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ELUSIVE EASTERN EUROPEANS OR EXOTIC FOOLS? THE PORTRAYALS OF ESTONIANS IN FICTIONAL ANGLOPHONE FILM AND TV SHOWS

MA Thesis

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I hereby confirm that I am the sole author of the thesis submitted. All the works and conceptual viewpoints by other authors that I have used, as well as, data deriving from sources have been appropriately attributed.

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Introduction

As the world around us is getting more globalised, the difficulty of maintaining a unique culture and keeping it from blending with the rest of the world is increasing. It is even harder for small cultures to gain any universal awareness or recognition, unless they have some trait that is already a common and widely known stereotype. For example as small nations go, it is more often than not that they are grouped together with the bigger, neighboring countries, and rarely have widely known traits and characteristics of their own (Beller 2007a: 14). Uniting with larger areas in associations and other political or geographical unions blur international lines and people feel the need to fight for their identities and distinctness from others (*ibid.*).

Within the last few decades, watching television has had a massive jump in popularity compared to literature, and has surpassed reading as the main leisurely activity for humans (National Endowment for the Arts 2007: 39). As a mostly passive form of entertainment, coupled with the availability and cheap pricing of various streaming services, consuming media and exotic cultures within it has never been easier. In literature, due to the limited number of pages and worry of boring the reader, the usually versatile and complicated traits of a person are diminished into a few main but superficial attributes (Beller 2007a: 7). On a TV screen, it is possible to portray an ethnotype in a more three-dimensional way, not having to rely on a word count, but providing information much quicker with the help of visuals. The way a person looks, their body language, and the way they speak can be presented to the audience in mere seconds. However, with these quick visuals, there is also the pitfall of resorting to images that are more simplified and trivialised.

As an Estonian, I definitely notice the rare occasions my native country is being mentioned on television and in movies, and over the years, a list started forming at the back of my mind. No imagological research has been done into the Estonian hetero-images in movies and TV series, and not even a concrete exhaustive list of mentions has been formulated. The study of imagology has been growing exponentially in popularity during the last few decades, but Estonia and the associated characteristics have been ignored so far, either by merging it into a generic Eastern European stereotype or skipping over it completely. Imagological research is important because national stereotypes are often

formed through imagined realities and a critical approach should be used to understand their formation. Series of national images that are constructed by producers in film and television can both reflect how the spectant perceives the stereotyped nation, as well as how the created stereotype can alter the view of this nation for the global audience. The way Estonians are portrayed in Western media directly influences the stereotype that the Western audience constructs, which is why research into this specific topic is of value. By looking into these images, it is possible to further the understanding of both Estonian culture as well as the Western cultures that have generated the films and TV show episodes. I believe it is necessary to shed some light on this topic and so I aim to hopefully gain a better overview of the stereotype that is currently out in the world about this little nation.

The aim of this thesis is to look at the portrayal of Estonians depicted in Western and anglophone TV shows and movies. My compared case studies will be only Western, as that is the area I found almost all of my examples from, and anglophone because that is the language I speak and am able to analyse. The goal of the imagological approach that I am going to develop in the thesis is to create a list of the mentions of Estonia, examine the national stereotypes that are created within them and study their background and role (Beller 2007a: 11-12). It is not the intention of imagology to get rid of the bias and preconceptions of unfair ethnotypes (*ibid.*), or claim them wrong or right, but to show how one nation has set specific attributes to another one within its portrayal (Leerssen 2007a: 27). The corpus I am analysing is more broadly Western and not narrowed to one nation, so I will be looking at the global film industry and its audience. My aim is also not to disprove any of my findings nor to try and eradicate them, which would likely be impossible. Instead, I will be looking at specific examples, their function and aim to put together a bigger picture.

Therefore, my research questions are the following. Firstly, I am going to look at "how Estonians are portrayed in Western television and film?". I aim to find "what are the main themes and patterns that emerge?", and analyse "what are the stereotypes that appear of Estonia and its people?" To answer my research questions, I will start with a theoretical chapter, where I attempt to summarise everything relevant written about my topic so far. I will start by outline the method of imagology and explain the most important terminology, followed by imagological research that is or might be more directly connected to my area. Since there is nothing written about Estonia in this field, I will be looking at neighboring

countries and geographical areas, such as Finland, Russia, the Baltics and (North-)Eastern Europe in general.

After laying out the theoretical background base for the topic, I will be delving into a list of 28 TV show episodes and movies featuring or mentioning Estonians that I have collected for this thesis (*Appendix 1*.). After providing brief descriptions of the relevant information in each example, I will analyse them using a coding procedure I have created by combining traits of imagology and discourse analysis, where I use the language of the audiovisual texts to see how the images are constructed. I will apply this to the material of my corpus and then connect it back to my theoretical findings. I aim to construct categories based on the audiovisual material I have and derive certain stereotypes or theme patterns that correlate to the context and nature of the references to Estonians.

Following the analysis, I will ensue with a discussion of the results I came to and how they relate to the theory chapter. I will close my thesis with a brief conclusion of everything I learned and found out, compare it to the previous findings that I mention in the literary review, and make suggestions on how to move forward in this field of study.

1. Theory

1.1 The Fundamental Concepts of Imagology

In the last seven decades, academics of various related fields have been increasingly noticing the importance of the representation of national characteristics in literature and developed the field of image studies (imagology), which evolved from the idea of the "national stereotype" (Chew III 2006: 179). The stereotype, although usually based on some level of truth, is created in the process of taking a small detail, minimal information that might only be accurate for one person or one situation, and giving it maximum meaning (Stanzel 1997: 12, in Beller 2007a: 8–9), generalising it to a whole country or culture. Many of the stereotypes that people have stratified in our collective consciousness are subjective and non-factual. The trend for people to assign particular attributes to specific cultures and countries is universal and quite common. For some reason, people have a need to label differences between nations just as if they were individuals with personalities, and every one needs to have their own fixed "character" (Leerssen 2007a: 18): Canadians are polite, Americans are fat, Finns like to drink, Russians are all either a part of the mafia or prostitutes. National stereotypes are extremely widespread and can have various negative consequences, both on the nationalities themselves as well as on the people who use them.

