement, the act of infinite resignation. Infinite resignation gives away everything for the universal, knowing that he has given it away for a better purpose, as “anyone who wants it, who has not debased himself by – what is still worse than being too proud – belittling himself, can discipline himself into making this movement, which in its pain reconciles

one to existence” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 74). Here one sees that the movement towards infinite resignation puts the knight in relation to the universal, and because the universal is infinite, the resignation is infinite as well. It is within this act that one’s “eternal validity,” that is the idea that his resignation is eternally right (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 75). This means that the knight of resignation does not temporarily make these sorts of sacrifices for the World, but makes them infinitely. The knight of resignation differs from the knight of faith, that being that can commit the double movement of faith, that being that is like Abraham in conviction, in one specific regard: the knight of resignation doubts, he recognizes his sin against the universal, thus making the second movement impossible, “as soon as the single individual wants to assert himself in his particularity, in direct opposition to the universal, he sins, and only by recognizing this can he again reconcile himself with the universal” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 83). Unlike the knight of faith, who sins against the universal as he asserts his particularity towards God, the knight of resignation falls to temptation and recognizes that he has indeed sinned. The knight of resignation is strong in his resignation, as “through resignation I renounce everything, this movement is one I do myself,” and the resignation is a *choice* for the knight (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 77). The key word here in determining where the knight of resignation splits from the knight of faith is “recognizes,” that is, makes a choice. The sin of the knight is meditated, just as with the ethical, and the knight makes a choice. With the knight of faith, there is no such meditation, as “this position cannot be meditated, for all meditation occurs precisely by virtue of the universal” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 85). If the act of meditation is by virtue of the universal, then the knight of resignation, who was almost a faith, falls short, as he realizes his sin against the ethical. The knight of resignation does not give up the movement of infinite resignation, as this movement is just a philosophical movement and does not require faith

(Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 77). To understand this in terms of the model for the double movement, Abraham, then the knight of resignation can be understood as Abraham is doubting that God will provide some sort of sacrifice and that Abraham will live. Here, Abraham hesitates, and realizes he has sinned in his attempted manslaughter. He would no longer plan to sacrifice Isaac, and must continue to make the movement of resignation, as that is a movement made infinitely (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 73). For the Kierkegaard, the knight of resignation is recognizable and justified within the World, whereas the knight of faith is not.

The knight of faith succeeds at the double movement of faith. The knight of faith makes the movement of infinite resignation, and goes further by making the movement of the strength of the absurd. The strength of the absurd can best be summed up as “on the strength of the absurd, on the strength of the fact that for God all things are possible” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 75). The strength of the absurd is the strength of the belief in God, and the belief that all that you have renounced will be returned to you by the strength of the absurd. It is with the absurd that one comes to faith, and also from the second of the movements that the paradox of faith is displayed fully. In the second movement of the absurd, the believer exists as a contradiction, “for faith is just this paradox, that the single individual is higher than the universal, though in such a way, be it noted, that the movement is repeated, that is, that, having been in the universal, the single individual now sets himself apart as the particular above the universal” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 84). The knight of faith is placed above the universal, that is, the finite has become higher than the infinite. This is the paradox of faith according to Kierkegaard. Because the knight of faith rests on the strength of the absurd, of faith in God, “He acts on the strength of the absurd; for it is precisely the absurd that as the single individual he is higher than the universal” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 85). The individual, the knight of faith in this case, has become

higher than the ethical because he does not reflect inwardly in relation to the ethical, he reflects on God, and as such, “he who loves God without faith reflects on himself, while the person who loves God in faith reflects on God,” leaving the knight of faith in relation to the absolute, not the infinite (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 66). As this individual that is higher than the universal, the knight of faith takes on a persona that is quite like that of the aesthetic, as the knight of faith cannot be meditated, and cannot recognize its sin against the ethical because it is no longer of the ethical, but of that which is higher, that of God. However similar on the surface the knight of faith and the aesthetic are, there is a difference in their interiority, as the aesthetic looks only at his wants and desires, whereas the knight of faith internalizes the will of God (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 97). The knight of faith teleologically suspends the ethical and claims an absolute duty to God, whereas the aesthetic is oblivious to the ethical and holds a duty only to himself and his desires. What Abraham shows in his story is that the knight of faith is only free from the ethical because of the belief in God, as “if you simply remove faith as a nix and nought there remains only the raw fact that Abraham was willing to murder Isaac, which is easy enough for anyone without faith to imitate; without faith, that is, which makes it hard” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 60). And here we see the true nature of the knight of faith in the eyes of everyone else. The knight of faith looks just like any other person, yet they make decisions that are nonsensical, almost mentally deranged in the eyes of those of the World, as “Abraham is therefore at no instant the tragic hero, but something quite different, either a murderer or a man of faith” (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 85). This is the life and the understanding of the knight of faith, as they have removed themselves from the society as a whole and live for God.

With the ethical sphere, the aesthetic sphere, the knight of resignation, and the knight of faith detailed and personified, the parts of Kierkegaard’s model have been put forward. It is these

four parts that may be reflected in the characters and characteristics of the five Soviet films for analysis, but for now, these parts provide one half of the equation for the possibility of Kierkegaardian analysis.

Chapter 2: Red Kierkegaard: A Brief History of Kierkegaard in Russia

Now that the model of faith as depicted in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* has been explored and defined, this, the second chapter, will begin to create the intellectual bridge that will historically link Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union. By creating this link between Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union, Kierkegaard and his philosophy will be observable and understandable within the Soviet context. Kierkegaard's influence on Soviet thinkers will be documented, linking him with different ideas and organizations in the Soviet Union. In doing so, any potential for future analysis with Kierkegaardian philosophy in Soviet studies will not appear forced, as the connection between the Soviet Union and Kierkegaard will have been revealed.

Starting with the general Soviet understanding of Kierkegaard and his philosophy, on the surface, he was not well regarded by the Soviet state. This can be seen chiefly in the *bol'shaia sovietstaia entsiklopediia*:

“[Kierkegaard, Søren] is a Danish philosopher, one of the most reactionary representatives of idealistic philosophy, a fanatical. Defender of clericalism. The worldview of K. is permeated with hatred of people. He considered suffering, illness, fear, death as a means of religious upbringing and was the worst enemy of democracy and socialism. He's scandalous and misanthropic. Views now use the philosophy of the imperialist. Bourgeoisie” (Vvedenskii 1953, 172)

Suffice it to say, the Soviet state did not think highly of Kierkegaard's philosophy and ideals.

Further evidence of the Soviet disdain for Kierkegaard is offered by Anna Makolkin, a research fellow and adjunct professor in Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto, whose research shows “if the prerevolutionary portrait of Kierkegaard was somewhat lyrical and sympathetic, albeit condescending, the post revolutionary Stalinist characterization would become almost grotesque. Kierkegaard would no longer be a noble, naive idealist but the embodiment of Evil, a Dostoevskian devil” (Makolkin 2002, 81). Under Stalin, Kierkegaard was an “obstructionist,” someone whose ideas were a poison to the Soviet Union, with the State

claiming that he preached materialism and individualism. And while some of this may be true, Kierkegaard, and by proxy the philosophical category which many believe he championed, existentialism, were undeniably rejected by the Soviet state, as shown by Stalinist thinkers at the time:

“This reactionary philosophy [existentialism] is the creation of the Danish malicious obscurantist Kierkegaard, the enemy of socialism and democracy who considered even Schelling’s philosophy of revolution insufficiently reactionary. By existence, he understands individual spiritual life and juxtaposes “existence” to being, i.e., the material world, the real physical and social life. A repulsive attitude toward life, fear of death, despair—these are the main themes of his works which rightfully belong to psychopathology rather than to philosophy”
(Morgan 1984, 36; Makolkin 2002, 81-2).

Even in the academic sphere, Kierkegaard and his philosophy were disregarded. In an anecdote given during his presentation at the “Kierkegaard and the Meaning of Meaning It” conference held in Copenhagen in early May 1996, András Nagy depicts a student expressing interest in Kierkegaard and Kierkegaardian issues. The professor points the student towards *Voprosy filosofii* (*Questions of Philosophy*), specifically towards a study conducted by D.I Zaslavskii titled «Iurodstvo i iorodivye v sovremennoi burzhuaznoi filosofii» (Idiocy and idiots in Contemporary Bourgeois Philosophy) (Nagy 1997, 107). Kierkegaard, for the most part, was rejected and ignored by the Soviet state.

However, the story of Kierkegaardian thought in the Soviet Union does not start there, as Kierkegaard and his philosophy were present, if only unnoticed, in Tsarist Russia. Along with the rest of Europe in the Nineteenth century, Russia and Russian philosophy was obsessed with Hegel and drew heavy influence from Hegelian philosophy (Makolkin 2002, 80). With the major Russian philosophers of the time, such as Belinsky, Herten and Chernyshevsky, all following Hegelian philosophy, Kierkegaardian philosophy found few readers, as it held staunchly anti-Hegelian positions (Nagy 1997, 110-1). Also, Kierkegaardian religious philosophy was largely

Protestant. With Russian Orthodoxy as the major religion of Russia at the time, and the negative connotation “Protestant” held, as “the Lutheran type of freedom and individuality became a symbol of the extreme of European thinking, religious cul-de-sacs, so frightening for Slavic believers,” Kierkegaard remained largely unpopular (Nagy 1997, 113). However, eventually Kierkegaard was translated into Russian at the tail end of the Nineteenth century. Partially due to the rise in popularity of Ibsen’s *Brandt* in Russia and partially due to connections to Rainer Maria Rilke and his newfound interest in Kierkegaard, Kierkegaard’s works began translation in the late 1880’s. The first Russian publications came in the mid 1890’s, as discovered by Piama Gaidenko’s study of Kierkegaard (Malkolkin 2002, 80, 87; Nagy 1997, 119-20). In the 1902 entry in the *Bol'shaia russkaia entsiklopediia*, the entry on Kierkegaard, written by P.O Kaptenov, noted that Kierkegaard was notably similar to Ludwig Feuerbach, with the only difference being “the essence of Feuerbach’s search was to arrive at the gist of Christian doctrine, with the goal of rejecting it. Kierkegaard, in contrast, became totally consumed by Christianity” (Makolkin 2002, 80).

