A cinema of one's own

Building/reconstructing Siberian indigenous peoples' identity in recent cinema: examples from Sakha (Yakutia) Republic and the Republic of Khakassia

Caroline Damiens

This paper discusses indigenous cinema from Siberia and how this media is being used by Siberian minorities as a means to (re)build national identity following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Indeed, in recent years films made by and for indigenous peoples have flourished on the other side of the Urals. Coming from regions as diverse as the Tuva Republic (Antuf'eva 2012) and Buryatia (Shagdarova 2011) as well as the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic (Anashkin 2006; Vanina 2012) and the Republic of Khakassia (Galetski 2008), these films are very often low-budget, practically amateur video productions, that have nevertheless found their way to enthusiastic audiences. One short film even made it to the world-famous Cannes Film Festival (Beloborodov 2012). This phenomenon is linked to goings-on elsewhere in the post-Soviet space where recently independent states have used cinema to reconceptualize their new national identities. Numerous studies have examined post-Soviet cinema in these terms, analyzing in particular how it engages in the creation of new heroes (Beumers 1999; Larsen 2003) and new myths (Abikeeva 2003) or, more recently, using a postcolonial approach to explore it (Abikeeva 2006; Kristensen, Mazierska and Näripea 2014). This article focuses on films from the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic and the Republic of Khakassia. Both republics are federal subjects of the Russian Federation and are located respectively in the Far East and the South of Siberia. They bear the name of the first nations that originally occupied—and still occupy—these lands: the Sakhas (also known as the Yakuts or Yakutians in Russian) and the Khakas, both of which are Turkic speaking

DOI: 10.2390/indi-v4-i1-87 ISSN 2191-6721

ethnic groups. Since *glasnost* in the 1980s, Sakhas and Khakas, along with other Siberian minorities, have experienced an ethnicity-based cultural revival (Le Berre-Semenov 2003; Nevolko 2011; Nyssen 2005) that became especially intense during the years just after the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. In the cinematic field, however, this process has evidently extended into the first decades of the twenty-first century.

This paper asks what role cinema has played in this revitalization process. To explore the question, it is focused on feature films inasmuch as they are the ones most acclaimed by audiences and most likely to be released in theaters, sold on DVD, or informally exchanged in digital format. First I will examine why and how Khakas and Sakha filmmakers consider cinema to be a good vehicle for reinforcing identity. This part will be based largely on interviews conducted on-line during the summer of 2012 and on-site in Yakutsk in August and September 2012. Further, by investigating the content of Siberian indigenous cinema, I will show how, in both Yakutia and Khakasia, filmmakers are rethinking the supranational (Russo-Soviet) narrative, re-imagining geography and trying to reconnect with their own past. Finally, I will highlight the differences between Khakas and Sakha cinema by showing how these national[1] film productions can express a strong or a weak feeling of identity.

A brief history of Sakha and Khakas feature films

The first Sakha and Khakas features appeared quite recently on Siberian screens (*Middle World* in 1993[2] and *Land of Our Fathers* in 2008 respectively), in both cases after the Soviet Union ceased to exist. These initiatives were carried out by two studios with similar names: Sakhafilm and Khakasfilm. The former was created as a national film company sup-

1 My use of the term »national« follows its Russian usage, which is closer in meaning to »ethnic,« but reflects the Russo-Soviet custom of distinguishing between nationality (ethnicity) and citizenship.

2 The very first Sakha film, *Maapa*, was actually made in 1986: it is a short graduation film by Sakha director Aleksei Romanov.

ported by rather meager governmental funds from the Sakha Republic. Khakasfilm, despite having been launched by »enthusiasts,« is likewise dependent on state subsidies for successfully completing its productions. While Khakas national cinema is still in its infancy, as audiences await the next national feature film and have only a few documentaries to watch in the meantime (Khakasfilm has produced 11 films since 2003), Yakutian[3] cinema underwent a »boom« in 2002 with the commercial success of *Black Mask*, and that has since encouraged the creation of many other film companies and the acceleration of film production. If we refer only to the Sakhafilm catalog, we can observe that between 1993 and 2001 only nine fiction films were produced, while in the next decade (2002–2012) the figure jumped to 25.[4] Following this success, a second major national film company was born, Almazfilm, which has since proven to be the most profitable and successful commercial attempt at a national cinema in the region, to such an extent that the director of the Yakutian box-office hit *Path of Death*, Anatoli Sergeyev, has spoken of it as a »revolution«: there's money to be made in indigenous films (Yakimenko 2008, 49). At present, Yakutian film production is extremely diverse, boasting a range of genres, from comedy and horror to art house and drama. In 2011, 17 locally produced films were released in Yakutia (Vanina 2012), whereas only two appeared in Khakassia (Kurochka, pers. comm.).[5]

Identity strengthening through film

Cinema is seen by many as a strong means for promoting national culture. From the late 1980s onward, the concept of a national cinema has been examined in a wide range of scholarship (Hjort and MacKenzie 2000; Vitali and Willemen 2006). In many cases, these scholars apply the

3 I will use the term »Yakutian« with reference to the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, all nationalities represented and »Sakha« with reference to Sakha nationality (etnicity).

4 For the same periods, seven documentaries were made before 2002 and 51 after.

5 Yuri Kurochka, online-interview by the author, August 4, 2012.

modernist approach (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) which claims that nation and national identities are constructions and the product of modernity. Anderson's concept of »imagined communities« has been particularly popular as it »can be usefully extended from print to cinematic cultures« (Hjort and MacKenzie 2000, 2). Nevertheless, it has been noted that this concept cannot fully »do justice to the internal diversity of contemporary cultural formations« and that »the contingent communities that cinema imagines are much more likely to be either local or transnational than national« (Higson 2000, 70, 73). This perhaps explains the emergence of these regional cinemas.

For Sakha filmmakers, film possesses a »simple language, more accessible and more popular than theater« (Arzhakov, pers. comm.).[6] It is additionally more economical because once the film is done, it can be sent to the other end of the world on a DVD, which is a simple and effective way to »transmit to the world one's own culture, traditions and view« (Romanov, pers. comm.).[7] Furthermore, it is also seen as a means for preserving the endangered culture of a minority (Kurochka, pers. comm.). It is in this vein that the Sakha Republic's president wrote the decree establishing Sakhafilm in 1992. According to the national film company's statutes, its aim is to make films »for developing and preserving the traditional cultures of the native inhabitants of Yakutia [the Sakha Republic], promoting those cultures through film and video« (Sivtsev 2005, 117). In a strategy typical of nation building, promoting cultures often means reinterpreting tradition, even inventing it (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), and the visual medium is expected to participate fully in this process.