Imagological research includes researching these stereotypes that are created for whole nations, finding cases of them in literary works and analysing their motivation and context. National stereotypes happen when one or more traits are labelled onto an entire nation or country, not paying any attention to what the individual people of this group are like in reality (Jackson 2014: 161). Just a few features are selected which are easily understandable and easy to remember for a wider audience. Those characteristics are then stripped to their bones and fortified so much that the most simplistic, but intense version of it remains, with the rest of the attributes of the people erased completely. (Hall 1997: 258) The result is usually reduced to phrases that are constructed from few catchy words that become widespread and fixed. In a situation where a stereotype would come up, having heard it before repeatedly creates an illusion of truth.

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In addition to stereotypes and how people and nations are represented, another important term is perception, which is how we see these groups from our point of view (Beller 2007a: 5). We need to be able to distinguish between how we see ourselves and how we see other people (*ibid.*). This is necessary as the two are inherently different and usually create a dichotomy. In social sciences, we refer to our own identities as the "Self", also sometimes called the "autostereotype" and everyone else as the "Other", or the "heterostereotype" (Rash 2012: 24). By looking at others, we are able to develop an image of Self by focusing on the differences and contrasting ourselves with the Other (Beller 2007a: 4).

Imagology is a fairly new term, essentially meaning the field where we study these "mental images of the Other" versus ourselves (Beller and Leerssen 2007: xiii). The way we look and judge other people is based on ideas that have formed already before anything we think has ever been proved to us, and is solely founded on stereotypes (Beller 2007a: 4). We could meet an Estonian person for the first time and assume that as they are from a post-Soviet country, they speak Russian and that they are probably a criminal. Very often, especially in political discourse, the Other that we create holds negative connotations as a direct contrast to the Self (Rash 2012: 24). It is possible that the Other can be portrayed in a positive context, but usually it is not the case (*ibid.*). If our own nationality has a self-image of being the hero, the chances are that we will remember the stereotypes that we polarise with ourselves, aka the villainous nations. The encounters we have with people form our assumptions about others from the same area, and these in turn form the biased action that we expect from "other Others" (Beller 2007a: 7). These "inner pictures" of cultures that shape in our heads before meeting a person is what determines our behaviour when we do (Beller 2007a: 4.).

As Walter Lippmann, the writer who originally coined the term "stereotype" in the way we use it today, said: "for the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define and then see" (1922: 81). He also describes stereotypes as "images in our head" (Beller 2007b: 429), similarly how imagology describes "mental images of the others" (Beller and Leerssen 2007: xiii). Because the creation of specific social stereotypes happened early on and predominantly inside our heads, inevitably they also ended up on paper, and the outcome was literary stereotypes. Literary authors quickly realised that the capacity of a specific nationality could easily be used as reasoning or function for a character's personality trait,

usually as explanations for mannerisms of a negative motivation (Leerssen 2007b: 353). When stereotypes are used for this sort of purpose, it deepens the stereotype even further and creates a new, complex reality by distorting what is real. Literary authors have explained away behavioural characteristics and peculiarities with a background from a corresponding nation for centuries (Hoenselaars and Leerssen 2009: 251). This means that an American character in literature might be presented with a larger gut based on the context that they come from the country that invented fast food.

It is difficult for us to read, for example, a good romance novel and not get entwined and even trapped in that universe in a way that we become to automatically believe the fictional and simplified stereotypes presented in the story (Pérez-Gil 2018: 4). The authority that the writer has makes it "increasingly difficult" to look at the narrative from an unbiased point of view, and it ends up concealing the reality (Dash 1988: 135). We trust the author to take us away to a world that is described accurately, with research done to provide us with realistic names and places that correlate with the real world. With this trust, we tend to forget that we are reading fiction, and anything else written gets pulled along into our subconscious, such as stereotypes that have been presented to characters.

These stereotypes, the smallest analysable component in imagology (Rühling 2004: 280, in Beller 2007a: 13), are greatly invented by "political-intellectual projection", and are embedded into people's minds as an alternative to unbiased, cold hard facts (Bock 2000: 11, in Beller 2007a: 12). National stereotypes attempt to provide a sense of a few, major traits of the people of a country, for example their temperament and other characteristics that are more frequent for them than perhaps another country. These characteristics are meant to set them apart from other nations and are often used to give reasons for the way they have acted in, for example historical events (Leerssen 2000: 283). The stereotype of strict and disciplined German police can be related to the strict rule of Nazi Germany, or the cowardliness of the French to how they operated during World War II.

Imagology is tightly connected to post-colonialism, as it is believed to have had great impact on the way Western people see and communicate with people from other societies (Echtner and Prasad 2003: 666). Postcolonial theory looks at how the world is divided into different parts, for example First, Second and Third world, and how people from non-first world countries are viewed by the Westerners (Caton and Santos 2009: 193). Binarisms such as the "us" versus "them" classifications are common in imagology and national

stereotyping, among others it is standard to see the contrast of good (usually us) versus bad (them). Other widespread oppositions can also be more geographical cases such as North versus South, or even more societal extremes, for example the civilised versus the savages (Hall 1997: 229). Both of these tend to be equivalent to each other, depending on which era the stereotyping takes place in, categorising the Northern parts of the world like Europe and North America as the more civilised continents versus the savages in South America, Africa and South Asia. Other times, the South could be depicted as the civilised against the North, for example during the high time of Ancient Greece's art and education, when Northern Europe was mostly illiterate peasants.

The issue with creating opposing stereotypes is that they tend to be excessively simplified (Hall 1997: 235). In reality, there are almost never two polar opposites this distinct, but instead there might be one side that is more dominant than the other (Derrida 1974). For example, a nation could never be completely good or evil, as it consists of more than just one person who have various aspects to their personalities. Both Derrida and also Foucault agree that stereotyping has by its nature a strong correlation with power, as the one doing the stereotyping (Hall 1997: 259), as well as the more dominant side of a polarised opposition is the more powerful one (Derrida 1974). The language used while stereotyping is considered to attain power through the people that use it, especially when talking about other people, as that usually presents in negative representation against positive self-representation (Lawless 2014: 85). The polarisation of powers in between the nations do not exist until one speaks about them, and the power relation lands depending on the person who points them out.