Now in the early Twentieth century, before and just after the October Revolution, Kierkegaard gained popularity around the same time as Karl Marx. As anti-Hegelianism began to reach some thinkers and revolutionaries in Russia, Kierkegaard and Marx soon made the rounds in those types circles. There exists a bit of irony here, since Kierkegaard and Marx, while were both reactionaries against Hegel, both differed and critiqued Hegel in vastly different ways. As Marx and Marxism ran rampant among the prevalent revolutionaries, Kierkegaard began to have an influence on others, such as Semion Frank and the members of *Vekhi*, a collection of essays written by “representatives of the religious philosophical movement” who expressed “deep concerns for the future of Russia, and gave words to an existential despair” (Nagy 1997, 124-5).

Members of *Vekhi* included Nikolai Berdyaev, Sergei Bulgakov, and Nikolai Losskii, and the members often wrote, referring either directly or indirectly to Kierkegaard and his work. Those influenced by Kierkegaard altered their worldview, which made them enemies of Lenin, as Kierkegaardian philosophy stressed the importance of Christianity, and was therefore bourgeois (Nagy 1997, 125-6). According to Nagy, Bulgakov became an ex-Marxist Orthodox priest, and Berdyaev left socialism soon after the Bolsheviks took power (126-8). Kierkegaard had immense influence on the writing and lives of the *Vekhi* and others (Isupov 2010, 474-5, 504-5; Nagy 1997, 126-8). Many of the thinkers influenced by Kierkegaard were soon exiled, while others were sent to camps, such as Pavel Florenskii, as the *Vekhi* were labeled enemies of the people by Lenin (Nagy 1997, 129-134). Many of the exiled eventually found their way to France, were a majority of them eventually died.

Among the many that fled to France was Lev Shestov, a Russian and Soviet philosopher. Lev Shestov, as Nikolai Berdyaev stated in his “Lev Shestov and Kierkegaard”, was an existentialist (Berdyaev 1936). Shestov’s interest in existentialism and religious philosophy in Kierkegaard originated in his comparisons he drew between Kierkegaard and Dostoyevsky, stating in the preface of *Kierkegaard and the Existential Philosophy* “And here he [Kierkegaard] comes so close to Dostoevsky that one may say, without fear of being reproached for overstatement, that Dostoevsky is Kierkegaard's double. Not only their ideas, but also their methods of inquiry into the truth are absolutely identical, and are equally unlike those which form the content of speculative philosophy” (Shestov 1969). It is claims such as the previous quotation that cemented Shestov as a philosopher very much inspired by Kierkegaard. Shestov also drew large comparisons to Dostoevsky, as he published in his 1935 paper, “Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard,” claiming that Dostoevsky was in fact Kierkegaard’s “double” (Makolkin 2002, 82;

Shestov 1969). “Double” refers to Shestov’s understanding of Dostoevsky’s themes and motifs as Makolkin states, “For him [Shestov], Dostoevsky joins his ‘double,’ Kierkegaard, through his disturbing acceptance of the irrational and in his denial of *knowing beyond*.” (Makolkin 2002, 82-3). This was not the only comparison Shestov came to in regards to the Kierkegaard-Dostoevsky pairing, with his claim that “not only their ideas, but also their methods of inquiry into the truth are absolutely identical, and are equally unlike those which form the content of speculative philosophy” (Shestov 1969). Shestov also believed that Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky both followed similar trajectories in thought, as both started with Hegel and found themselves at Job, from the old Testament, tracking the works of Dostoevsky and finding that many of the stories are variations on the book of Job, such as “‘Hippolyta’s Confession’ in *The Idiot*; the reflections of Ivan and Mitya in *Brothers Karamazov*, and of Kirilov in *The Possessed*; his *Notes from Underground*.” Similarly, Kierkegaard became infatuated with Job and his story of suffering, leading to his fascination with Abraham, leading to the work that is of most use to this thesis, *Fear and Trembling* (Shestov 1969; Makolkin 2002, 83-4). Nagy also continues to draw comparisons between Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard, just as Shestov did, such as showing “the center of the novel [*Brothers Karamazov*], the ‘Legend of the Great Inquisitor’ seemingly echoes Kierkegaard’s rejection of the Church as a state, and emphasizes the overestimation of mankind with the faith, with the Bible, with Christ’s presence in the world” (Nagy 1997, 118). As can be seen in the works of Shestov and the research of Nagy, there are indeed similarities between Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky.

Berdyayev continued in his works regarding Kierkegaard as well, drawing comparisons to Shestov and Kierkegaard, aiming to show that the latter heavily influenced the former. Berdyayev states that Shestov “was struck by the closeness of Kierkegaard to the fundamental theme of his

life” (Berdyayev 1938). The works written by Berdyayev and Shestov, a dialogue is revealed regarding the other’s work and work with Kierkegaardian themes.

“And as might be expected, as regards the book of L. Shestov it is impossible to learn of Kierkegaard himself, and one learns only of the author of the book. Kierkegaard was however a fine subject for the unraveling of themes, which torment him himself and to which he devoted all his creativity. Though there is much of Kierkegaard that he does not take note of. But Kierkegaard is especially close to him, he is shaken by his fate, and the encounter with him was an important event for him” (Berdyayev 1936).

The fact that texts like Berdyayev’s *The Fundamental Idea of the Philosophy of Lev Shestov* and *Lev Shestov and Kierkegaard*, and Shestov’s *Kierkegaard and the Existential Philosophy* do exist show that at the very least there existed discussions on Kierkegaardian philosophy.

The legacy of Soviet thinkers studying Kierkegaard continued with Piama Gaidenko, a professor of Philosophy at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Philosophy. Gaidenko read Kierkegaard thirty-five years after the death of Stalin, and analyzed his works in her *Tragediia estetizma. Opyt kharakteristki mirosozertsaniia Serena Kirkegora*. (The Tragedy of Aestheticism). Gaidenko offers a new interpretation of Kierkegaard based on the concept of irony in Kierkegaardian writing, developing an image, as Makolkin so kindly lays out: “This new Kierkegaard is neither a Christian thinker, nor an idealist bourgeois obscurantist. He appears, instead, as a master of modern paradox, as a creator of a new existential carnival rooted in Desire, Feeling, and Pleasure rather than in Reasonable Being predicated on Moral Choice” (87). Here we have another Soviet thinker, this time in the Brezhnev era of the Soviet Union (*The Tragedy of Aestheticism* was published in 1970), who has found an interest in Kierkegaard. While Gaidenko may not have the sort of enthusiasm of Shestov or the *Vekhi* for Kierkegaard, the influence of Kierkegaard is no less present.

In this chapter, it is key to note that there existed a connection between Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union, and that there existed a readership of Kierkegaard within the Soviet Union.

What is important here is not specifically how each writer was influenced and how it shows in their writing, what is important is the fact that they were influenced, placing Kierkegaard in the Soviet Union historically, politically, academically, and philosophically. With the examples of Shestov, Berdyaev, and Gaidenko, the connection between the Soviet Union and Kierkegaard are plainly visible, and as such, there is no problem placing Kierkegaard in the Soviet context. Now that Kierkegaard is philosophically linked to the Soviet Union to a certain degree, the next step in the process of revealing the potential for Kierkegaardian analysis in Soviet studies is to find a link between Kierkegaardian philosophy and Soviet ideology and Communism.

Chapter 3: Connecting Kierkegaard's World to Communism: Communism as Religion

While the last chapter placed Kierkegaard and his philosophy in historical context of the Soviet Union, no matter how minor his impact may have been, it is not enough to warrant the use of Kierkegaardian philosophy in Soviet Studies. The use of Kierkegaardian philosophy and themes in Soviet studies requires not only the historical link to the Soviet Union, but also an ideological link. When studying anything related to the Soviet Union, it is impossible to avoid the study of Communism, the Soviet ideology, and the impacts that they had on all aspects of Soviet life. As such, in order to open Soviet studies up for analysis using Kierkegaardian philosophy, it is not enough to just note the historical link between Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union. In order for Kierkegaardian thought to be viable as a tool of analysis in Soviet studies, it must be compatible with Communism and Soviet ideology. Compatibility here is the key issue, as Soviet Communism is staunchly atheistic, whereas Kierkegaardian philosophy is based heavily in Christianity.

Knowing this alone would cause most people to believe that the two ideologies are therefore incompatible, and could not be used as a means of understanding and analysis of each other. This of course is true in the comparison of Communism and Kierkegaardian philosophy in a certain respect. Communism as a socio-political philosophy is inherently atheistic, and Kierkegaard and his philosophy rest in Christianity, finding that the World to be the religious life, as was established in previous chapters. However, it is Kierkegaard's understanding of the World as the religious life that leads to the possibility of the connection between Kierkegaardian philosophy and Soviet Communism. All that is required for this connection is a certain understanding of Soviet Communism: Soviet Communism as a religion. If Communism can be understood as some sort of religion and as having religious attributes, then Kierkegaardian

philosophy may indeed have a possibility for future incorporation into Soviet studies as a tool of analysis.