The promotion of national culture through cinema often starts with the production company's name and logo, i.e. even before the production of films. Sakhafilm and Khakasfilm both obviously bear the name of the nationality they promote. Other film companies are also clearly desig-

6 Nikita Arzhakov, interview by the author, August 28, 2012, Yakutsk.

7 Alexei Romanov, interview by the author, August 30, 2012, Yakutsk.

nated with markers of national identity: the name Almazfilm refers to the main source of wealth for the Sakha Republic: diamonds (*almaz* means »diamond« in Russian); Tuymafilm refers to the Tuyma River in Yakutia, birthplace of the company's founder (Evseyeva and Nikonova 2008, 73). Firm logos play the same role. Sakhafilm's emblem is the typical Sakha oval shamanic drum; Khakasfilm uses the megalith, a Khakas national symbol. Even the Yakutian companies Detsat and 20:06 Pictures, which have »neutral« names, use animation showing the well-known Sakha mural paintings, which have become well-established national symbols since the republic gained sovereignty in 1990. It must be noted that all of these logos are inspired by ancient indigenous art from the pre-contact past.

Apart from logos, films often exhibit many other identity markers. The first national element that attracts attention is language. It is seen by outsiders as denoting the absolute originality of Sakha cinema, its very quintessence (Anashkin 2006, 85). For insiders, it is an essential trait, the most important bearer of culture. The Sakha language has been classified as »vulnerable« by Unesco: most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (Moseley 2010). Russian being neither the filmmakers' first language, nor that of the viewers, Sakha cinema has an »internal« market as its first target (Ivanov and Kirillim, pers. comm.).[8] Some filmmakers argue that it is a way to better understand what is being said, especially when it comes to humor, which proves to be quite untranslatable (Shchadrin, pers. comm.).[9] Sakha-language films are also wielded like a defensive weapon against invasive Russian language. »Everything is in Russian […] Many started to think: what's the use of Sakha language? I started to film in Sakha to ›counter‹ this feeling,« explains producer Alexander Danilov. »I want people to be proud of their language« (Danilov, pers. comm.).[10] For Khakas filmmakers, it is even more essential. The Khakas language has been largely abandoned

8 Nyurgun Ivanov and Anatoli Kirillim, interview by the author, September 3, 2012, Yakutsk.

9 Dmitri Shchadrin, interview by the author, September 10, 2012, Yakutsk.

10 Alexander Danilov, interview by the author, September 6, 2012, Yakutsk.

for the benefits of Russian. According to Unesco, the language is classified as »definitely endangered«: children no longer learn the language as a mother tongue in the home (Moseley 2010). Filming in their own language gives Khakas directors the feeling of participating in the preservation and revitalization of Khakas (Galetskaya, pers. comm.; Kanadakova, pers. comm.).[11] However, this concern for national languages can be found in other sites of the post-Soviet space, where language is not particularly at risk, such as Ukraine (Hosejko 2001, 371). It can thus be understood as a reaction against the dominance of Russian, a way to denote one's specificity.

Cinema also permits the display of culture-bearing items such as traditional objects, costumes, or musical instruments. Many films incorporate insistent shots of traditional tools and gestures (*Middle World*, *Land of Our Fathers*, *The Moth*), show traditional sports or dances (*Black Mask*), or integrate shamanic artifacts (*Path of Death*, *Path of Death 2: Expiation*) or the traditional Sakha tent (*Cranes over Ilmen Lake*); musical instruments are displayed (the Sakha khomus in *Sakha Sniper* and the Khakas chatxan in *Land of Our Fathers*) or played on the soundtrack (*My Love*, *The Free Warriors*); and national costumes are worn (*Middle World*, *Land of Our Fathers*, *Maapa*, *The Free Warriors*). All these items and gestures are put forward to reaffirm »the value of the things that surround [indigenous people] and that can serve as one of the factors for ethnic identification« (Nevolko 2011, 1122). These Siberian films are comparable with Central Asian films from the 1960s. Gul'nara Abikeeva notes that films made by Central Asian directors during the Thaw period showed a similar tendency to display a traditional way of life (Abikeeva 2006, 52). This concern for verisimilitude is a distinctive trait of national drama and cultivates an »ethnic atmosphere« (Smith 2000, 50). While acknowledging Hobsbawm's famous concept of »invented traditions« (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), Smith argues that the rediscovery and authentication of »pre-existing myths, symbols, values, memories and traditions of ›the

11 Nonna Galetskaya, online-interview by the author, July 22, 2012; Marina Kanadakova, online-interview by the author, August 5, 2012.

people« serves to »locate the ›old-new‹ nation […] within its evolutionary ethnic framework« (Smith 2000, 48).

But the main »item« displayed in film is of course people themselves. The list of Soviet fiction films depicting Siberian indigenous peoples is not very long. The Sakha and Khakas peoples were rather seldom represented on the Soviet screen. According to the *Catalogue of films on Yakutia*, until 1976 there existed only ten full-length fiction films presenting Sakha characters (and even then, some of these appeared only for a few minutes in supporting roles, in *The Long Way*, for example) (Savvinov 1976). Two more films from the 1980s can be added to this list.[12] As for the Kakhas, no inventory has been made so far. But more importantly, Siberian indigenous people are now calling for self-representations, images of and by themselves, not those constructed by outsiders. In the Soviet context, the national cultures of the USSR had had to perform a delicate balancing act between socialist and traditional values in accordance with the slogan »national by form, socialist by content,« which ultimately led to mere folklorization. In order to create a new image of themselves, indigenous peoples first needed to rediscover who they were and reinvent their identity. National film production started at a time, the 1990s, when the former Soviet Union was being shaken with national revivals. Influenced by other nationalities, the recent film school graduate Aleksei Romanov began questioning his own Sakha identity. »I am Sakha. What is special about me in terms of ethnicity? … What distinguishes me from a Mongol or a Tuvan? Based on this, I started a film« (Romanov, pers. comm.). In light of the post-Soviet context, this statement reflects the search for a cultural specificity that needs to be reshaped in the reconfiguration of the region (Maj 2009, 69). In terms of globalization, it can be read as a new emphasis on the local. Indeed, Sakha people and Sakha culture are the focus of Romanov's film *Middle World*. The film eschews the typical storyline in favor of presenting all sides of the life of a people (birth, marriage, etc.) in an almost encyclopedic way, as a first attempt at self-representation.