In imagology, it is important to keep in mind where the stereotypes that we have stem from (Lacey 1998: 138). When it comes to people from unfamiliar lands, our knowledge of them tends to be scarce, so any type of depictions that we might come across will most likely shape our opinions about them. In preparation for us to meet people from foreign cultures, the "empty spaces" in our heads get filled by data that we receive from outside sources which we have selectively picked at during our lifetimes by choosing the types of entertainment we consume (Beller 2007a: 4). Most commonly, this sort of generalisation used to be obtained from literature, often travel books, but also fictional characters and the way they are represented (*ibid.*). Because the bias that is created is based on fiction, the consequences tend to be negative Other-images, which in turn contributes to creating an uneven and binary

worldwide class system: the heroes versus the villains. Even if the stereotype is seemingly positive, for example that "all Estonian women are beautiful", they are a slippery slope to negative ones, as well as establish high standards. However, the skill of stereotyping, or assigning groups of people particular traits has developed for humans out of necessity, as it makes it easier for us to understand the planet around us (Leerssen 2007a: 17). Stereotyping is a part of evolution and assists humans in cognitive tasks while helping to save time in for example memorising things.

Although evolutionally this is a useful ability, because it is not derived from reality and instead from fiction, it makes the communities we have formed "imagined" (Anderson 1983). Imagology uses this notion of the created national stereotypes in literature and looks into the way they have been constructed. Leading Dutch imagologist Joep Leerssen argues that in literature (and therefore also other fictitious media), there is more freedom to use such stereotypes than in real life, because the reader often approaches fiction already with the presumed scepticism, and will credit some of the exaggerated traits to aesthetics (Leerssen 2007a: 26). I disagree with this point, as I believe that literature is something that is mostly taken seriously. Especially in cases where the audience of a book or a movie has no previous conceptions or experience with a certain location or race, their trust lies with the author to do adequate research and bring an authentic and true version of the character on to the page or screen. This sort of trust in the author is likely even more intensified if the story is accompanied by a visual as it is the case of film and television series, where the realistic effect of pictorial depiction and seeing the action happening with our own eyes contribute to the audience believing it to be true.

1.2 Imagological Research on Literature *versus* Film

For centuries, the written word and especially travel writing was mostly responsible for bringing cultures around the world closer to people's homes. Before we even met a person, we would have an image of them based on what we had read. That is why the national stereotypes that were formed were not actually about the nations themselves, but about previous stereotypes that have been reflected onto us (Leerssen 2000: 281). In the last century, the literary sources for stereotypes have been taken over by video, which is now believed to be the more prominent root for the cause of national stereotypes (Van Dijk 2000:

36). Film by nature is a medium that can be massively reproduced and which is constantly available for substantial amounts of viewers, especially now when audiences do not even have to leave their couch to watch something. Television shows as well as films are the ideal ways to exhibit representations of various cultures, as it can also provide visuals, which previously had to largely be imagined by the audience while reading a text (Brooks et al 2006: 300). Stereotypes in TV shows are found in abundance, as widespread or popular archetypes are used to create characters that make it easier for the audience to relate it back to themselves while watching (*ibid.*). This makes the audiovisual medium the perfect area from which to find and research (national) stereotypes.

Although the study of imagology was born and is most commonly employed in the literary branch of humanities, it's value expands beyond those limits (Beller and Leerssen 2007: xv) into a more interdisciplinary approach in, for example, the audiovisual arts, which is also where I will employ this methodology. If in imagological works of literary comparisons, the main focus is on the verbal, then in movies, the centre of attention is on the visual and the sound that accompanies it, as well as where the events take place (Rother 1998 and Giannone 2005 in Degler 2007: 295). This means that in my imagological analysis, I will need to pay attention to different factors than when I would be analysing literature. In early cinema, without the help of audio, film-makers had to rely on other means to portray national stereotypes (Degler 2007: 295). They used visual cues such as make-up and clothing to accentuate certain demographic characteristics such as age and gender, but also where the characters were from in a way that would be clear for every viewer, often succumbing to clichés to do so (Metz 1972; Schnell 2000; Schanze 2001 in Degler 295), some of which can still be found in cinema today. In cinema, this could involve anything from blackface to represent race (*The Birth of a Nation 1915*), the staple dark sunglasses to represent the blind (*Pride of the Marines 1945*) to giving a female character two long braids on each side of the face to make them appear younger than the actress really is (*Lolita 1997*).

In literature, much of the author's bias can be interpreted from the narration, but in cinema, a narrator is not usually present in the way it is in novels, and so the "us" vs "them" opposition is not as clear (Degler 295). In addition to what a narrator picks to tell the reader, in film the audience has the ability to see also what happens outside of that, often even in addition to what is intended, as a single scene frequently holds much more information than a paragraph ever could in text form (Monaco 2000: 45). In the 21st century, the acting and

make up are not as over the top as it was in the silent film era, and is more naturalised, so the clichés are not as apparent, but much of it still remains as well, which can be accentuated for example with clothing or a specific foreign accent.

Literary and audiovisual texts are closely related, which is why it should be easy to apply imagology that was created for literature also to films. Nowadays it is common for books to be made into movies later on, and are often written for exactly that purpose (*ibid.*). Whatever is written, can also be made into a cinematic experience. However, there are some limitations to both mediums. Most significantly, a book can be put down and continued multiple times, whereas a movie or an episode of a TV show is meant to be watched through from beginning to end in one sitting. This gives literary texts the capability of ending whenever they wish, in contrast with a movie, which usually needs to stick to on average a 90-minute mark for it to not bore the audience. By cutting the film medium short, details and storylines that can go on and on in novels would need to be cut out from films (*ibid.*). In case of national archetypes, the background of a character might never be explained, or some minor roles might never even make it on screen, just because it did not fit in the allocated time.

At the same time, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the film has the added benefit of visuals, which can provide much more information and faster compared to reading it from a book. While creating a scene, a director can choose to show a broader perspective, inside which the audience can actively choose their point of view and a detail to concentrate on by themselves, whereas in literature, the reader is directly exposed to the author's personal prejudice (Monaco 2000, 46). American film critic James Monaco argues that every time we watch a movie, it can be a different experience if we wish to guide our focus elsewhere, while rereading a book will repeat the same experience once more (*ibid.*). However, it can be disputed that if you reread a book for example during a different time in your life, the meaning behind the words is able to change with you, therefore invalidating this claim. Because of its visual aspect, in films there is also a lot less imagination involved than with reading a novel. During a cinematic experience, the director provides the audience with all the information, whereas in literature you can have more gaps that the reader must fill in with their own creative power, making the encounter much more interactive.