Thankfully, there has been academic research and work published that interprets and presents Soviet Communism as a religion, including Arthur Jay Klinghoffer's *Red Apocalypse: The Religious Evolution of Soviet Communism*, which in great detail outlines Soviet Communism, both as an ideology and as an institution, in a way that relates Soviet Communism to the religions it aimed to replace, and outlines it as a religion. It is this argument and works like Klinghoffer's *Red Apocalypse* that make the possibility of Kierkegaardian analysis possible, as it brings religion into the Soviet picture. Now, before getting further into his depiction of Soviet Communism as religion, it is necessary to understand that the validity of his work and the work of others who interpret Soviet Communism as religion are not in question here, and thus will not be argued. The validity of such work is not in question here, nor is the critic and actual analysis of such work. For the purposes of this thesis, the very fact that such an interpretation of Soviet Communism suffices. It is not that such work is flawless or beyond critique, it is just that for the purposes of this thesis, it is not necessary. The mere existence of such an interpretation of Soviet Communism is enough, as it is because this interpretation and this academic understanding exists, that the use of Kierkegaardian philosophy in Soviet studies has a possibility. Also, it means that the basic understanding of this interpretation of Soviet Communism will be noted in this thesis, not a fully detailed understanding of the interpretation. The basic understanding and the existence of the interpretation of Soviet Communism will allow for the World in Kierkegaard's philosophy, the religious life, thus, bringing the World of the Soviet Union and the World of Kierkegaard together.

In looking at the interpretation of Soviet Communism as religion, Klinghoffer advises the reader that “...it should be realized that Christian values strongly influenced the precepts of Marxism-Leninism and the course of Soviet communist development closely paralleled that of Christianity” (Klinghoffer 1998, 1). Klinghoffer develops an argument that first looks at the origins of Marxism and Christianity, linking them together through a common origin, as well as demonstrating the change in direction that both Marxism and Christianity took from their origin: “Both derive from Jewish messianism, with Marx’s Old Testament prophetism being overtaken by bureaucratic Leninism and Jesus’ by the institutionalized Church. In essence, Leninism came to dominate Marxism Leninism and Christianity evolved away from Judaic roots” (Klinghoffer 1998, 3). From here, Klinghoffer draws a connection between the development and the history of Christianity to the history and the development of the Soviet Union through comparison, as he shows that “In an historic sense, Lenin may be compared to both Jesus and Paul, as a messiah who constructed the edifice of his own religion. Stalinism may then be related to the Crusades and the Inquisition, with the demonization of Trotsky a reminder of the anti-Semitic strands evident within medieval Catholicism” (Klinghoffer 1998, 4). He goes on further to relate the Khrushchev era and de-Stalinization to the Renaissance and Reformation, the Brezhnev era to the Counter-Reformation, and Gorbachev and his reforms of *perestroika* and *glasnost*’ to Enlightenment. As Klinghoffer is presenting this view of Communism as religion, he also is providing plenty of sources that seem to agree with the idea of Communism as religion, often noting its roots in Christianity, as Leon Onikov, an ideologue and an activist within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, notes, “The ideas of socialism were first formulated by Jesus Christ in the New Testament” (Klinghoffer 1998, 7). Klinghoffer also looks at the Russian culture and the Russian religious culture, and again, shows the connections with Christianity and

religion, especially in regards to themes and its relation to Marxism and later Leninism. In religion, especially Christianity and Catholicism, “Faith requires personal involvement, preparation for action, devotion to duty and self-denial; to a great extent, it also incorporates suffering” (Klinghoffer 1998, 68), and it is these ideas that Klinghoffer relates to the Russian culture and Russian religious messianism. In the culture, “Fundamental to Russian culture was the Christian theme of enduring suffering on the road to salvation, which may be likened to Marx’s interpretation of the working class’ enmiseration,” and then further into messianism in Russia, Klinghoffer shows that

“Russian religious messianism included the expectation of an earthly Kingdom of God, which made atheistic Bolshevism more palatable to the masses” (Klinghoffer 1998, 44-45). In this last excerpt, Klinghoffer notes a connection between Bolshevism and Russian religious messianism, which demonstrates an understanding of Russian culture and religious culture, as well as an understanding of Bolshevism, that allowed for Bolshevism and Leninism to have a larger impact on the masses. He also reveals that certain religious groups, such as the God-Builders, were important members of the Bolshevik party, and important allies of Lenin, as well as the Sectarrians. These groups saw Marxism and Bolshevism as potential replacements for Orthodoxy, and for good reason, as “Messianic groups in Russia accepted the principle of ‘sobornost,’ which subordinated individualism to group cohesion” (Klinghoffer 1998, 45). The connection to group cohesion is the key, as Communism also favors this position with the emphasis on the collective over the individual and the removal of private property and materialism.

Klinghoffer also goes into the depictions of religious practice and religious icons in Communism, starting with the deification of Lenin. “He (Lenin) was deified as a communist Christ, and his mausoleum adjacent to the Kremlin wall becomes a place of religious reverence”,

as Klinghoffer notes, the deification of Lenin is not out of the question (Klinghoffer 1998, 57). He also notes that Soviet heroes often became a saint like in the eyes of the State, as he describes “Red baptisms”, where new born children are wrapped in a red banner, and the godparents and parents are given a calendar, with each day being named after a Soviet hero. The name of the child was meant to be the name of the hero that their birth coincided with. This whole phenomena and the naming of Soviet heroes to dates are reminiscent of the saints’ days in Catholicism.) In addition, Soviet Communism held its own moral teachings, and adopted Christian holidays like Easter and Christmas and transformed them into Soviet holidays (113). Other works have looked at the relation between Soviet ideology and institutions and Christianity. In Jochen Hellbeck’s *Revolution on My Mind*, he looked at the diaries of Soviet citizens during Stalinism, and to note one example, there is such a case that draws a direct connection to Christianity. In the story of Piatnitskaya, a woman whose husband was arrested for being a counter-revolutionary, she struggled with her love for her husband, and her duty as a Soviet citizen to despise him as a counter-revolutionary. This troubled her so much that she went to the NKVD and confessed her struggles to be a good citizen (Hellbeck 2009, 97-98, 111-112). This act is highly reflective of the sacrament of confession in Catholicism. The act of confessing one’s sins to those who commune with God is similar to the act she took her in her confession to the NKVD.

Klinghoffer goes into much further detail in his analysis, but this summation of his argument will not go to such lengths, as it is the fact that this interpretation of Communism as religion exists is what is important. But ultimately, for Klinghoffer, “Communism is a form of religion which helps man achieve salvation; it is a form of psychoanalysis which helps man overcome deviance; and it is a form of ideology which helps

man discern and combat the contradictions inherent in his civilization” (Klinghoffer 1998, 72). This understanding of Soviet Communism as a religion is all that is needed to bring Communism and Kierkegaard one an even plane, as they can now interact through religion and religious understanding. It is because this understanding exists that this connection is possible, and it is because of this connection that the possibility of using Kierkegaardian philosophy as a tool for analysis in Soviet studies becomes reality. This reality will be displayed in the rest of the thesis, as the potential of Kierkegaardian analysis will be tested through the analysis of five Soviet films and their relation to Kierkegaardian philosophy.

Chapter 4: Boris Borozdin, Joseph Stalin, Alyosha Skvortsov

For the potential of Kierkegaardian analysis in the realm of Soviet studies to be demonstrated, it will require some examples of the potential uses of Kierkegaardian analysis to be displayed. For the purposes of this thesis, those examples will be demonstrated through the study of Soviet film as aspects of Soviet studies and the subjects of analysis. As stated in the introduction, the films that the remaining chapters will focus on are the following: Ivan Pyrev's *Tractor Drivers*, Grigori Chukhrai's *Ballad of a Soldier* and *The Forty-First*, Mikhail Kalatozov's *The Cranes are Flying*, and Mikheil Chiaureli's *The Fall of Berlin*. Characters from these films will be studied and analyzed, presenting a narrative of their lives and depictions of the Soviet citizen. After these characters have been displayed, they become open to analysis, and the potential for Kierkegaardian analysis becomes possible. Starting with this chapter, the demonstration of the potential of Kierkegaardian analysis will begin with the characters of Boris from Chukhrai's *Ballad of a Soldier*, Alyosha from Kalatozov's *The Cranes are Flying*, and Stalin from Chiaureli's *The Fall of Berlin*.

Starting with Boris, Chukhrai and the writer, Viktor Rozov, present the hero of the story, which holds a sense of irony, as the hero of the story has little screen time, and has dies rather early in the film. The film first introduces Boris in a scene with his fiancé Veronika. They are on a romantic stroll, and they are enjoying each other's company. Jump to the next scene, and we see that Boris has decided to volunteer to fight for his country, which is in the middle of the Second World War. Boris volunteers with his friend Stepan, one of his co-workers. Boris volunteers out of a sense of duty to his country. Boris becomes hesitant to tell Veronika and his family this news, as it would be hard for them to hear, but she finds out indirectly from Stepan. Boris still has every intention of marrying Veronika, but the news of his enlistment devastates

her, thus leading to a whole scene where Veronika fails to say goodbye to Boris. Both Boris and Veronika are distraught by their failed meeting, and so Boris goes off to war without saying goodbye. From here on in the film, the focus completely shifts to Veronika, with some brief scenes, including the death of Boris, who dies helping one of his fellow soldiers struggling through a swamp (Kalatozov 1957). The rest of Boris's characterization comes from Veronika and her situation during the war. While Boris is on the front, Veronika was assaulted by Boris's cousin, Mark, and out of embarrassment and shame married him. She remains in love with Boris, even though she is deeply unhappy and ashamed by her actions, culminating in her contemplation of suicide. When she is about to jump off of a bridge, a child in distress distracts her as she saves him instead. The child she saved was an orphan named Boris, which she took as a sign from her Boris (Youngblood 2007, 118-120). She takes to boy in, and eventually leaves her husband after discovering his infidelity and his trickery in avoiding conscription. When the war ends, the soldiers return home, and Veronika searches for Boris, only to no avail, finding out from Stepan that he had died. While she is distraught, she decides to remember his memory as she hands out bouquets of flowers to other returning soldiers (Kalatozov 1957). Here, Boris, while not present, has an impact on Veronika and her actions, revealing the strength of his character in the eyes of Veronika, thus renewing her own strength and determination to help with the war effort.