12 *Urgent… Secret… Gubcheka* (1982) and *Semyon Dezhnyov* (1983).

More informally, people are often happy to see themselves existing on screen. »It was nice to see so many familiar faces,« expresses a viewer of *Land of Our Fathers* on a local Khakas Internet forum (Forum Khakasskogo Naroda 2008). According to some, it may even explain the local box-office success of Sakha cinema (Ivanov and Kirillim, pers. comm.). Film works like a vehicle that confirms the very existence of a people. Hence, the return of a feeling of pride and self-esteem at seeing one's own traditions and language being shown in a film alongside blockbusters originating from powerful and confident cultures such as the American, Russian, or French ones. Khakas filmmaker Marina Kanadakova says she chose to film the biopic of Khakas scientist Nikolai Katanov, *Destiny of an Alien*,[13] to encourage Khakas national pride (Kanadakova, pers. comm.). Sakha film producer Alexander Danilov compares his task with Hollywood's effort to promote patriotism (Kolbasina 2008a, 7). Journalist Marina Kolbasina is not afraid to speak of the »civic duty to make films about the best persons of our republic […] they allow us to be even more proud of our native republic« (Kolbasina 2008b, 44). All these assertions point to the increasing valuation of the local and the »familiar« in a more and more globalized and homogenized world.

Rethinking the supranational (Russo-Soviet) narrative

The Sakha and Khakas peoples want to exist on screen as well as in history. Their films often provide an alternate vision of the Russo-Soviet narrative. They demonstrate a desire to be fully integrated in this supranational narrative. By choosing Nikolai Katanov, a great man of Khakas history, Marina Kanadakova shows in *Destiny of an Alien* that indigenous people played a full part in the scientific history the of Russian Empire and in global history: »Thanks to people like Katanov,

13 *Destiny of an Alien* is actually half-documentary (interviews with academics), half-fiction (performed by actors). I chose to include it there as another Khakas feature in the corpus after Kanadakova explained her decision to incorporate fictional elements in it; she found documentary insufficient for expressing everything she wanted to say (Kanadakova, pers. comm.).

our people has a future and its full place in the sphere of world history« (Kanadakova, pers. comm.).

Many films, in particular Sakhafilm productions, express a desire to integrate Yakutians in recent Soviet history and emphasize their role in it. It is particularly striking in films commemorating important historical events such as Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War.[14] Both *Cranes over Ilmen Lake* and *Sakha Sniper* were commissioned by the Sakha Republic's president and government in honor, respectively, of the 60th and 65th anniversaries of the event. Both films emphasize the suffering endured by Yakutians, whether on the front lines or on the home front. By doing so, Sakha filmmakers and their official sponsors call for full acknowledgement of the Yakutian role in this victory. Their fiction films are augmented by the impressive figures of Yakutian snipers, victims of war, or decorated soldiers in the opening or closing credits. *Black Mask*, also a commissioned film, was made to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Russian police. The action takes place in Soviet times, just after the victory (which provides another opportunity to hear the names of many dead Yakutian heroes). The main character of the film is a Sakha police officer who manages to arrest a criminal gang terrorizing the whole Soviet Union. Here again, the closing credits inform the viewers that the film is based on a true story and provide a short biography of this everyday hero.

This emphasis on real events and the very fact that these films were made in conjunction with supranational commemorations is a way to bring to light new historical sources. Film is used to revise history. In this regard broad distribution beyond the borders of the Sakha Republic is vital. *Cranes over Ilmen Lake* was broadcasted on the all-Russian TV channel Kul'tura on February 4, 2008, marking a first for Sakha cinema.

This concern with revisiting history is common to many post-Soviet cinemas, particularly in reexamining the Soviet period (Abikeeva 2003; Balčus 2012; Beumers 2012; Laaniste 2010). In the newly independent

14 The Second World War.

states films tend to rewrite the Soviet or pre-Soviet past through a »national perception of the world« (Abikeeva 2003) or to establish a »»right way‹ of remembering historic events« (Laaniste 2010). In the case of Siberian indigenous peoples who remain part of the Russian Federation, however, such films express a desire for inclusion in Soviet and pre-Soviet history.

In revising history, these films also counter outsiders' stereotypes. One stereotype is the absence of native Siberians on Siberian land. Indeed, in films like *Siberiade* or *Farewell*—to refer only to milestones of Soviet cinema—Siberia is shown empty of indigenous people. This absence is reversed in some indigenous films where instead it is the Russians who are missing. *Run*, for instance, portrays the city of Yakutsk with no Russian inhabitants: all the characters are Sakha, speak Sakha. The entire environment is Russian-free: Sakha features on TV as well as in the background music. Films by Vyacheslav Semyonov, for example *The Moth*, also depict a life without Russians, although the action takes place in the Soviet context of a kolkhoz. In indigenous cinema, the absent figure has changed nationality.

In Russo-Soviet cinema, when Siberian peoples are represented, it is always by and for outsiders and in a stereotypical way. However, unlike Hollywood westerns where indigenous people were more often than not depicted as a brutal and fierce enemy, in Soviet movies, they were not rivals but peoples to be freed and enlightened by socialist progress. Some current indigenous filmmakers are very critical of what they perceive as a misrepresentation. For example, director Nonna Galetskaya, without naming any particular film, states: »We were then shown as uneducated savages, although we have our own ancestral culture with its own writing system,« (Galetskaya, pers. comm.). Most of the time, they criticize the lack of »soul« and the fact that they are represented as generic »peoples of the North« (Timofeyev, pers. comm.),[15] a statement that can be linked

15 Konstantin Timofeyev, interview by the author, September 8, 2012, Yakutsk. It must be noted that there are others who think differently and fondly remember the few films where indigenous peoples appear; and

to the habit of giving Siberian roles to actors originating from Central Asia in Russo-Soviet films.