From an imagological perspective, the added visual in film can also be restrictive. Books have less limitations when it comes to location, as anyone can sit down and write a

storyline that could happen anywhere in the world or even outside of it. With television, creating a visual narrative in a realistic setting is more difficult if you wish your story to take place in an exotic location on the other side of the globe.

Whether our medium of choice is literary or on our television screens, national stereotypes are equally prevalent in both. The availability of books and TV shows in the 21st century, coupled with their realistic portrayals of the various parts on earth has ultimately changed the way we see and act in the world (Monaco 2000, 261). It gives us a chance to experience parts of the world we otherwise might not be able to, and could even transport us through time (Richardson 2010: x). Television performs as a filler for the empty holes in the viewer's knowledge about the people around the globe, and the audience takes those stereotypes further into the real world (Kersten 2017: 9). Film enables us to travel the universe without ever getting on a plane, and it can therefore give us a false sense of knowledge about it.

1.3 Methodology

Bringing attention to all this gives rise to the questions if the national images we know are actually real and why they are created. This is why we need to study these images of national characters, and bring forward examples from something more tangible than thoughts and opinions, analysing cases from audiovisual media in the form of TV shows and movies. Isolating these cases will help me find the patterns of topical stereotypes and then proceed to look for the author's intent and reasoning for using these particular attributes. If it is possible to find out the cause and origin of the stereotype, it is that much easier to show how little they actually have any truth to them (Beller 2007a: 11). Although my aim is not to show whether the generated stereotypical Estonian is true or not, it is important in imagology to also break down the general concept of a national ethnotype by demonstrating how they come to be.

Although (audio)visual culture and its analysis have been becoming more popular in the last few decades as film is gaining mainstream popularity, there is no one specific method developed for research on it, and not a lot of guides on how to conduct them. (Rose 2001: 2) The cinematic world is so diverse and perspectives to analyse from are so varied that it would

be impossible to put together an all-encompassing method. The relatively new field of study that I will mostly be focusing on is called visual culture, which appeared in the last few decades out of necessity (Rose 2001: 9–10). Visual culture covers a vast area of different forms of art, and the fast-paced and globalising field needed a strong and interdisciplinary umbrella term to include them all. I will be looking at both movies and television shows, and although they are strictly speaking two separate visual culture mediums, I will not be drawing distinctions between them. I believe that from an imagological perspective, the tools and key aspects for character analysis will remain the same, therefore I will refer to both forms of narratives interchangeably as audiovisual fiction.

Since I am dealing with how the Estonian nationality is represented in film and TV shows, as already mentioned, I will be using imagology as my method of study. While imagological research has so far focused on literature, I aim to use the imagological method to look at audiovisual media, which has not been a common practice in the field. In addition to imagology, I will also be using discourse analysis as my other main tool of methodology, as it is ideal for exploring how certain social discourse is produced by images, and the ways this resulting social construction has made itself persuasive and the effects it leaves behind (Rose 2001: 140). Discourse analysis also has room for your own interpretation of the case studies, but it is important to remember where you as the author come from and to be critical of your own connection of the topic, as it may skew your point of view (Rose 2001: 16). As an Estonian, I must be aware of the bias I have towards my own nationality and I must try to remain objective and remember the target audience of the object under analysis rather than rely on my own personal connections with the examples.

In this field of study it is important to note that the aim is not searching for the ultimate truth of the matter, as it does not exist. Analysing images is rather difficult, as looking into the "true" meaning of a picture, moving or not, could be endless, as it could mean very many different things to different people. Visual culture focuses more on the possible, not necessarily the correct meanings, and does so through evaluation and interpretation, sometimes even resulting in conflicting answers. The meaning of an image is not stagnant, it is personal and shifting. Since that can lead to over-simplification and often generalisations, especially in topics that have not been researched before, it is important to provide comprehensive and relevant justification (Rose 2001: 2). In imagology it is important not to justify why these traits for a national character are chosen, but merely show

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what types of stereotypes are used. The aim is to seek out a comprehensive selection of movie and TV show snippets that I can then describe and analyse, eventually generating an overview of the overall picture.

One of the most important factors of analysis in imagology is intertextuality, which means that when looking at a case of a national stereotype in a text, it is necessary to also look at other related examples that are repeated in other texts, to compare and to look at the patterns that prevail (Leerssen 2007a: 26). This is essential, because just analysing individual cases is not sustainable enough evidence to draw any conclusions from, and for a respectable outline to be formed, one must try to include as big of a corpus as possible to contextualise the separate observations into one whole (Leerssen 2000: 286).

I will be putting together a corpus similar to German historian Dr Hans Henning Hahn, who in his analysis of the representation of Slavic Eastern Europe (2002) used in his research not only texts from literature, but also other types of media to back up his findings and create a better overview of the stereotypes that have formed. Cinema is closely related with literature and also other discourse types, for example alternative visual art forms such as photography and paintings, which eases the navigation between the assorted discourses. Therefore, the "net should be cast far and wide" while looking for national imagery, and all forms of discourse should be considered (Leerssen 2000: 287). For these reasons, I decided to include every mention of Estonia I could find in my corpus. There is no easy way to put together a corpus of all the pop cultural mentions of a country or nation, as both authors and screenwriters tend to use mentions of larger and more commonly known countries as a frame of reference, as well as they could be found anywhere. Fortunately, as Estonia is a relatively small nation, when it is mentioned in movies or TV shows, it will most probably get talked about. A specific method to finding these cases does not exist, so a lot of my findings were dependent on what I had personally already seen and what came up while talking with acquaintances. In addition to verbal tips, I managed to find a few articles, blog posts, a Reddit thread and a Filmiveeb thread, which is an Estonian forum for film lovers, from which I generated a preliminary list of potential analysable content. It must be mentioned here that every day, new content is created and although mostly exhaustive, the prospect of including every possible mention in the corpus I created is unlikely.

In my thesis, the nationality that is being analysed will be only Estonia. Even though I am looking at theory that might talk about nearby or related countries, I decided to narrow

my corpus to only examining verbal mentions of Estonia and Estonians, which means that I chose my objects of analysis on the basis of whether the words "Estonia" or "Estonian" were actually part of the dialogue. I then proceeded to watch through the list of my findings to develop a way to categorise them, which was easier said than done, as many times the wrong episode was cited, which meant having to scour through subtitle files to find which episode actually had the representation in it. I also decided to cut the mentions of Estonia in documentaries and game shows, continuing only with examples of a fictional kind. The geographical scope of my work is strictly Western and anglophone due to my language abilities, which meant also ignoring representations of Estonians in Russian, Finnish and even Korean television. After putting together this criteria, I ended up with 69 items for analysis. For the purposes of this thesis, I will focus mostly on the specific Estonian characters, which is where I can provide screenshots as well for visuals, and leave out mentions of Estonia as a location or its language use for another time. This left me with a corpus of 28 analysable units, out of which 24 are TV show episodes and 3 are movies.