Kalatozov's *Ballad of a Soldier* details a moment in the life of Alyosha, a Russian soldier who was granted a few days of leave so he could go home to see his mother. The first scenes with Alyosha depict him as a boy with luck. He is retreating from German tanks, and falls into a hole. In the hole he finds an anti-tank rifle, which he proceeds to use to take out two tanks as an act of survival. The nineteen year-old then receives accommodations from his commander for

taking out the tanks as an act of bravery, which earns him a few days of leave, so he can go back home to see his mother. Given these days of leave, Alyosha encounters several people along the way. He first meets a disabled soldier on his way home, whom he helps reconnect with his wife, because he was afraid that she would reject him as he was now disabled. Next, he meets a girl named Shura while hiding out on a train, with whom he builds a sort of romantic rapport which leads nowhere. He also meets the wife of one of his comrades, who he and Shura find cheating on her husband. Alyosha, after separating from Shura, meets a family on a train, who escaped the disaster of the war before the train itself gets bombed. Eventually, after persuading a truck driver to alter his scheduled route, arrives at home. When he meets his mother, he has only moments to stay with her, as he was delayed and delayed himself. He then leaves again, for the last time. The film ends with the mother still on the road, waiting, with the narrator of the film stating that Alyosha was a Russian soldier, and just a Russian soldier (Chukhrai 1959). The entire time Alyosha is heading home, he never loses sight of his goal, to return to the front. Even though the story is about his return from the front, Alyosha never wavers from the idea that as soon as he sees his mother, he will return directly to the front as instructed.

The final case, as it were, for this chapter is the characterization of Stalin in Chiaureli's infamous *The Fall of Berlin*. The characterization of Stalin in the film is different to the other cases that have been presented already. While Alyosha and Boris's characterizations can be summed up in the narrative of the film, as their lives are covered in their respective films, Stalin's characterization in *The Fall of Berlin* is more spread out, and is only an aspect of his character. The film has two romantic leads in Alyosha and Natasha, yet it quickly drops them for the characterization of Stalin. Chiaureli's film is infamous for its portrayal of Stalin as a War hero, and the voice of reason and understanding of all people (Youngblood 2007, 96). Before the

start of the war, characters are seen to have an infatuation with Stalin, such as Natasha, as she is all too pleased to thank Stalin for the opportunities given to the Soviet citizenry. Some characters are even scared of Stalin, as seen with Alyosha, not because he was frightening, but because of his portrayed as being holy, and so he finds himself to not be worthy of Stalin's presence. How can someone such as himself even begin to speak to someone that is depicted as pure and angelic, tending to his garden, clothed in white, and soft-spoken. During the Yalta Conference in the film, it is clear that Stalin is the most composed of the group, as "whether dealing with his generals, world leaders, or a steelworker, Stalin presents an appealing image: well-informed, wise, thoughtful, calm, but strong nonetheless" (Youngblood, 100). Stalin is a man of the people, the "father of the little people", as it is stated in the film (Chiaureli 1950). Here the viewer is presented with the understanding that Stalin himself was not only the most important factor in the defeat of the Germans in the Second World War, but also he alone made the victory possible. Stalin is painted as an ethereal, almost Christ-like figure, as one character states on the war front: "Stalin is always with us," of course he is speaking in spirit, but the use of this phrase indicates that the film treats Stalin as a perfect, omnipotent being, as "everywhere are manifestations of Stalin's genius, Stalin's wisdom, Stalin's goodness and solicitude" (Babitsky 1955, 194). In the end of the film, Stalin reunites the romantic leads from the first third of the film, as well as uniting the allied forces in Berlin, as soldiers and citizens of all nations who suffered under Nazi Germany praise Stalin for the defeat of Hitler. It is with this film that "Chiaureli created the first true epic about the war, with Stalin as epic hero" (Youngblood 2007, 97). Stalin, as this film portrayed him, was seen as a perfect example of humanity, caring and strong, yet also thoughtful and gentle, always thinking of his people.

When looking at the characterizations of these three characters from the films, it becomes evident that within these characters are the reflections of the Kierkegaard's ethical. All of these characters fight for the World, in their case, the Soviet Union, and the Soviet way of life, ultimately, Communism. The ethical, as discussed in chapter one, can be understood as the universal, and the embodiment of the social norms, guidelines, and laws that encompass the World, and are what is universalized within the World, "the ethical as such is the universal, and as the universal it applies to everyone, which can be put from another point of view by saying that it applies at every moment" (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 83). The ethical represents both the World the universal, as those individuals, such as Alyosha, Boris, and Stalin, uphold the ethical sphere as the highest ideal and chose to work for the greater good of the World (Kierkegaard [1843] 1992, 486-7). With the connection between Soviet Communism and Kierkegaard's religious life, having been established last chapter, it is evident here that each character acts and aims to uphold the status quo of the Soviet Union and Soviet Communism.

First, in starting with the ethical as Soviet Communism, which is also representative of the World given the prevalence of Communism in all aspects of Soviet society, it becomes what the ethical fought and continues to fight for, as the ethical knows the difference between good and evil and has choice, and thus those who choose to stay with the ethical would then support and work for the greater good of the World. For the Soviet Union, the ethical is the ways of Soviet Communism and Marxism-Leninism, and as this ethical is the universal, as it must be applied to all. This can be seen in the examples of Alyosha and Boris, as both made the conscious decision to go to the front to fight for the ethical: the Soviet Union and Communism. In Alyosha's case, he never wavered from the reality that he would be going back to the front, and jus as the ending narration described him, he was a Russian soldier, above all else. His

identity, that which he had chosen, was that of a Russian soldier, someone who would fight the good fight for the Soviet Union and Soviet Communism. Alyosha has the opportunity to find love, and he could have defied his orders and spent a little more time at home, but Alyosha was keen to keep to his regiment and return to the front, as that was his duty, and part of his identity. Boris is in a different situation regarding his decision to the ethical, but it is still reflective of Kierkegaard's ethical. He knew that he would inevitably be sent to the war by the State, so he chose to enlist himself, making the decision to fight for his country, the one he loves, and for Soviet Communism. He leaves behind his love and his family in order to protect them and their way of life. This was not his only choice available, as seen with his antithesis, his cousin Mark (who will be discussed in the next chapter), who was able to get out of the war by receiving, illegally, a deferral from the war. Boris instead chose to fight for his country, as it was his duty. While the film focuses less on this duty, and more on the impact of news about his family and Veronika, his loyalty to the Soviet Union and to the ethical is undeniable (Fujiwara 2002). Both Alyosha and Boris acknowledge their own desires, yet they choose to dedicate themselves to the ethical, fighting for the safety and security of Soviet Communism.

The influences of Boris and his memory on Veronika in *The Cranes are Flying* are also reflective of the ethical. After finding herself depressed and lost in the World, Veronika meets a child named Boris, who she believes is a sign sent to her from her Boris. The memory of her Boris and this apparent sign from him reinvigorates her and she takes a more active role in her life, taking in the child and leaving her husband, Mark, seeing his true colors as a schemer and a liar (Kalatozov 1957). It is Boris's memory that strengthens her, and causes her to act for the ethical near the end of the film. His example as a Soviet and a soldier for the ethical are shown to

be influential for many people, including his father, Fyodor Ivanovich, Veronika, and the man for whom he gives his life to save.

Chiaureli's representation of Stalin is a different case in terms of the reflection of the ethical from Boris and Alyosha, as Stalin's role in the war, as portrayed in the film, was fundamentally different, as well as going beyond the confines of the war. Stalin, in *The Fall of Berlin*, reflects the ethical entirely, so much so that he becomes the sole representation of the ethical for the film. He is constantly represented as the greatest Communist by the Soviets in the film, and the representative of all Soviet people. His calm, humble, and collected portrayal, along with the ethereal portrayal, help lend to this view of Stalin. The film, which came at a time where Stalin and Soviet executives were portrayed as the heroes of the time and the ones who defeated Nazi Germany, was meant to display Stalin as such a perfect being, "it was mandatory for the novelist, the playwright, the poet to show that Soviet patriotism stemmed from communist convictions, that it derived its heat from 'the unextinguishable burning of the socialist idea'" (Yarmolinsky 1957, 61-62). In this regard, the portrayal of Stalin was meant to represent this idea, that "unextinguishable burning of the socialist idea". And, as the "socialist idea" was Soviet Communism, which has been expressed as the ethical, Stalin was the totality of this idea, of the ethical. In terms of directly relating it to Kierkegaard's ethical, Stalin represents the "religious life" of the Soviet Union, Soviet Communism. Every action and every decision that Stalin made was made for the ethical. For the majority of the film, Stalin is working as the chief strategist in the war effort. In this role he cares deeply for his people and does not put them in harms way for no reason. He shows an immense understanding of the war, and what it means for the Soviet Union. In contrast, his antithesis, Hitler, is more self-centered, maniacal, clueless, and at his people's time of need, he was busy getting married. Hitler displayed a lack of respect for his

people and only cared for himself, whereas Stalin represented the Soviet ethical. As the “father of the little people”, Stalin’s goals and actions were reflective of the ethical, as these goals and actions were not only for his best interest, but also for the greater good of the World of the Soviet Union, and all peoples of the World (Chiaureli 1950).