Another stereotype that has been particularly robust in Soviet filmography is the advanced ethnic Russian, most of the time a Bolshevik, who saves the Siberian native from his own backwardness and integrates him or her into the dominant—predominantly ethnic Russian—society, as occurs in the Stalin-era film *The Romantics*. In recent Sakha and Khakas cinema, this process is reversed. In *Cranes over Ilmen Lake* and *Sakha Sniper* it is native Siberians who save the Russians (and the whole Soviet Union) by playing a decisive role in World War II. In *Black Mask* they save the Soviet Union from a terrorizing gang. In *Land of Our Fathers* Khakas adopt blond Russian orphans, assimilating them into their society.

Re-imagining geography

In addition to revising history, Siberian indigenous cinema serves as a tool for re-imagining geography. Closely linked to the cultivation of an »ethnic atmosphere« is the creation of an »ethnoscape« figuring the ancestral »homeland,« a landscape that mirrors the ethnic community by historicizing the territory through particular historical events or relics and monuments. More poetic than strictly factual, their authenticity is mainly »emotional and moral« (Smith 2000, 55). As well as other identity markers, films display locations that translate ethnicity, sometimes insistently like the long and numerous shots of the Lena River pillars in *Cranes over Lake Ilmen*. This spectacular rock formation has turned into a Sakha Republic national symbol and is used in the film to represent the fatherland that Sakha soldiers are leaving in order to join the front. Playing the same role, megalithic architecture is used in *Land of Our Fathers* both as a national marker and as the mythological place where the future mother of the Khakas people takes refuge when she is exiled. Focusing on this burial architecture allows for identification with a buried past through its

some are convinced that a national (Sakha) cinema would have emerged sooner or later, had the Soviet Union lived longer.

most visible symbols and makes it possible to »recover […] the submerged landscape of a pre-Soviet and pre-Russian collectivity« (Anderson 1998, 64).

More casually, many well-known places in the city of Yakutsk are used as a set for contemporary Sakha teenage films (*Looking for Joy*, *Run*, *Debt*): the Main Street, The National Sakha Theatre, The Opera and Ballet Theatre, the War memorial, etc. Beyond that, these films offer an alternate vision of the republic's capital city. Usually mentioned in outsiders media as the coldest city in the world (with temperatures dropping to -50° C in the winter), in Sakha teenage movies Yakutsk is a sunny and trendy place where one can go shopping in the most fashionable boutiques, stay at five-star hotels, or go out to exclusive nightclubs and restaurants where pop stars are putting on a show. Judging from the beach location where the heroes of *Looking for Joy* are flirting with girls, Yakutsk looks more like Los Angeles or Miami than North Siberia! In these films, the Sakha Republic's capital city is a center where anyone can become a VIP. The films show tourists from surrounding villages and towns visiting and taking souvenir pictures of Yakutsk's memorable sites. In short, no need to go to Moscow in order to live a glamorous life or go sightseeing; Yakutsk is the place to be. Making their capital city an attractive destination is a way to reassert the value of their own geographic location. In doing so, these films shift the center eastward. This reconfiguration of the relationship of center to periphery at the Federation level must be correlated with the successful development of the Neo-Eurasianist political tendency in the Sakha Republic. Emerging after 1991 in an effort to reshape a national identity on the ruins of the Soviet Union, Neo-Eurasianism emphasized Russia's geographical position as a link between Asia and Europe. This special location, at the crossroads of civilizations, gives Russia a particular messianic role to play in the post-Cold War era, no longer at the periphery of Europe, but at the same time culturally closer to Asia. Although its political ramifications are diverse and sometimes contradictory, Neo-Eurasianist discourse rehabilitates national and religious diversity within the Russian Federation, fully acknowledging its Muslim and Turkic components (Laruelle 2007b).

Consequently, Neo-Eurasianist ideas have developed in ethnically non-Russian regions such as the Tuva Republic, Buryatia, and the Sakha Republic, in all of which the argument of being at the crossroads of the Eurasian space is reinterpreted (Laruelle 2007b, 201). In the Sakha case, renegotiating the rhetoric of center vs. periphery has augmented the desire to associate more closely with Central Asian Turkic peoples and allowed both for an increase in distance from Moscow and emphasis on a regional hegemonic role (Laruelle 2007b, 203; Maj 2009).

This center shown in these films radiates out to the borders of the republic while the rest of the Russian Federation is notably absent. As I mentioned earlier, some films simply »erased« the Russian side of Yakutia (*Run*, *The Moth*, *The Free Warriors*) by not showing it. Life can go on without Russians. The geography imagined by these films turns its back on Russia (and Europe) and looks entirely towards Asia. The young heroes of *Run* escape the Yakutsk mafia for a sunny paradise located in China. Sakha horror films take Japanese horror as a model and a point of comparison (Maksimov and Schastlivaya 2012; Yakimenko 2008, 47).[16] Almazfilm's latest project is the dubbing of Chinese films into the Sakha language. When asked why they've chosen Chinese and not Russian (or Euro-American) films, producer Alexander Danilov explains that

> The Chinese look like the Sakha, they have Asian faces […] When a Russian or a French person speaks Sakha, it is hard to believe […] We are used to the fact that foreigners speak Russian […] If a Kazakh, Chinese person, or a Buryat speak Sakha, it is ok, I think (Danilov, pers. comm.).

Once again, this statement echoes some new trends of Neo-Eurasianist thought: that Turkic populations represent a chance for the Russian Federation because they embody a »fusion« with the »Confuciano-Buddhist axis,« and are attractive because of their extreme dynamism and economic success (Laruelle 2007a, 92).

16 It must be noted that horror is a genre almost absent from Russo-Soviet cinema.

By the Will of Genghis Khan, the first Yakutian super production,[17] directed by the current Minister of Culture himself, Andrei Borisov, is a biopic of the Mongol conqueror. Borisov, a dedicated Eurasiasnist (Laruelle 2007b, 201; Chusovskaya and Krasil'nikova 2009, 22), explains that Genghis Khan and the philosophy associated with him is a legacy of all Asian peoples. The film »reveals those deep strata of history when all Asians were initially united« (Chusovskaya and Krasil'nikova 2009, 23). This is the reason why the cast comprises representatives of so many Asian nationalities: Tuvan, Buryat, Sakha, Mongolian, Altaic, Khakas, Bashkir, Japanese, and Chinese, along with Russian and American. According to the producer, the film promotes Tengrism, which used to be the religion of ancient Turks and Mongols (Ivanov, pers. comm.).[18] Some have even perceived the film as a Tengrist symbolism manual, seeing it as a kind of Turko-Mongol *Da Vinci Code* (Fedorova 2009, 28). In short, *By the Will of Genghis Khan* clearly posits Sakha people and culture in the Asian sphere. By employing Tengrism, understood as a return to the origins, it serves the purpose of uniting Turkic peoples in a Neo-Eurasianist vision (Maj 2009, 79–80).