I will not be focusing on the production ways of the audiovisual material, nor will I be using cinematic tools such as lighting, sound and montage as my analytical methods. For imagological purposes, I believe that the way montage or background music is used is not as important as the language use, especially for preliminary analysis. Using discourse analysis, I will be solely concentrating on the image itself, its content and text. Through watching and re-watching the items of my corpus, I will attempt to identify key themes and various relations between the material through the process of coding, which means that I will use a table to mark down next to every analysable item any relevant and stereotypical aspects that I can find (*Table 1.*).

Characterisations of nations are very common, but also usually untrue rather than factual evidence. The cases I will analyse are strictly fictional as well as subjective, which should be taken into account while analysing (Beller and Leerssen 2007: xiii). With a basis in imagology, I have adapted Joep Leerssen's method to analyse each film and TV show excerpt (2007: 28). First, when starting my analysis I will take into consideration the context of the piece and consider the genre before starting to break it down further. During analysis I will also keep in mind the target audience, the intended effect on the audience and the possible impact it may have on them. If relevant, I will take into consideration possible relevant historic events, politics, relations with other countries. Lastly, I am going to consider

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intertext, comparing the excerpts to each other and demonstrating a relationship, if I find any.

Images of characters in film and television are produced via a set of defining aspects (Brooks et al 2006: 301). These could include universally known archetypes, but they can also be traits that are not as widespread (Ten Thije: 4, in Kersten 2017: 8). I decided to look at factors such as the importance of the character in the overall narrative, their physical appearance including their demographics such as age and gender, the setting in which the character is placed, and the linguistic features that are used (if any). In my initial categories, I will be sorting through the characters based on the role they play in the narration, as I hypothesise that these groups will have the most similar stereotyping. But before I can start with analysis, I need to lay down a basis of what sort of imagology has already been done in Estonia, and what sort of research has been conducted in other neighbouring and culturally close areas, to see if maybe some of those findings can be used in systematising the observations that will emerge from the analysis of my corpus.

1.4 Imagological Research on Close Cultural Areas

Looking into what has been done in imagology so far, it is clear that thorough research has been done within major nations around the world. In Europe, countless books have been written about the countries and people of Germany (see Parker 2016; Zacharasiewicz 2007; Sagarra 1994 and many others), France (Chew III 2001; Verdauger 2004 and others), Italy (Halliday 1997; Moe 2002, etc) and the like. The rest of Europe that is filled with smaller countries is covered by studies of regions, such as the Balkans and Slavic countries. However, there is a distinct gap in the field when it comes to the Baltics, or even (North-)Eastern Europe (with the exception of Poland, e.g. Velikonja 2003; Tomaszewski 1993). In the introduction of Beller's and Leersen's volume *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: a Critical Survey*, we are promised "entries on nearly all European nations" (Beller and Leerssen 2007: xiii), yet there is no mention of Estonia anywhere.

Because Estonia does not have a general imagological background of literary mentions yet as many other nations have, I will look into some analysis that has been done

about Estonians in other areas, such as how Estonians have been represented in paintings during the 18th century. This will give me a basic national character to work with, and although it is not recent, it will help see Estonians as a nation through the ages. If I manage to find similarities to the present and that the stereotypes are still the same in the 20th and 21st century, this foundation will support my findings, and if it has changed, it will be interesting to see how it has developed. I will also research some of Estonia's neighbors that we often get grouped together with, such as entries on Finland and Russia.

1.4.1 Estonia and the Baltics

Imagology in general is considered quite a popular branch of studies right now, but the European East-Baltic borders have yet not been explored very much (Laurušaitė 2018: 1). When it comes to Estonia, little research has been done on Estonian characters in most art forms, as it is still a field in formation. The representation of Estonians in art is considered a sort of a grey area or "no-mans-land", which is also probably the main reason it is so under-researched. Art historians believe that this belongs to the area of ethnologists, and vice versa. There has been a lot of groundwork done, but compendious overviews are missing. (Hein 2019: 104) It is my aim to bring more attention to the imagological appreciation of Estonia and to boost the formation of the field of research in the Baltic states. The imagology that has been done so far has touched upon other nations as seen through the point of view of Estonian literary authors (Kõvamees 2011 and 2015; Kõiva and Vesik 2014; Allik 2008; Nool 2018; Peetris 2012), but a vice versa study and the potential for visual image exploration has been kept largely untouched.

My aim is to distinguish particular features from the context of the Estonian stereotype which I can then develop into a supportive base that I can use for further analysis. Although in Estonian literature imagology is fairly new, what has been looked into a little bit is the Estonian archetype reflected in paintings made by foreigners during the Enlightenment period in the 18th century, which is the earliest time a substantial amount of case studies could be gathered (Hein 2019: 105) so that some generalisations or outlines could be formed. It is interesting to point out that these (about a hundred) works were mostly made by foreigners who were just passers by (Prussian geographer Johann Gottlieb Georgi

1776; French painter Jean-Baptiste Prince 1765; German etcher Gottlieb Christian Welté 1780s; art historian English Elizabeth Rigby and others), and not by the local Baltic-German elite, who had no interest in the matter during the 18th century (Hein 2019: 104). For them, the visual of an Estonian peasant working on a piece of land was common and not fascinating enough to be immortalised on paper. Depicting a peasant woman or a man was extremely rare, and in the few cases that it did happen, it was so because of their exotic "foreignness" (Hein 2019: 140). Until that time, portraits were exclusive of the wealthy and powerful, not the lower class, unless it was to capture their dress, or sometimes the type of job they were doing (Hein 2018: 49). This means that the paintings and drawings of Estonians that exist now which are suitable for imagological analysis are only a few, but they are also mostly hetero-images, which can give a compelling basis on how the nation was seen from another perspective.