Kierkegaard’s ethical can be found in these three characters, as all represent those who chose to fulfill their duty to the Soviet Union, the Soviet people, and Soviet Communism. His ethical, the religious life, coincides with Soviet Communism, as both are the universal and the embodiment of their Worlds. For Kierkegaard the religious life as the ethical allows him to devote his life to God, and for the Soviet Union, Soviet Communism as the ethical allows the people to devote their lives to the Soviet way of life. Boris, Alyosha, and Stalin never let their selfish desires control them in their respective films, and as such they all followed the ethical to the best of their abilities. Boris volunteered to go to the front in order to fulfill his duty to the ethical, Alyosha never diverted from his goal of getting back to the front after seeing his mother once again in order to fulfill his identity as a Russian soldier fighting for the ethical, and Stalin existed in the film as the personification of the ethical himself, supporting his people and Communism while encouraging them to continue the fight for the ethical.

Chapter 5: Mark, Adolph Hitler, Vadim Nikolaevich Govorukha-Otrok

In the previous chapter, the characters that were studied were found to be reflections of Kierkegaard's ethical sphere, as each character were characterized in a way and acted in ways that fulfilled a duty to the ethical. All of these actions also represent the universality of the ethical, as each action and characterization reflect that, which is what every Soviet citizen should be expected to do in those situations. From Boris's volunteering to go to war to fight for the Soviet Union, to Alyosha's determination to go back to the front after his granted leave, to Stalin's composure in the face of war and the level of care and importance he gives to every one of the Soviet people, the actions from these three characters reflected the ethical completely. In this chapter, their antitheses will be studied. The characters of this chapter act as the opposite character types to the characters in the last chapter, and will now be the new subjects of the potential of Kierkegaardian analysis. These characters, two of which were mentioned in the previous chapter, include Mark from *The Cranes are Flying*, Hitler from *The Fall of Berlin*, and Vadim Nikolaevich Govorukha-Otrok from *The Forty-First*.

Mark has already been discussed to a limited extent in the characterization of Boris from the previous chapter. Mark is the cousin of Boris, and has been living with Boris and his parents in an apartment. Unlike his cousin Boris, Mark does not go off to the front, as he acquired a deferral, claiming that the government would give deferrals to artists. Boris of course declines this offer, as he has already volunteered and committed to fulfill his duty to the Soviet Union. After Boris is shipped out to the front, Mark decides to seduce Veronika, Boris's fiancé. Veronika, who was devoted in Boris, rejected his advances. However, during an air raid, amongst the chaos and confusion, Boris forces himself on Veronika with the heavy implication that he had raped her (Kalatozov 1957). As stated in the previous chapter, out of the shame and

embarrassment of the situation, Veronika marries Mark, much to the despair of Boris's family. After some years of marriage, Mark, who along with Veronika, was unhappy with the marriage, and had been spending most of his time partying, and playing music with others, even implying that he was cheating on Veronika. Mark even takes Veronika's stuffed squirrel, which was the last gift she ever received from Boris before he left for the front, and attempts to give it to another other woman as a gift (Kalatozov 1957). After witnessing these events, Veronika is driven to contemplate suicide. Boris's selfishness and desire drove Veronika to marry him out of shame, and later it had driven her to contemplate suicide. As this was happening, Boris's father, Fyodor Ivanovich, found out that the deferral that Mark received was received through bribery. Mark had apparently used his uncle's name to bribe a government official to obtain the deferral. After all of this, Mark was banished from the family, abandoning Veronika, leaving her with Boris's family (Kalatozov 1957).

Another character that was brought up in the previous chapter was the characterization of Adolf Hitler in Chiaureli's *The Fall of Berlin*. Again, where in *The Cranes are Flying* was the depiction of Boris and his antithesis, Mark, here, with the two characters from *The Fall of Berlin*, is another example of one character and his antithesis. The characterization of Stalin in *The Fall of Berlin* portrayed a man who was calm and collected, cared deeply for his people, and was a brilliant strategist who never put his people in harms way. Hitler, however, was much different, portrayed as the antithesis of Stalin. The portrayal of Hitler in *The Fall of Berlin* characterized a man who has reached the frayed ends of his sanity. Throughout the film, Hitler is a nervous wreck. He was constantly yelling at his commanders and chastising them for their incompetence, while ignoring his own incompetence. He ignored the advice of his commanders and his confidants regarding the state of the war, throwing all of his country's resources and manpower

into lost causes and desperate schemes, all of which failed. During the most critical period of the war, when the Soviet's were about to take Berlin, Hitler was too busy to listen to the pleas of his commanders, as he was getting married. Shortly after Hitler was married, he took his own life out of the realization that Stalin had bested him and that his world was no longer a possibility (Chiaureli 1950). This ultimate of selfishness wraps up the depiction of Hitler as the antithesis of Stalin. While Stalin's characterization represents the position of the individual as the greatest resource of Communism, Hitler stands as an example of when the individual becomes the greatest threat to Communism, as he acted for himself and only himself, ultimately committing the most complete act of individuality: suicide (Pinnow 2009, 251).

Moving on to Vadim Nikolaevich Govorukha-Otrok of *The Forty-First*, he was a White Army lieutenant who was captured by the Red Army and was placed under the watch of Maria Filatovna, a Red Army sniper. Vadim was depicted as a blonde-haired, blue eyed man, from which derives Maria's nickname for him in the film: Blue Eyes. He was well educated and well versed in literature and the arts, as he was able to give Maria pointers on her Agitprop poetry, as well as reciting the story of Robinson Crusoe to Maria during their marooned stay on a small island (Chukhrai 1956). As previously mentioned, as Maria and her unit were transporting Vadim, they encounter a nasty storm, which leaves Maria and Vadim shipwrecked on an isolated island in the Aral Sea. Through a number of hardships, the two fall in love. It is here that Vadim's true desires come to the light. Vadim has had enough of the fighting and revolution, as he really just wants to get back to his books that he recalls from before the Revolution. This shocks Maria, as she thought that he had changed to the point that they could live together as lovers after the war. Vadim rejects the idea of her following her Bolshevik ideals, which causes Maria to breakdown. While the feelings between Vadim and Maria do exist, Vadim's selfishness

proves to be a factor that drives them apart enough for Maria to fulfill her duty and kill him when he tried to escape.

All of these characters present some sort of behavior and way of life that is selfish and against the ethical of the Soviet Union, that is, Soviet Communism. Mark bribes an official of the Soviet government to receive a deferral from conscription. Hitler, while not a Soviet citizen, displays behavior that goes against the Soviet collective, as he places his people in danger and acts selfishly near the end of his life as he gets married as his people are invaded, followed by his suicide. And then Vadim, who acts selfishly and against the Soviet ideology as he denies Maria's love of the revolution in favor of sloth and self-indulgence of his previous life. All of these characters are the antitheses of the ethical, and as such, they are reflections of Kierkegaard's aesthetic. Kierkegaard's aesthetic, which is described in detail in the first chapter, is a slave to his own desires. The aesthetic is either unaware of the ethical, or has denied the ethical (Kierkegaard [1843] 1992, 284). The aesthetic, which continues to be the individual in the Soviet context, as seen with Pinnow's understanding of the individual in the Soviet context as both the greatest threat and the greatest resource, is corruption that amounts to self-indulgence and any actions that defy the ethical of Soviet Communism. A working definition of corruption in the Soviet Union depicts an understanding of corruption that aligns well with the actions of these characters, as "Corruption is behavior of public officials which deviates from accepted norms in order to serve private ends" (Staats 1972, 41). In this definition, Staats shows that corruption is a deviation from accepted norms. If the ethical from the previous chapter reflects the accepted norms, and the actions of the characters of Mark, Hitler, and Vadim are against the accepted norms, then they represent corruption. And as corruption is defined as that which works for one's own private means, then these characters qualify as this as well. Corruption, by definition a part

of the aesthetic, is practiced by the characters of Mark, Hitler, and Vadim, and therefore go against the ethical.

Mark's actions as the man who took Veronika's innocence for himself while acting out of pleasure rather than the greater good of the Soviet Union and the people of the Soviet State. He also cheated the Soviet system, leading to him failing to fulfill his duty as a Soviet citizen. Instead, he lives a life where he offers little to the Soviet war effort, and as such, lives only for himself, succumbing to pleasure over duty. His dismissal of the duty to the Soviet Union and his focus on pleasure over commitment and sentiment mark him as a reflection of the aesthetic. Just like Johannes from Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*, Mark only shows interest in the pleasures of the flesh, and as such the institution of marriage holds little meaning to him, as depicted in his relationship with Veronika, as they are not on good terms naturally (Kierkegaard [1843] 1992, 284). Mark only seeks to satisfy his own desires, and as such he threatens the Soviet ethical.

Hitler is a different case from Mark and Vadim as he is not a representation of a Soviet citizen, but a German one. This distinction is not important for determining who in Soviet society goes against Soviet ideology, but it is important as the Hitler characterization does represent how the a Soviet citizen of the ethical ought not to act. Hitler as a reflection of the aesthetic displays the conduct that is uncouth for the Soviet citizen and the ethical. While Stalin reflected the ethical and committed actions that are universal in the ethical, Hitler's actions go against the ethical, and reflect the aesthetic because of the heavy focus on the self and the self's desires. Hitler's representation of the aesthetic culminates in his marriage to Eva Braun and his suicide (Chiaureli 1950). Hitler ignored the people when the Soviet's invaded Berlin, and then he took his own life, actions that directly defy the ethical by committing actions that are selfish and cannot be universalized. These actions are the epitome of Kierkegaard's aesthetic.