Reconnecting with the past

As noted earlier, films are used to question one's own identity. In this process, digging into the past is a way to reconnect with native traditions that had been interrupted by the Soviet period. *Middle World*, the first Sakha feature film, is clearly a search for a lost purity. It narrates the life and death of a typical Sakha according to Sakha traditions and rituals. Every step of life is depicted: birth, education, marriage, etc. Traditional occupations such as shaman or blacksmith are described. »With this film, one can learn a lot about our culture, our traditions« (Romanov 2012, pers. comm.). And not only outsiders can benefit from the learning.

17 It is the only project originating in the Sakha Republic to have been released in mass distribution in the Russian Federation and abroad.

18 Vladimir Ivanov, interview by the author, August 26, 2012, Yakutsk.

According to the director, his film contributed to help Sakhas themselves rediscover their own traditions.

> At a time when people were celebrating weddings Soviet style, after having seen the film, people started to […] celebrate weddings according to our national traditions, to dress in national costumes […] People told me that. My film helped people rediscover traditions (Romanov, pers. comm.).

Having no record of »traditional« weddings after 1993, but no reason either to doubt the director's statement, we can only once again observe the level of influential power attributed to film in terms of nation-building, a power also ascribed to other post-Soviet cinemas, for instance in Ukraine (Hosejko 2001, 369).

Historical films are often good vehicles for national narratives. It has been noted that nationalisms have an investment in the past, memory being particularly subject to mobilization. As Anthony Smith argues: »no memory, no identity; no identity, no nation« (cited in Hayward 2000, 90). *Land of Our Fathers* narrates how all the Khakas men are killed at war while the women and children, among whom a new chief has just been born, are re-founding the nation in another place. Not content to offer an account of the origins of the Khakas, the film stresses this point by using old women to represent the ancestors in the opening and closing scenes of the film, a kind of missing link between past and present: they lead viewers to the origin. In a Neo-Eurasianist effort, the blockbuster *By the Will of Genghis Khan* reaches very far back in time to reunite the Sakha people with Asia. In addition, its hero has an Uryankhay mother, a tribe that is considered one of the ancestors of the Sakha people (Anashkin 2006, 90).

One simple way to reconnect with traditions and perpetuate them is to adapt works by national writers for the screen, a task that has been taken on by Sakhafilm. According to the company's chief executive, Sakha youth no longer read the national classics. It is therefore the national film company's responsibility to show these literature classics at local

schools in another format (Sivtsev, pers. comm.).[19] Film director Vyacheslav Semyonov, for his part, stresses the importance of adapting national writers in order to preserve the language (Semyonov, pers. comm.).[20]

While not literature per se, the oral tradition is also taken as a source of inspiration for screenplays. The script of *Land of Our Fathers* comes from a folk story that was adapted for the stage before being made into a film (Galetskaya, pers. comm.). *Maapa*, the very first Sakha film, has its origin in the frightening Sakha legends that filmmaker Aleksei Romanov was told as a child.

These scary legends are fertile ground for recent Sakha horror films (*Path of Death*, *Path of Death 2: Expiation*, *Naaxara*, *Paranormal Yakutsk*). Sakha folklore is rife with evil spirits, restless and tormented souls that have found a new cinematic life after having kept silent for decades. All these teenage films, while targeting younger audiences, are actually forging links with the ancient traditions of their ancestors (Kolbasina 2008b, 42; Maksimov and Schastlivaya 2012). Oral sources such as the Sakha epic, *Olonkho*, with its many heroes and stories, may serve as a great basis for films, but they are still seen as taboo by some (Ivanov and Kirillim, pers. comm.), which testifies of the vitality of the myths. Nevertheless, some filmmakers, mostly of the younger generation, use this material for their stories. Producer Konstantin Timofeyev knows that showing *abaahy* (Sakha evil spirits) will be a source a discontent for many, but he is not afraid to do so precisely because this is what invests *Paranormal Yakutsk*, the local version of *Paranormal Activity*, with »Sakhaness« (Timofeyev, pers. comm.). Interestingly, by their use of both traditional legends and the aesthetics of horror, they take their material not only from the national register but from the global register as well. Claiming influence from the Japanese and Hollywood horror industries, these films cross borders and end up being hybrid, »impure« objects. They make global

19 Stepan Sivtsev, interview by the author, August 28, 2012, Yakutsk.

20 Vyacheslav Semyonov, interview by the author, September 5, 2012, Yakutsk.

products local, and are ultimately transnational, reminiscent of other post-Soviet cinematographies (Mazierska 2010).

While reconnecting with the past, these horror films also highlight a rupture in tradition. Every one of these films shows young people facing phenomena they cannot understand. When they realize they have disturbed an ancient order, most of the time by breaking a traditional taboo, they do not know what to do to restore normalcy. When they can, the young heroes have to consult elders, as happens in the two-part film *Paths of Death*. Otherwise they are damned for eternity for their transgression, as in *Naaxara*. In any case, these films show that there has been a discontinuity, a failure in transmission. They are used to reconnect with the tradition, but this tradition has now become impenetrable because »the cultural, identity and linguistic link with elders, and above all with ancestors, has been broken« (Le Berre-Semenov 2003, 399). They also engage in what Faye Ginsburg calls »mediating across boundaries,« that is »the mediation of ruptures of time and history—to heal disruptions in cultural knowledge, historical memory and identity between generations due to the tragic but familiar litany of assaults« (Ginsburg 1991, 104).

Strong and weak feeling of identity

When comparing films from Khakassia and Yakutia, the first striking difference one notices is the number of films that have been produced so far. Khakassia is just starting its national film industry; and the few films made so far have had a very ceremonious destiny: they are shown at local Houses of Culture, libraries, schools, etc. (Kurochka, pers. comm.). The situation is very different in the Sakha Republic, where films have been produced for almost 20 years, and the exhibition of them is more casual: they are released at local cinemas, mostly with success (Vanina 2012). The second divergence is that Sakha films do not necessarily demonstrate the same approach to their past and traditions. Khakas films regard their history with great reverence. This has even been criticized by Khakas viewers of *Land of Ours Fathers* on an Internet forum: »The speech seemed artificial, histrionic, bookish. Conversations should be true-to-life« (Forum Khakasskogo Naroda 2008). One could

think that the filmmakers are filming this way in order to pay respect to a culture that has been disregarded for decades.