The type of art originally intended as a topographical piece of information that developed in the 16th century was able to form into something more with the dawn of a new composition of art. Instead of using the images as a superficial "around-the-world trip" as they were originally planned, the audience was craving for a more in-depth description of the setting to accompany the images, to change up the usual simple few-worded caption that had been the norm so far (Vilberg 1942). People wanted to really see what life was like in different parts of the world, and were not interested in pictures of people in stagnant poses on white backdrops, as if they were cutouts from a fashion magazine. New images that surfaced in the 17th century came with detailed accounts of the surrounding life, sometimes even with analyses, if the picture was being distributed with the aim of making the reader feel closer to the societally struggling person depicted. (*ibid.*) This is similar to the cinematic tools used today, where character creation is largely based on the aim of inducing a sense of relatedness in the audience, and see themselves reflected on the screen or a page of a book.

For Estonians, both the appearance and the dress were described in the literature that accompanied the various images that circulated of the nationality. A watercolour painting by an unknown author from the 1740s of a couple from Põltsamaa shows that even though it is summer (based on their clothes), they are still wearing woollen mittens with fancy cuffs on the wrists. This is a rare piece of a reminder that 300 years ago, Estonians would wear mittens to all the important events, saying "if you do not wear mittens, no good will come", when inquired about it (Luce 1786: 204, as cited in Hein 2019: 111). As a cold weather country

often associated with the North, habits like wearing mittens all year round could be a clue that might have deepened this stereotype. A copper engraving from 1805 by Friedrich Neyer, who was one of the best engravers from central Germany titled *Manor farmhand* portrays an average Estonian peasant man in his usual setting, the field that he works on (*Image 1.*). This is a significant example as the teacher and historian Johann Christoph Petri chose it to be a part of his book *Neue Pittoresken aus Norden, oder statistisch-historische Darstellungen aus Ehst- und Liefland. Nebst einem kurzen Umrisse von Moskau* (1805), which was one of the first ethnographical mentions of Estonians ever, and he described the painting as follows (loosely translated)[1]:

> As you can see, he is wearing only a shirt, that he has half-thrown off because of the heat. He is tired from the all-day rye harvest and that is exactly how he is portrayed. His hair is uncombed, but they are never in a good order anyway and mostly guys like him have them trimmed short, more curly than straight [---]. On his shoulder he carries a small wooden keg, which has had a poor drink in it called kvass, sometimes maybe also sour milk or water. His food bag is depicted as pretty bulky, but indeed people like him can only spare a heel of bread at the bottom of his bag when going to work in the morning, and even the bread is baked more from fine flour dust and chaff rather than real rye flour; he has also probably stuffed his coat in that bag, so that in the evening, when he returns home at sunset, he can pull it back on.
> (Petri 1805: 95, as cited in Hein 2019: 135)

Here, interesting aspects to point out are that Petri describes the man while focusing more on assumptions rather than actual physical elements that you can see, like his large physique, big burly and low-set brows and a gaped mouth that give him a sort of neanderthal look, or the type of clothes he is wearing (or not wearing, as he is barefoot and has only half a shirt on). Petri mentions his curly hair, but the description is mostly about aspects that have to do with his class instead, mentioning his choice of "poor" drink and how "people like him" cannot afford real bread, therefore his bag must be bulky for other reasons. He is represented in his usual everyday setting, on the field working hard and sweating, creating the stereotype

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[1] All Estonian and Russian quotations that have been translated into English here and elsewhere in this thesis are the author's own translations, unless otherwise stated.

of a diligent worker, but coupled with the emphasis of his social division, the general effect that is created is of a simple lower class man.

Image 1. *Manor farmhand*. Friedrich Neyer's copper engraving of 1805 after German etcher Gottlieb Christian Welté's drawing from the 1780s

Although most visual mentions of Estonians during the 18th century and earlier originate from the collections of travellers from elsewhere in Europe, beginning of the 19th century was the start of the popularisation of peasants being painted by also the local Baltic Germans. Watercolour paintings by A. Von Uexküll from 1820, and other similar works show Estonian men as thin and gracious, while the women are often portrayed as a little bit dumpier (Kaera 2007). About half a century later, the lithographic prints of Friedrich Sigismund Stern showed Estonians, especially women, as much shorter and wider. Remarkable facial features included "a straight nose, round red cheeks and exclusively light, wavy hair". (*ibid.*) Another lithographer Ernst Hermann Schlichting also portrayed Estonian women as round, yet men as more delicate and slender beings with curly hair. Both Schlichting and Uexküll portrayed Estonians with striking blue eyes. (Kaera 2007) Baltic-German scientist Karl Ernst von Baer

writes in 1814 how Estonians have predominantly blonde hair with some with black, and how their facial features are largely unremarkable (67; see also Feyerabend 1797). These are all aspects that have been used to depict the average Estonian's appearance, which can be used later in my analysis to see if it correlates with how Estonians are currently represented in television.

To be born in Estonia or Livonia as an Estonian or Latvian meant you were inevitably born a slave, that is how nationality was intertwined with class in the 18th century. This was also increased by the strange languages that the Baltic people spoke, drawing a clear line between the German elite and the serfs, who were thought of as simple people who needed to be taken care of, always instructed and reprimanded, almost as children. (Hein 2019: 139) Language can also be used in fiction as a tool to clearly distinguish someone who is from another country, and often is portrayed in a negative light because of this, with the connotation that they are not intelligent enough to speak the language of the majority.

This sort of condescending behaviour was eventually even supported by anthropologist Alexander von Hueck, who claimed in a 1838 study that the Estonian people were by default inferior in physical and mental ways, because of how their bodies were generally built (Kalling and Heapost 2013: 87). Therefore, the few images showing what Estonians looked like that did end up circulating were deeply ingrained with the underlying hierarchy system, and were created solely as a way to show the Others "from another world", allowing a peek inside a culture otherwise too far and different from the Us watching (Pushaw 2019: 358). This correlates with what was said earlier about art forms including literature and television being capable of transferring the viewer to another place on the globe, with the ability to imitate strange and mysterious landscapes and people.

In his analysis of various art pieces, historian Ants Hein focuses mostly on what Estonian peasants look like and what the traditional clothes that they wore looked like. This makes sense as the analysed works were most probably created for the same purpose. However, some of these images can also show other aspects, such as what the person was like behind the clothes (Kaera 2007). It is sometimes difficult to analyse any deeper meaning through how a person is painted since artist styles differ and a physiognomic factor can not always be assumed. However, the study of physiognomy, meaning how to characterise people based on how their bodies and faces look, did have its high time in popularity during

the same era that Hein's case studies were created, and was finding its way from literature into portrait art, so it is not impossible that the styles of these artists were also affected (*ibid.*).