Vadim's reactions to Maria's determination to remain a soldier and fight for the Bolshevik ideals and his desires to go back to the way things were before the war and the Revolution denote him as a reflection of Kierkegaard's aesthetic. The aesthetic ignores the needs and the desires of the other, just as Vadim is doing to Maria. The film and the production company, Mosfilm, are trying to make a point that Vadim's point of view is erroneous. This point is seen in the climax, where Vadim is running back to his White Army comrades, causing Maria to abandon her love to commit to her duty to the ethical. The screenplay was edited numerous times, as Mosfilm found the idea of a White Army officer and a Red Army officer falling in love to be a poor idea. Filming was allowed to commence only after the ending of Maria killing Vadim had been included (Muskyi 2007, 119). The fact that Vadim's death was the factor that allowed for the filming to commence demonstrates that the character was meant to represent something that goes against the Bolshevik narrative, and by extension, Soviet Communism. Thus, the Vadim is the enemy of the ethical, that is, the aesthetic. The aesthetic of Kierkegaard does not choose, as it is driven by selfish desire, and as such remains cloaked as an individual. Vadim wants to remain an individual and not join the collective, as seen with his desire to go back to the way things were, where he could read books all day, and his desire to no longer be a soldier. This in contrast to Maria, who chooses to go back to being a soldier. She still loves Vadim, but she knows that she must go back and she wants to go back to fight for Bolshevism and the perpetual revolution (Chukhrai 1956). Maria wants to work for others and fight for a cause, whereas Vadim wants to stop fighting and wants to care about himself and his own desires. Vadim as a reflection of the aesthetic works because he himself disregards the ideas that there could be anything above his own desires, and because of this and his affiliations he is killed at the end of the film by Maria.

These characters, which are reflective of the aesthetic, act in a way that expressed the individual and the private needs and wants of the individual over those of Soviet Communism and the Collective. Mark, Hitler, and Vadim represent the ways of life and actions that cannot be universalized under Soviet Communism, as they worship the individual over the Collective, thus casting aside the duty of the Soviet citizen to uphold the ethical, that is, Soviet Communism. Mark fails to fulfill his duty to the Soviet Union by obtaining an illegal deferral and indulging in his own pleasure while hurting others, Hitler's commits the final act of selfishness in the face of adversity, ignoring his people and his duty, and Vadim thinks only of himself, denying Maria of her duty, ultimately leading her to kill him out of a sense of duty to the ethical. Here, the aesthetic is seen in these three characters as those who have devoted their time to the pleasure and enrichment of the individual over the greater good, and in turn bringing harm to others.

Chapter 6: Veronika and Maria Filatovna

So far in the analysis of characters from the films chosen for this thesis, the characters have been found to possibly reflect the ethical and the aesthetic of Kierkegaardian philosophy. The fourth chapter found reflections of the ethical in the characters of Boris, Alyosha, and Stalin, and in the fifth chapter, possible reflections of Kierkegaard's aesthetic were observed in the characters of Mark, Hitler, and Vadim. With these examples of the potential of Kierkegaardian analysis, the parts of Kierkegaard's model of faith that have been discussed so far have proven to be very possible through the films and characters in question. While the ethical and the aesthetic have already been addressed within Soviet film characters and their depictions, there are still two more parts to address: the knight of resignation and the knight of faith. Finding reflections of these two parts may prove more difficult than the ethical and the aesthetic, as both the knight of resignation and the knight of faith have very specific qualifications for existence. Whether or not these parts of Kierkegaard's model of faith can be found in Soviet characters remains to be seen, but this chapter will continue to explore the possibility through more character analysis. The character analysis continues with the study of Veronika from *The Cranes are Flying* and Maria Filatovna from *The Forty-First*.

Veronika has already been spoken about in some detail in the previous two chapters, as she was the fiancé of Boris, and the love interest and eventual wife of Mark. And while the story has been told regarding the events and actions of Boris and Mark, Veronika's story and characterization have yet to be fully explored. By covering the film's narrative again, this time though the actions and reactions of Veronika, her character will come out more so than it did in the characterizations of Boris and Mark from previous chapters. *The Cranes are Flying* presents the audience with a scene of two lovers by a river, Boris Borozdin and Veronika, portrayed by

Tatyana Samojlova, embracing. When war breaks out, Boris volunteers to go to the front, hesitating to tell Veronika this fact. As shown earlier, she discovers this fact indirectly thanks to the poor timing of Stepan, Boris's fellow worker and conscript. She immediately becomes saddened by this news. Out of selfish anger and poor communication, she does not make it in time for his going away celebration. Through the cruelty and chaos of the situation, she fails to say goodbye to Boris and give him a parcel containing food. She tosses the parcel at him, missing him completely, as the contents become waste on the ground (Kalatozov 1957).

Veronika's war life starts off horribly: her fiancé is off at war and has not sent her any letters, and her parents and her home are destroyed in an air raid. In another air raid, Mark forces himself on her, with a heavy implication of rape. As stated earlier, the shame and embarrassment of this event causes her to marry Mark, leaving Boris's family to see this as a betrayal. After these events, Veronika fails to smile or look joyful. She is unhappily married and still waiting for a letter from Boris while working for Boris's father, Fyodor Ivanovich, in a hospital caring for wounded soldiers. When she discovers that her husband had been cheating on her and was spending all of his time partying, thus offering nothing to the war effort, she contemplates killing herself. She stops herself in time to save a child named Boris, which she takes as a sign from her Boris (Youngblood 2007, 118-120). She leaves him and the family after discovering Mark's nefarious means of obtaining his deferral, taking the boy, Boris, with her. When the soldiers return home, she learns from Stepan that Boris had been killed in action. The reality of her situation, as she had been waiting for him this entire time, regardless of her betrayal, comes crashing down, as the one she waited for was not coming home. She is then encouraged to give flowers to the other returning soldiers, as that while Boris did not return, others did. As she hands

out flowers, while noticeably saddened by the loss of Boris, knowing that she would never see him again, she smiles slightly, with tears in her eyes (Kalatozov 1957).

Veronika's character seems to be an intriguing case for this analysis, and while she could be characterized as the heroine of the film, her presence and situation may call that into question, as Denise J. Youngblood explains. Youngblood states in *Russian War Films: On the Cinema Front 1914-2005*, that Veronika does not completely qualify as the heroine of the film, as she is too passive throughout the majority of the film, and is more accurately labeled a victim of the War (2007, 119). And while this may be true in this film that depicts the War from the domestic front, Veronika still presents an interesting case as a potential reflection of Kierkegaard's knight of resignation. The knight of resignation from Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* is a person that follows the first movement of faith, the movement of infinite resignation. The knight of resignation resigns everything to the wayside, caring not for the desires of the past, nor for the finitude of loved ones, thus committing the movement of resignation infinitely (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 74-75). It may be difficult to see Veronika as a reflection of the knight of resignation, as for most of the film she had stuck to her desire to hear from Boris and to be with him (Kalatozov 1957). However, to see Veronika as a reflection of the knight of resignation, her image as the knight of resignation can become clear with the help of the film's characterization of Boris's sister, Irina. Irina worked with her father, Fyodor Ivanovich, in the hospital, where she was a surgeon. In this position, she gives up her sexuality and the possibility of love for her work for the ethical, as she fulfills her duty to the Soviet war effort (Youngblood 2007, 120-22). Irina reflects the knight of resignation, as she denies herself and her desires in order to work solely for the Soviet war effort by helping wounded soldiers. She never hesitates, nor does she have regret. Ultimately, she becomes a knight of resignation through these acts. Now, for most of the film,

Veronika, unlike Irina, is not a knight of resignation. Veronika spends a majority of the film depressed and distracted with thoughts of Boris, as she has not heard from him since before he left, and she fears the worst. She is focused entirely on desire and longing. For her to become a knight of resignation, a number of events had to occur to bring her there. First is the letter that Boris had placed in the Squirrel he had given to Veronika before he left. This note, which explained his decision to go to war and expressed how deeply he cared for her, became the point of closure, as she had now heard Boris's goodbye. She was still waiting for a letter from the front, but she had closure on the departure. The second event was the child named Boris. In choosing to save him, and later adopt him, instead of jumping off a bridge, Veronika relinquishes her desires for a second and helps someone else without thoughts of Boris on her mind. In that split second, she was fulfilling her duty on the domestic front. While she may have already been fulfilling her duty at the hospital, she was not working there to her utmost. She had nowhere else to go, and so she helps out, instead of choosing to work for the Soviet war effort. The final moment that signaled Veronika's evolution into the knight of resignation was the confirmation that Boris had died from Stepan, and the symbolism of the cranes. When Veronika heard of Boris's death from Stepan, Veronika broke down, she wept, running through the crowd. Eventually, a voice over a loud speaker states that those that have died will be remembered, as will those who have returned. Moments later, cranes are seen flying overhead, which is a return to an image from the very beginning of the film. The symbolism of the cranes is up to debate, but "many Soviet critics interpret the flying cranes as a metaphor of hope and renewal" (Shrayer 1997, 427). If this interpretation is followed, then the idea of hope and renewal, which more than likely represented the hope and renewal of the Soviet Union after the war, it can also refer to the hope and renewal of Veronika. "The recurrence of the shot of the flying cranes at the very end of

the film has been explained away by several critics as a pronouncement upon Veronika's plight, something along the following lines: she made a terrible mistake, but the war itself was excruciating and that explains her betrayal; further, she paid a heavy price for her betrayal, and now that the war is over, there is a future again for her”, meaning that she need not focus her attention toward her own sadness and self-hatred, as with the end of the war comes a new beginning (Shrayer 1997, 428). By allowing herself to move on, Veronika steps into the realm of the knight of resignation, as she resigns her sorrow and agony, embracing the reality of the situation, and begins to realize her duty to the Soviet ethical by handing flowers out to the returning soldiers. These reflections of the knight of resignation in Veronika a brief, but they are there, as seen throughout the last third of the film.