This kind of criticism or prudence seems to have been overcome by Sakha filmmakers. In this regard *The Free Warriors* is paradigmatic. The film is a comedy that makes fun of *toyons* (Sakha traditional chiefs) and *booturs* (epic warriors) in the manner of Monty Python's lampooning of the Arthurian Legend. Here, speech is by no means bookish and histrionic. On the contrary, when the chief ventures to speak in a serious and erudite way, his interlocutors do not understand him anymore and ask him to repeat his statement in an intelligible manner. Even the subtitles are only quotation marks during these scenes to stress the literary language. The film also plays with the traditional celebration Yhyakh (a national holiday in Sakha Republic), which an unorthodox rap singer surrounded by chorus girls is to host. It also shows no reverence for religion or the Sakha belief that nature is omniscient: the »all-knowing forest« answers directly the warriors' questions and loudly groans when someone breaks a branch.

The Free Warriors is not an isolated case, although other examples do not twist tradition so openly. The rude and rough loser who is the protagonist of *Breathe* is called Nyurgun, which is the name of the greatest hero of traditional Sakha epic tales. The heroic deeds of this cinematic Nyurgun are clumsy attempts to get by in life (rob a shop to feed his family, save his son from thugs representing evil-spirits). *Breathe* replays mythology (Filippova 2008, 63). Other films simply depict a darker side of Yakutian life. *Debt* and *My Love* openly deal with troublesome issues such as alcoholism, rape, murder, or prostitution. Accused of showing Yakutians in a bad light in his films, director Sergei Potapov claims he is merely showing them honestly (Potapov, pers. comm.).[21] But not everybody is ready to reveal what they perceive as the »negative side of life« (Everest 2008, 60), »negative« here being used to describe issues as diverse as »nonstandard« (in the Yakutian context) sexual orientation,

21 Sergei Potapov, interview by the author, September 5, 2012, Yakutsk.

diseases that are supposedly »shameful,« or criminal behavior. The reason given for this reluctance is that Sakhas are a »minority.«

> Majority peoples have the right to show another side of life [in their films] because everybody knows England, USA, France […] They are so powerful that if they show homosexuality, drug addiction, there are no consequences. We are so few that we must protect ourselves […] We have to show the positive side (Arzhakov, pers. comm.).[22]

However, the very fact that not all films are limited to showing the »positive« side of life is a sign that the Sakhas, although small in number, think their culture is not at risk. On the contrary, it demonstrates confidence in their cultural identity. A proof of this is that *The Free Warriors* was the 2010 Sakha box office hit in Yakutia. Being able to make fun of traditions or to criticize their society implies a secure sense of identity. In the Khakas case, films show nothing of the sort. They manifest the desire to exist and to be taken seriously, what Sakha cinema was doing 20 years ago with films such as *Middle World*. In this regard, Khakas films demonstrate much less confidence in the power of their cultural identity. This might be linked to the fact that in the Republic of Khakassia, Khakas represent only 12.1% of the population, while 81.7% of the inhabitants are Russian. Khakas are indeed a minority in the republic that bears their name. In the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, on the other hand, the Sakha people account for 49.9%, nearly half of the total population, with »only« 37.8% being ethnically Russian (Federal State Statistics Service 2011). Although Sakhas were a minority in their own republic

22 In his vision of homosexuality or addiction as »shameful« behaviors that should be hidden, film director Arzhakov expresses an opinion so widespread in the republic (as in the whole of the Russian Federation) that members of the Yakutian regional assembly (*Gossobranie*) addressed the issue by making »gay propaganda« illegal (Adamov 2012), some politicians going so far as to view homosexuality as a kind of »fascism« coming from Europe (SakhaNews 2013). It must be noted that this view is far from being unanimous, and some people actively protest against such laws (Stopzakon 2012).

during the Soviet period, their proportion of the total population has increased significantly since the end of the Soviet Union.[23] The differing degrees of confidence in the Khakas' and Sakhas' respective cultural identities can be correlated with these population statistics.

Moreover, as Ian Jarvie suggests, a national cinema is not sufficient to build a nation, but merely contributes to the process. Indeed, a national cinema arises in places with an already established clear national identity or a strong language and culture (Jarvie 2000, 80). Unlike the Republic of Khakassia, the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic seems to be such a place. At least since the beginning of the twentieth century, a sense of national identity has existed among the Sakhas and has continued to develop ever since, the Sakhas demonstrating »a determination to preserve their national culture« even during the radical changes of the 1930s (Forsyth 1992, 168, 319). All this makes them one of the »most original of Siberian peoples,« capable of asserting their individuality (Forsyth 1992, 381).

In spite of their differences, the Siberian indigenous peoples of these two Russian republics, »like a handful of indigenous people throughout the world, are using film both as a mechanism of self-expression and as a tool in the process of cultural revitalization and political recognition« (Fienup-Riordan 2003, 162). In this revitalization process, films prove to be good tools for strengthening national and cultural identity, promoting language and a traditional way of life. In addition, they play a significant role in creating narratives, whether national or otherwise. They revise history by rethinking the supranational narrative in order to be fully acknowledged as members of Russo-Soviet history. But they also re-imagine geography in order to reassess the location of the center, moving it eastward toward Asia. Finally, indigenous filmmakers are attempting to (re)discover their own history by re-connecting with their

23 It is to be noted that Sakha (Yakutia) Republic numbers among its population other Siberian indigenous minorities: Dolgans, Evenks, Evens, Yukaghirs, and Chukchis, who are very few in number. They, too have seen their populations increase proportionally in the censuses following the collapse of the USSR, but they are not represented in recent Yakutian cinema.

past and traditions while at the same time revealing the rupture in contact with this past. Indeed, films fully participate in the process of »imagining the community,« offering this community a space, a time, and an image of itself. Even though the »imagined communities« of the Khakas and the Sakhas demonstrate differing levels of self-confidence, both use film to provide a more complex image of themselves and their present than the one imagined by outsiders.

The author wishes to thank Svetlana Atakova, Anna Nikolaeva, Dmitri Fedotov, and everyone else without whom this article could not have been written. This work was carried out with the financial support of the National Institute for Eastern Languages and Civilizations Graduate School, Paris.