Another German travel writer and historian Johann Gregor Kohl wrote in 1841 about an interesting phenomenon that he noticed and that he thought probably everyone did who met local Estonian peasants from the service of different masters. He points out that the peasants are all very different when it comes to habits and clothing, and deducts that it must be because of how various groups and families of peasants have lived under different lords. If the peasants of one squire seemed no more than thieves, pagans and liars, then another one next door could very well be the complete opposite as honest, rational and loyal. (Kohl 1841: 372, in Hein 2019: 138) This thought of frequent exchanges of various "masters" of Estonians can be further developed into symbolism about the Estonian nation in general. As an aftermath of so many different occupations (by the Swedes, Polish, Danish, Germans, Russians, etc) it is likely it has left a mark on the people, resulting in a diverse nation. Because the central power in Estonia has shifted so many times, the national character that has developed can have many layers and the image of the identity that has been created is both adaptable and accommodating (Laurušaitė 2018: 23).

As Kohl pointed out, every manor has developed their own customs and traditions, down to details like what their horse harnesses looked like, as well as the colours and cuts of clothes. It was possible to tell where someone was solely from the hat they wore or the traditions they followed for weddings and other parties, if one was well versed in the different customs. (Kohl 1841: 372, as cited in Hein 2019: 138) Using dress to signify where someone is from is definitely a method still used today in cinema. Although maybe not as prevalent and exaggerated, clothing as a tool to express both the personality and background of a character is a strong visual technique that can be seen in everyday television.

Other "Estonian" characteristics that have been mentioned by authors describing the nation or its people include for example the seriousness of their personalities. Estonians do the thing they love most (eating) always in dead silence, even if there happens to be a bigger party gathered, and they never joke around (Baer 1814: 60). Extremely common is associating Estonians with drinking, specifically vodka, which some have said developed as a habit because of their wickedness (Baer 1814: 64), but Baer claims it happened purely for logical reasons as that could be the only thing to warm the people during their long and cold winters, as well as be used as a stimulant for the otherwise phlegmatic people (65), with the

belief that feeding vodka to babies will make them stronger when they grow up (72). Vodka drinking is a common stereotype in many countries, which tend to mostly be located in either the North of the East, as a contrast to the West and South, where beer and wine are more standard.

Under numerous lords, the Estonian character remained mostly as a character of a victim, fighting its invaders one by one and struggling with just one mission: to stay alive (Laurušaitė 2018: 130; also Kukk 2003: 105). And yet after slavery was abolished, the people even then did not have a country of their own, but were still under the rule of the Russian Empire. After a short victorious independence, Estonia was subsequently commandeered by the Soviet Union. It would be interesting to compare the image of the Estonian during the German occupation to the image of Estonians during the Soviet era, but the latter is also a field largely unexplored, therefore theory to base this on is scarce. The people of Estonia and the Baltics are generalised as being used to someone else being in charge and not having to take care of anything themselves. Fiction written about a Baltic or generally an Eastern European character is frequently in line with this, as they are put in situations of lower class jobs, implying that they are fine with the dirty work with no pay and longer hours, even if it is humiliating, as it is something they are used to, and maybe even idealise (Laurušaite 2015: 175). This can also be tied back to the time of serfdom, when Estonians were given the lowest of jobs in return for just a place to live.

Sociologists have even gone so far as to say that Lithuanians are documented to be more disposed to the mannerisms of a serf, as in looking for "a master" or someone to bow down to and be dependent on (*ibid.*), which could easily also be widened to include the other Baltic nations. It was not until the late 19th century that Estonia and the Baltics dared starting to develop a widespread identity of their own and not just be what hundreds of years of oppressors told them they were. For the first time, the nationality of Estonians was released from the role of a struggling, poor and submissive serf who spoke an inferior language that no one could understand, but instead it was something that was connected with being part of something bigger, of being part of Europe (Made 2003: 189). And although Estonia has always been a part of Europe and is now connected to the continent more than ever, it is still on the binary opposing sides of Western Europe versus Eastern Europe or generally "the Rest", which are considered the areas that are outside the Western world. This segregation brings us back to post-colonial theory, as the discourse of Eastern Europe has largely been

created as based on the post-soviet and post-socialist countries (Laurušaitė 2018: 21). As Leonid Bachnob coined it, since Europe "B" (2015: 525, as cited in Laurušaitė 2018: 21) is fairly new to the notion of independence, there has not been a sufficient amount of time to figure out their own national characters and therefore they tend to be combined into one bigger area with shared characteristics (Laurušaitė 2018: 21). This is also why it is possible to look at the imagological research of other neighbouring countries around Estonia that have close cultures and develop a picture of Estonians that is mixed from other nationalities.

1.4.2 Finland and the North

Sometimes it happens that an ethnotype is not generated through specific fictional texts, but through bringing them over from a neighbouring country (Dukić 2012: 123), which is also why other countries' ethnotypes are analysed in this section of the thesis. Culturally, linguistically and anthropologically, the closest neighbours to Estonians are without doubt the Finns from the North. Located in the Scandinavian peninsula but preferring not to be called Scandinavia, the country considered the "big brother" of Estonia bears a lot of similarities to Estonia in a variety of fields. It is therefore useful here to turn to the imagological studies of Finland, as it is in my opinion a good comparison to have, especially since the imagological research on Finland is much more advanced than on Estonia. I will limit this chapter to an overview of literary examples, as I could not find any cinematic analysis, just as it is the case with Estonia. In addition to Finland, I will also be considering Northern Europe or the general concept of "the north" in this chapter, as the stereotypical traits tend to overlap and are often talked about interchangeably.

As small nations with no distinct features yet strongly developed, the Baltic states attempted to desperately differentiate themselves from Russia and the Eastern European stereotype after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and chose to identify with the Nordic countries instead (Žvirgždas 2018: 224–225). The identity of the images of Scandinavian countries was also perceived as being culturally superior, but brought with it negative roles as well, which I will attempt to give an overview of in this chapter.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a little lost with the sudden cultural freedom and no idea what to do with it, Estonians turned towards Finland, the neighbour who by this

time had everything already figured out. "The Baltic Sea connects us with the Scandinavian peoples around a hearth of common culture and our relation with Finland demonstrates to us even more right to take part in this brotherhood", writes Eduard Willmann, an Estonian art critic in 1909 (as cited in Pushaw 2019: 362). During the 19th and 20th centuries, Estonia needed someone to lean on to expand a cultural (and political) partnership with. A quick basis for this was created by putting emphasis on the connected language families and this "brotherhood" type relationship with Finland. (Made 2003: 184) Though Estonia was never accepted into the closed Nordic club, the Baltic character is still often associated with the values and nature of the North.