Like Veronika, the story of Maria revolves around romance and love that gets lost in reality. Maria Filatovna, a Red Army sniper during the Civil War between the Whites and the Reds, is placed in charge of guarding Vadim, a captured White Army lieutenant who was smuggling correspondence for the White Army. While they are in the Karakum Desert, Maria and Vadim get rather close, as she recites some her Agitprop poetry to him one night to get his opinion, understanding that he knew literature and poetry well enough to offer an informed opinion. They also end up calling each other by nicknames, as Maria calls him “Blue Eyes”, for his blue eyes, and he calls her “Man Friday”, after a character from Robinson Crusoe (Chukhrai 1956). However, they still remained hostile and on guard in each other’s presence. They eventually get shipwrecked on an island in the Aral Sea, leaving just the two of them alive. Maria shows that she was growing closer and was beginning to care for Vadim, as she took care of him when he was suffering from a bad fever. After a while, Maria asks Vadim to tell her the origin of her nickname, and he tells her the story of Robinson Crusoe. She is enraptured by this

story, and her fascination for him grew. Eventually, they confessed their love for each other. This love affair was not smooth however, as they disagreed fundamentally on what ideology and how they wanted to live. Vadim was content to go back to the way things were before the revolution, while Maria was devoted to the revolution and the Bolshevik ideology. She argues with Vadim about her desire to continue being a soldier, leading to a silence between them. This silence appears to hurt Maria, as she breaks down and weeps on the shore. After Vadim comforts her, they make up, and all seems to be well. But moments later, they notice a boat. They work together to get its attention, and as the boat gets closer to the shore, Vadim realizes that the boat held White Army soldiers, and he begins running to them in joy. At this moment, Maria forgets about her love and remembers her duty, aiming her rifle at Vadim, yelling for him to halt. He fails to do this, leaving Maria no choice but to shoot him in the back. She kills him, making him her forty-first kill. After she realizes what she has done, she runs to his body in the sea, crying his name (Chukhrai 1957). While she did indeed love him, her character held her duty to the Red Army, and the revolution as a higher priority.

It is clear that the characters from this section are going to reflect the knight of resignation, and the characterization of Maria certainly demonstrates this phenomena. The case of Maria reflects the sacrifice that the knight of resignation makes in order to uphold the ethical. Just like the knight of resignation in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, Maria sacrifices her love for Vadim in the moment and fulfills her duty to the revolution, killing him as he runs towards his comrades (Kierkegaard [1843] 1985, 74-75). Maria is characterized throughout the film as a true revolutionary. She keeps score of her kills, letting her know her contribution to the Red Army, and she writes Agitprop poetry, which she takes great pride in. When she falls in love with Vadim, an enemy soldier, she becomes involved in something that rejects the ethical,

supporting the aesthetic desire. Even though she loves him, she never gave up her devotion and duty to the ethical. She wants to get back to the fight for the Red Army as she believes in the revolution, leading her to struggle with her love because of Vadim's desires and his denial of her duty. While this troubles her visually. She still holds on to her duty, which culminates in the climax. Maria, while fully in love with Vadim, in a gut reaction to follow the ethical, shoots him in the back, claiming her forty-first victim (Chukhrai 1956). As a reflection of the knight of resignation, Maria proves her duty to the ethical by killing her lover, ending her love, and placing her duty to the ethical above her desires to be with the one she loves.

The knight of resignation from Kierkegaardian philosophy has been seen in these two characters. Veronika develops into a character that is like the knight of resignation, letting go of her grief and shame, and fulfilling her duty to the ethical of the Soviet Union by supporting the soldiers returning from war under the hope and renewal of the cranes above. Maria determines her path as the knight of resignation, resigning her desires in order to follow the ethical, as she fulfills her duty to the ethical in the act of killing her lover, Vadim. Maria and Veronika display the traits of the knight of resignation, demonstrating the possibility of Kierkegaardian analysis in Soviet studies by using Kierkegaardian ideas to understand these characters of Soviet cinema.

Chapter 7: Alyosha Ivanov and Klim Yarko

The potential for the use of Kierkegaardian philosophy in research of the Soviet Union has been put to the test so far in the past three chapters, with the ethical reflected in Boris, Stalin, and Alyosha; the aesthetic reflected in Mark, Hitler, and Vadim; and the knight of resignation reflected in Veronika and Maria. With these examples and studies covering three of the four parts of the model of faith from *Fear and Trembling*, the only part of the model of faith that remains to be touched upon is the knight of faith. In order to find the knight of faith reflected in Soviet film, the knight of faith must be found in a character who believes that he is sacrificing everything, yet at the same time believe that that which they had sacrificed will be returned to them by that which rules over the ethical. In Kierkegaardian philosophy, this would refer to God, as seen through Abraham's belief in God returning Isaac to him while still sacrificing Isaac at the same time. God would not come into question in the Soviet Union, nor would God be featured in Soviet film in such a role, but that does not mean that something would not return that which had been resigned in order to fulfill one's duty to the ethical. This possibility will be explored in the characterizations of Alyosha Ivanov from *The Fall of Berlin* and Klim from *Tractor Drivers*.

Alyosha Ivanov is one half of the couple that makes up the romantic leads in Chiaureli's *The Fall of Berlin*. He is a steel worker who receives accommodations for his work, setting an exemplary example by breaking through his quota for production. Because of this extraordinary work and work ethic, Alyosha earns the Order of Lenin and an interview with Stalin, as well as a chance to meet his love interest, an idealistic teacher named Natasha. The two of them soon fall in love, and shortly after, the German's invade, leading to Alyosha getting knocked unconscious and slipping into a coma. When he wakes, he finds out that war has come and Natasha missing. His family tells him that Natasha was taken to by the Germans (Chiaureli 1950). Alyosha, filled

with rage, then enlists in the Red Army so he could retrieve Natasha and punish the Germans. Whenever the film decides to go back to Alyosha, Alyosha is always portrayed as an effective soldier, always charging forward, translating his exemplary work ethic to the battlefield, moving closer and closer to Berlin in an effort to find Natasha. He and his unit liberate prison camps and storm Berlin, but there was still no sign of Natasha. At the end of the film, he and his unit, along with the rest of the Red Army take Berlin, as he and the other three chosen to carry the victory banner hoist the flag atop the Reichstag. Eventually, he does find Natasha, as the two are reunited in Berlin by Stalin, as a crowd has surrounded him, thus bringing the two lovers together (Chiaureli 1950).

Alyosha, at the end of the day, accomplished the double movement, and as such, he is reflecting the knight of faith. In order to understand how Alyosha reflects the knight of faith, he must be understood from both the first movement and also the second. His actions throughout the film mirror the first movement, as he proves his worth and fulfills his duty to the Soviet Union. He only knows how to be a good Soviet: he overproduces, he has no taste for classical music, he only recognizes Soviet poetry, and he holds the Soviet Union and Stalin in the highest regard (Youngblood 2007, 98). He fulfills his duty to the ethical by working harder and producing more than any other, and while when he goes off to war he leaves his important work as the steel worker behind, he takes it upon himself to claim that his duty to the Soviet Union, and to Natasha, was to kill Germans (98). While his initial motivation was one of desire and emotion, that of the aesthetic, he fought to avenge her by fighting for the Soviet Union, helping them to defeat the Germans. This goal maintains his duty to the ethical, as he knows not what has happened to Natasha, she was either alive or dead. Whether or not he would have gone to war without this motivation, it is unknown, but Alyosha's persistence to do his fighting part in the

war effort demonstrates that he is willing to fight for the ethical of the Soviet Union, using his feelings for Natasha to help launch him full force in the Soviet war effort. As a knight of resignation, he resigned his thoughts and used them to fulfill his duty, seeking to avenge her and the Soviet Union.

Now in terms of the second movement, this requires that he believes he will get Natasha back somehow, through the strength of the absurd, which would be the belief in some sort of higher power. While the belief in God, as it would be for Kierkegaard, is absent in this film, as in many other Soviet films, an argument can be made that there existed a higher power in *The Fall of Berlin*, from which Natasha would be returned. This higher power in *The Fall of Berlin* would be Stalin himself. Stalin was spoken about earlier as a reflection of the ethical, but in reality his characterization in the film goes beyond that, as he takes on a Christ-like persona. Edvard Radzinsky, a Soviet playwright, wrote in his book *Stalin*, that films such as *The Fall of Berlin* are designed to portray Stalin as a Christ figure, with the film describing him as being everywhere and perfect, displaying almost a deification at the end of the film “with an apotheosis: Stalin arrives by plane... In the white attire of an angel descending from the clouds” and later when all of the people in Berlin gather around him, like Christ’s sermon on the mount, he “reveals himself to the expectant humans” as they “glorify the Messiah in all tongues” (Radzinsky 1996, 536). This glorification was also done earlier in the film, as a character tells Alyosha that “Stalin is always with us” and in her speech congratulating Alyosha for the Order of Lenin, she states “Long live Stalin, who has given us such a happy life” (Chiaureli 1950; Youngblood 2007, 98). With Stalin representing a Christ-like figure, the ending of the film truly mirrors the knight of faith, and while Alyosha may have given up hope of finding Natasha, he still believed, as did all Soviet citizens, that Stalin would persevere and the Soviet Union would be victorious. Even so,

Alyosha and Natasha meet each other again in the crowd, and they were brought together by their faith in Stalin, and he delivered. If Stalin had not arrived in Berlin in the film, it is likely that Natasha and Alyosha would not have found each other. It is Stalin who brings them back together, and it is through the strength of this absurd moment that Alyosha is a knight of faith. Not only did he believe that he may never see Natasha again, he believed in Stalin, to which Stalin seemingly replied in kind by reuniting him with Natasha, giving back to him what he had lost to fulfill his duty to the Soviet Union. In this case, Alyosha becomes reflective of Abraham, as well as the knight of faith. It is because Alyosha believed in Stalin that he was able to overcome the resignation of his hope in finding Natasha, reuniting him with her, and overcoming the boundaries of the ethical, thanks to the Christ-like Stalin.