References

Abikeeva, Gul'nara. 2006. *Natsiostroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane i drugikh stranakh Tsentralnoi Azii i kak etot protses otrazhaetsya v kinematografe*. Almaty.

Abikeeva, Gul'nara. 2003. »What is the Phenomenon of the Central Asian Cinema?« *Kinokultura*. Accessed January 24, 2014. http://www.kinokultura.com/CA/A1centralasia.html.

Adamov, Denis. 2012. »Muzhiki protiv geev.« *Ykt.ru*. Accessed January 24, 2014. http://news.ykt.ru/article/3700.

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. 2nd ed. London.

Anderson, David G. 1998. »Living in a Subterranean Landscape. Identity Politics in Post-Soviet Khakassia.« In *Surviving Post-Socialism: Local Strategies and Regional Responses in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, edited by Sue Bridger and Frances Pine, 42–65. London.

Anashkin, Sergei. 2006. »Doroobo, kinne! Zdravstvuy, kino!« *Iskusstvo kino* 2: 79–90.

Antuf'eva, Nadya. 2012. »Kino iz nashegi dvora.« *Centr Azii*, May 18, 11–17. Accessed May 23, 2012. http://www.centerasia.ru/issue/2012/18/4243-kino-iz-nashego-dvora.html.

Balčus, Zane. 2012. »Narrative Trends in Recent Latvian Fiction Film.« *Kinokultura*. Accessed January 24, 2014. http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/13/balcus.shtml.

Beloborodov, Stanislav. 2012. »Bair Dyshenov: Ya idu k bol'shomu buryatskomu kino.« *Moskovskii Komsomolets Ulan-Ude*, April 11. Accessed May 23, 2012. http://ulan.mk.ru/interview/2012/04/11/691557-bair-dyishenov-ya-idu-k-bolshomu-buryatskomu-kino.html.

Beumers, Birgit. 1999. »To Moscow! To Moscow? The Russian Hero and the Loss of the Centre.« In *Russia on Reels: The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema*, edited by Birgit Beumers, 76–87. London.

Beumers, Birgit. 2012. »National Identity through Visions of the Past: Contemporary Russian Cinema.« In *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities*, edited by Mark Bassin and Catriona Kelly, 55–72. Cambridge.

Chusovskaya, Valentina, and Gela Krasil'nikova. 2009. »Vechnosinee nebo, edinoe dlya vsekh.« *Ilin* 1: 20–23.

Everest, Kseniya. 2008. »S. Sivtsev-Dollu: Na ›Zhuravlyakh nad Ilmenem‹ ›Saxafilm‹ zarabotal 61 tysyachu.« *Polyarnaya zvezda* 2: 58–60.

Evseyeva, Lyudmila, and Zhanna Nikonova. 2008. »Konstantin Barashkov: ›Kino—eto igra so zritelem.‹« *Polyarnaya zvezda* 2: 71–73.

Federal State Statistics Service. 2011. »Vserossiiskaya perepis' naseleniya 2010 goda.« Accessed April 20, 2013. http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm.

Fedorova, Lena. 2009. »Borisov brosaet vyzov Khauardu?« *Ilin* 1: 26–30.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann. 2003. *Freeze Frame: Alaska Eskimos in the Movies*. Seattle.

Filippova, Tat'iana. 2008. »Ty imeesh' pravo na zhizn'.« *Polyarnaya zvezda* 2: 62–65.

Forsyth, James. 1992. *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony, 1581–1990*. Cambridge.

Forum Khakasskogo Naroda. 2008. »Khud. film Ada Chiri.« Accessed April 14, 2013. http://www.khakasia.com/forum/archive/index.php/t-149.html.

Galetski, Kirill. 2008. »First-Ever Khakas Film Premieres in Abakan Russia, 2008.« *Kino-German Film*, December 9. Accessed June 6, 2012. http://www.kino-germanfilm.de/?p=532.

Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford.

Ginsburg, Faye. 1991. »Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village?« *Cultural Anthropology* 6 (1): 92–112.

Hayward, Susan. 2000. »Framing National Cinemas.« In *Cinema and Nation*, edited by Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie, 88–102. London.

Higson, Andrew. 2000. »The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema.« In *Cinema and Nation*, edited by Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie, 63–74. London.

Hjort, Mette, and Scott MacKenzie, eds. 2000. *Cinema and Nation*. London.

Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence O. Ranger. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge.

Hosejko, Lubomir. 2001. *Histoire du cinéma ukrainien, 1896–1995*. Die.

Jarvie, Ian. 2000. »National Cinema: A Theoretical Assessment.« In *Cinema and Nation*, edited by Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie, 75–87. London.

Kolbasina, Marina. 2008a. »Alexander Danilov: ›Nashemu obshchestvu neobkhodim dialog.‹« *Polyarnaya zvezda* 2: 4–9.

—— 2008b. »Grazhdanskij dolg ›Almazfilm.‹« *Polyarnaya zvezda* 2: 40–44.

Kristensen, Lars, Ewa Mazierska, and Eva Näripea, eds. 2014. *Postcolonial Approaches to Eastern European Cinema: Portraying Neighbours On-Screen*. London.

Laaniste, Mari. 2010. »Conflicting Visions: Estonia and Estonians as Presented in the Cinema of 1990s and 2000s.« *Kinokultura*. Accessed January 24, 2014. http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/10/laaniste.shtml.

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

Laruelle, Marlène. 2007a. »Le néo-eurasisme russe.« *Cahiers du monde russe* 42 (1): 71–94.

—— 2007b. *La Quête d'une identité impériale: Le Néo-Eurasisme dans la Russie contemporaine*. Paris.

Le Berre-Semenov, Marine. 2003. »Renaissantismes et renaissance des peuples du Nord: Évolution de la question autochtone en République Sakha (Yakoutie) dans le contexte des mutations post-soviétiques.« *Slovo* 28/29: 395–406.

Maj, Emilie. 2009. »Interpréter le dialogue interculturel entre Russes et peuples autochtones de la République Sakha (Iakoutie).« In *Antagonismes communautaires et dialogues interculturels: Du constat des polarisations à la construction des cohésions*, edited by Kévin Haddad, Altay A. Manço, and Monique Eckmann, 63–83. Paris.

Maksimov, Nyurgun, and Lija Schastlivaya. 2012. »Paranormal'nyi Yakutsk.« *Yakutsk vechernyi*, September 14.