The final character in this thesis is Klim from Pyryev's *Tractor Drivers*. Klim is a former tank driver travelling to Ukraine to work on a collective farm as a mechanic in order to meet Maryana Bazhan, a famous tractor driver in her particular farm, as she is able to meet and surpass her quotas with ease. Klim is fascinated with her because of this, and seeks her out. When they eventually meet, he is charmed by her, and find himself in love with her. Soon enough, he gets set up as the foreman of a group of tractor drivers, including Nazar Duma. When Klim finds out that Nazar and Maryana are engaged to be married, he is left heartbroken, and decides to leave the farm, declining the job as foreman (Pyryev 1939). Issues arise on the farm, leading Klim to make the decision to forget his feelings and heartache and return. Now fully the foreman, he whips Nazar and the rest of his crew into shape, teaching them how to be more productive workers and how to surpass their quotas and limits in production. He succeeds in this endeavor, and Nazar becomes a true man in the eyes of the heads of the collective farm. Maryana confronts Klim, and after some terse, tense moments, she thanks him for making Nazar into a

many worthy of marriage. At that moment, they both confess that each was truly in love with the other, and the whole engagement to Nazar was a ploy to keep men away from approaching Maryana for marriage. In the end, Maryana and Klim are happily married, as all on the collective farm are present and celebrating joyfully, even Nazar (Pyryev 1939). While Klim hid his feelings for Maryana after finding out about her engagement, Klim's conscious and sense of duty brought him back, and with that he was rewarded with the fulfillment of his love for Maryana.

Much like the situation with Alyosha, Klim demonstrates traits and actions that mirror that of Kierkegaard's knight of faith. While Klim is indeed in love with Maryana, once he finds out that she is engaged to Nazar, he decides to leave, as he cannot stand being in the same place where his love would remain unrequited. However, he is able to resign these feelings and fulfill his duty to the ethical by becoming the foreman of the collective farm and inspiring his men to go produce beyond their perceived limits. It is clear from this understanding that Klim was able to complete the first movement of the double movement, as he resigns his feelings for Maryana so that he could help the collective farm increase productivity for the Soviet Union. So here we see Klim reflecting the first movement that would place him as a knight of resignation. Were the film to not to have the romantic plot line or to have ended with Maryana marrying Naza then Klim would have remained a knight of resignation. Yet, the film does have a romantic plot line, and Maryana does not marry Nazar. Instead, she marries Klim. The film allows Klim to fulfill his love for Maryana, almost as a reward for his faith in the ethical. Here Klim reflects the knight of faith (Pyryev 1939). The knight of faith believes that while is resigning everything for the ethical, he is also believing that through the strength of the absurd that all that has been resigned will be fulfilled by God. Again, God does not play a part in Soviet society and this film, but in terms of the second movement, Klim is rewarded for his belief in the work that he was

doing for the collective farm. Klim wins Maryana in the end, and no one rejects this idea, even though some believed that she was Nazar's fiancée. As a knight of faith, his love is returned to him by the system that for which he resigned his feelings for Maryana to fulfill a duty to the ethical. In this way, Kierkegaard's knight of faith is very much reflected in the characterization of Klim.

Finding that there are potential reflections of the knight of faith from *Fear and Trembling* in some of the characters from Soviet film completes the usage of the model of faith as a tool for understanding and interpreting these characters, as well as what these characters symbolize in their respective films. Both Alyosha Ivanov and Klim make sacrifices regarding love in their films, only for that love to be returned to them by higher powers, as Alyosha is reunited with Natasha, thanks to Stalin, and Klim marries Maryana thanks to his duty to the ethical and the collective farm. The films' endings do not lessen the impact of their resignation, they reward their loyalty to and faith in the Soviet Union and Soviet Communism. Both characters symbolize the rewards of working beyond one's own limits for the ethical, as that work and faith are rewarded with their greatest desires, the love that they had resigned. As seen in the ethical, it is the Soviet Union and those representing Soviet Communism that grant this reward to Alyosha and Klim, demonstrating that one will be rewarded for committing oneself to the fulfillment of the duty to the ethical. By reflecting the knight of faith, Alyosha and Klim can be understood in the Kierkegaardian context, and vice versa, as Kierkegaard can then be understood in a Soviet context.

Conclusion

Over the course of this thesis, the goal has been to display the potential use of Kierkegaardian philosophy as a tool of analysis in the academic realm of Soviet studies. While there may not be a connection between Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union on first, or even second glance, the development of the connection between Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union and the demonstration of the potential uses of Kierkegaardian philosophy in Soviet studies. The thesis, in an attempt to show this potential for Kierkegaardian philosophy, is laid out in two distinct parts that display this attempt of reaching the ultimate goal of the work. The first part of the thesis, which consisted of the first three chapters, aimed at drawing connections and understandings of Kierkegaard and the relationship between Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union. These first three chapters attempted this in order to validate the potential use of Kierkegaard in Soviet studies by linking him with Communism. The final four chapters make up the second part of the thesis. These final four chapters represent the demonstration of the potential of Kierkegaardian analysis in the Soviet context through the character studies of numerous characters from Soviet film. Together, these chapters set up the potential of Kierkegaardian analysis as well as demonstrate it in action.

The first part of the thesis builds up the connections between the Soviet Union and Kierkegaard, ultimately bringing both to a level field where the connections can make sense, and thus lead to the possibility of future analysis and research of the Soviet Union from a Kierkegaardian angle. The first chapter takes a concrete example of Kierkegaardian philosophy, the model of faith from *Fear and Trembling*, and breaks it down into its key components of the ethical, the aesthetic, the knight of resignation, and the knight of faith. By separating the parts of the model, Kierkegaardian philosophy can be explained in a simpler way while providing a clear

distinction between the various parts. Thus, with the various parts outlined separately, they become concise ideas that could be used later in the analysis demonstration in the second part. The second chapter develops the connection between Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union through a historical sense. By presenting Kierkegaardian philosophy and its historical relationship with the Soviet Union and specific Russian and Soviet groups like the *Vekhi*, the physical connection is found between Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union, allowing for the third chapter's analysis of the philosophical connection between Kierkegaard and the Soviet Union. The problem presented here is a theological one, as Soviet Communism was atheistic, and Kierkegaardian philosophy was Christian. By displaying the existence of an interpretation of Soviet Communism as religion through the work of Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, Soviet Communism and Kierkegaardian philosophy meet together at the philosophical and the theological level. Thus, defining the parameters and connections that may allow for Kierkegaardian analysis in studies of the Soviet Union.

The second part of the thesis set up the demonstration of the potential of Kierkegaardian philosophy in Soviet studies. With these last four chapters, the analysis of film characters as reflections of the parts of the model of faith from the first chapter aimed to demonstrate this potential. The ethical is seen in the characters of Boris from *The Cranes are Flying*, Stalin from *The Fall of Berlin*, and Alyosha from *Ballad of a Soldier*, as each of the characters represents how a Soviet citizen ought to act in fulfilling their duty to Soviet Communism. The aesthetic is reflected in the characterizations of Mark from *The Cranes are Flying*, Hitler from *The Fall of Berlin*, and Vadim from *The Forty-First*, demonstrating the evils and the weaknesses of the individual. Veronika from *The Cranes are Flying* and Maria from *The Forty-First* seem to be reflections of the knight of resignation, as they resign their love for another to fulfill their duty to the ethical. And in the final chapter, the knight of faith is explored in the characterization of

Alyosha Ivanov from *The Fall of Berlin* and Klim from *Tractor Drivers*, with both characters representing the rewards of devotion and faith in the Soviet Union, displaying that the sacrifices made for the ethical are repaid in tenfold to those with faith. This demonstration of the potential of Kierkegaardian analysis in Soviet studies is a small example, but these final chapters provide the some of the first uses of Kierkegaardian concepts in the study of the Soviet Union, displaying how Soviet studies might use Kierkegaardian philosophy as a tool of understanding and analysis.

This work opens up the possibilities of further analysis of the Soviet Union through a philosophy that is different from many of those before it. With this demonstration of the potential of Kierkegaardian analysis, the continuation of the study of Kierkegaardian themes in the Soviet Union can expand the use of Kierkegaard beyond the areas of study that have used Kierkegaard previously, as seen through the documentation of researchers such as Nagy, Mlikotin, and Makolkin, opening up the potential use of Kierkegaard to others, such as the works of Robert L. Perkins, writer of *Why Kierkegaard Matters*, which explores modern avenues of thought regarding Kierkegaard's philosophy. This thesis works to bridge the gap between the current studies and research surrounding the Soviet Union and the existential philosophical study of Kierkegaardian existential and religious theory, researching the potential of possible future collaborations. Through nontraditional demonstrations such as this, new life can be brought into the Soviet studies, and introduce new researchers to the other possibilities of research of the Soviet Union and understandings of Soviet reality under Communism.

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