Mazierska, Ewa. 2010. »Post-Communist Estonian Cinema as Transnational Cinema.« *Kinokultura*. Accessed January 24, 2014. http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/10/mazierska.shtml.

Moseley, Christopher, ed. 2010. *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. 3rd ed. Paris. Accessed April 17, 2013. http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas.

Nevolko, Natalia. 2011. »The Visualisation of Ethnic Theme in the Khakas Artists' Paintings and Graphic Work of Art.« *Journal of Siberian Federal University: Humanities and Social Sciences* 8: 1109–26.

Nyssen, Liesbet. 2005. »Traditional and Modern Khakas Conceptions of Sound and Music.« *Oideion; Performing Arts Online* 4. Accessed May 29, 2014. http://iias.leidenuniv.nl/oideion/journal/issue04/nyssen/index-a.htm.

Okhlopkova, G. K. 2000. »Kinematografia Respubliki Sakha (Yakutia) v tsiffrakh i faktakh.« Republic scientific conference report, Yakutsk.

SakhaNews. 2013. »Evropu zakhvatil voinstvuyushchii gomoseksualizm.« Accessed January 24, 2014. http://www.1sn.ru/93006.html.

Savvinov, N. E. 1976. *Annotyrovannyi katalog fil'mov o Yakutii*. Yakutsk.

Sivtsev, Stepan N. 2005. »Stanovlenie kinematografa v kul'ture Yakutii.« PhD diss., Russian Institute of Culturology.

Smith, Anthony. 2000. »Images of the Nation: Cinema, Art and National Identity.« In *Cinema and Nation*, edited by Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie, 45–59. London.

Stopzakon. 2012. »Ostanovym gomofonyi zakon.« Accessed January 24, 2014. http://stopzakon.wordpress.com/regions/yakutia/.

Shagdarova, Alexandra. 2011. »Burivud, ili kakoe kino snimayut v Buryatii.« *Vostok-Teleinform*, November 17. Accessed January 21, 2013. http://vtinform.ru/detail/203/55754.php.

Vanina, Elena. 2012. »Sostoyanie kino ›Tyal baaryn tuxary‹ ›Balyksyt,‹ ›Aanchyk‹ i drugie yakutskie blocbastery.« *Afisha*, July 23. Accessed August 30, 2012. www.afisha.ru/article/12249.

Vitali, Valentina, and Paul Willemen, eds. 2006. *Theorising National Cinema*. London.

Wood, Houston. 2008. *Native Features: Indigenous Films from around the World*. New York.

Yakimenko, Zhanna. 2008. »Kinoepopeya Anatoliya Sergeyeva.« *Polyarnaya zvezda* 2: 45–51.

Filmography

Films from the Soviet Union

Dolgii put (The Long Way). 1956. Directed by Leonid Gaidai and Valentin Nevzorov. Moscow: Mosfilm.

Proshchanie (Farewell). 1982. Directed by Elem Klimov and Larisa Shepitko. Moscow: Mosfilm.

Romantiki (The Romantics). 1941. Directed by Mark Donskoi. Moscow: Soyuzdetfilm.

Semyon Dezhnyov. 1983. Directed by Nikolai Gusarov. Sverdlovsk: Sverdlovsk Kinostudiia.

Sibiriada (Siberiade). 1979. Directed by Andrei Konchalovski and Leonid Eidlin. Moscow: Mosfilm.

Srochno…sekretn…Gubcheka (Urgent…Secret…Gubcheka). 1982. Directed by Alexander Kosarev. Moscow: Mosfilm.

Films from the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic

Chornaya maska (The Black Mask). 2002. Directed by Nikita Arzhakov. Yakutsk: Sakhafilm.

Dolg (Debt). 2008. Directed by Konstantin Barashkov. Yakutsk: Tuymafilm.

Könyl booturdar (The Free Warriors). 2010. Directed by Roman Dorofeyev and Dmitri Shchadrin. Yakutsk: Detsat.

Kuot/Begi (Run). 2005. Directed by Konstantin Barashkov. Yakutsk: Almazfilm-Tuymafilm.

Lyax (The Moth). 2011. Directed by Vyacheslav Semyonov. Yakutsk: Sindis Film.

Lyubov moya (My Love). 2004. Directed by Sergei Potapov. Yakutsk: Almazfilm.

Maapa. 1986. Directed by Aleksei Romanov. Sverdlovsk: Sverdlovsk Kinostudiia.

Naaxara. 2007. Directed by Marina Kalinina. Yakutsk: Sakhafilm.

Orto doydu (Middle World). 1993. Directed by Aleksei Romanov. Yakutsk: Severfilm-Sakhafilm.

Paranormalnii Yakutsk (Paranormal Yakutsk). 2012. Directed by Konstantin Timofeyev. Yakutsk: Costa Production.

Snayper caxa (Sakha Sniper). 2010. Directed by Nikita Arzhakov. Yakutsk: Sakhafilm.

Tayna Chingis Xaana (By the Will of Genghis Khan). 2009. Directed by Andrei Borisov. Ulan Bator: Ugrel V, Nyamgavaa Film Production; Chicago: Brown Wolf Production.

Tropa smerti (Path of Death). 2006. Directed by Anatoli Sergeyev. Yakutsk: Almazfilm.

Tropa smerti 2. Iskuplenie (Path of Death 2: Expiation). 2008. Directed by Anatoli Sergeyev. Yakutsk: Almazfilm.

Tyyn (Breathe). 2008. Directed by Sergei Potapov. Yakutsk: 20:06 Pictures.

V poiskax radosti (Looking for Joy). 2007. Directed by Alexander Ivanov. Yakutsk: D&A, Ykt Cinema.

Zhuravli nad Ilmenem (Cranes over Ilmen Lake). 2005. Directed by Nikita Arzhakov. Yakutsk: Sakhafilm.

Films from the Republic of Khakassia

Ada Chiri (Land of Our Fathers). 2008. Directed by Nonna Galetskaya. Abakan: Khakasfilm.

Sudba inorodtsa (Destiny of an Alien). 2012. Directed by Marina Kanadakova. Abakan: Khakasfilm.

***

Caroline Damiens, CREE (Research Centre Europes-Eurasia), INALCO (National Institute of Eastern Languages and Civilizations), Paris, France:

caroline.damiens@inalco.fr.