Finns, as any other smaller and relatively unknown country in the big scheme, are the ideal type of character for quick and ambiguous mentions in fiction, both television and literature. The use of a Finnish character in modern literature can mostly be categorised into two, usually rare occasions: in a comedic situation as a gag (Mead 76: 117) or in a a crime or action genre, especially influenced by the Cold War era (Saukkonen 2007: 152–153). Because they are so different from the average global reader, the method of creating a contrast between the Finns and the viewer's nationality creates the perfect basis for both someone to laugh at in a comedy and a mysterious character in the opposite genre. Representations of Finns fall in line with the general representation of any nationality, with the characters carrying stereotypes that are oversimplified, are devoid of any diversity and make one think of caricatures (Mead 63: 260).

English geographer William Richard Mead has written three books about the depictions of Finns in literature, with the last one written in 1982. He concluded that Finns were most often used as a method for comedic relief, providing laughing stock with their "strangeness and [---] primitiveness" (Kantola 2010: 441). "(T)he drinking Finn is an international figure of fun", Mead writes, as he describes the mostly negative, drunk and fighting, sailor-type ethnotype of the average Finn that reigned until the twentieth century (1963: 260; 1976: 122). This relates somewhat to the stereotypical Estonians outlined in the previous chapter, who were also considered strange and primitive, a folk of simple peasants who like to drink.

Mead also mentions that Finns are silent characters (1976: 120). This seems to mostly be the case, unless they do speak, in which case the humour lies in their terrible language skills (Kantola 2010: 446). For example, in the novel *The Hotel New Hampshire* by John

Irving (1981), there is a scene in which the running joke is a Finnish doctor at a Thanksgiving dinner who is unable to express himself well enough and gives an absurd diagnosis with aid from his daughters dictionary, which he then has to use to look up the word "moron" (Kantola 2010: 446). This can be linked to the language oppositions in Estonia, where the class difference was defined by the language you spoke, thus the inability to speak another (the superior) language was a direct reflection of the individual's intelligence.

One of the key elements used in fiction is exaggeration, which is a frequent device for an author who uses national stereotypes in creating a character. In the case of the Finns, Mead brings out some dominant aspects that are often magnified, such as "[---] the sauna, alcohol, and the distinctive language" (Mead 1982: 44). Symbols such as this are inclined to be overstated especially in cases of comedy (Kantola 2010: 442). In addition to being as keen on vodka as the Estonians and sharing the same obscure language, another notable trait of Finns that also applies to the rest of the Nordics as well as Estonia is that they are considered hermits (Taramaa 2007: 101). Finns, like Estonians, are often depicted as preferring the company of nature rather than humans, and due to the large areas of forests that cover the country, have a tendency to use that opportunity to get away from other people.

The appearance of Finns is also similar to Estonians in the sense that they are described mostly as "fair [and] blue-eyed" (Mead 63: 252-254). However, they are also described as being very tall and muscular, often labelled with the archetype of a big, burly and blonde sailor-type male Finn, which clashes with the image of lean Estonian men and short, round women. For the Finnish males, the recurrent theme is of a stubborn alcoholic (Saukkonen 2007: 153), in addition to which there is also the image of the deranged witch female. Either a sorceress (Mead 1982: 45), "demoniac Finn" (Fitzgerald 69: 1925) or just a "beautiful blonde woman" on a train talking to herself (Bradbury 2000: 245), the image that forms is quite clear. The combination of a mystical woman who speaks a strange language or has an uncommon name/comes from a foreign location adds even more to the overall image of magic. In both gender cases, the Finns are often represented in a bestial manner, compared to animals as being either funny and out of their mind or just simple-minded and quiet (Kantola 2010: 448-449). An Italian Vivident Xylyt chewing gum commercial from around 2009 is an example of a seemingly unrelated "wild" Finnish male, who is shown minding their own business alone in the forest, when they get shot with a tranquiliser gun in a nature documentary fashion (Anastasio 2009). While he is passed out, a camera crew

approaches him and checks his teeth, which they explain to be in good shape since the Finnish created Jenkki, the first chewing gum in the world that included xylitol, which is also what the gum brand has as one of its ingredients. The way the advertisement portrays the Finnish man is just as wild and untamed of a beast as the scholars claim they are usually represented as. It is possible to draw a parallel between the beastial Finns and the wild Estonians, who were often compared to dark skinned pagans and savages (Hein 2019: 139).

In Malcolm Bradbury's novel *To the Hermitage* (2000), the narrating character ponders about what he knows about Finns before meeting one. He brings out five main aspects: the drinking, ski-jumping, exceptional ability in architecture, a "obscure agglutinative language strangely related to Hungarian which nobody else could understand, not even fellow Finns", and the claim that they read a lot of books (Bradbury 2000: 228). Although he spends an entire long paragraph speaking about the Finns and their land, ultimately, this description mainly serves the purpose of contrasting a culture in a humorous way, the "Other" against the narrator, a British novelist (Kantola 2010: 448). The narrator also describes the Finns he meets as "hearty men and great specialists in vodka" (Bradbury 2000: 230), amplifying again the drinking stereotype and illustrating it with the beverage that often go hand in hand.

Common images of national representation do not reflect on the nation itself, but are built on previous (literary) depictions of the nation (Leerssen 2000: 280) and are simultaneously related to all other appearances in texts (Kantola 2010: 449). Therefore it is necessary to look at depictions as a whole and not focus on individual examples. The complete image of Finns in Western literature is painted as "lonely, inflexible, straightforward, disheartened", a very non-complex and shallow portrayal of prejudice (Kantola 2010: 450). Just like the people of Northern Europe, Estonians are also considered quiet, private people who keep to themselves and hold personal space in high regard (Laurušaitė 2015: 178). Although appreciation of silence and love of nature could usually be considered as positive traits to have, as stereotypes go, it has been turned around to be presented as a negative attribute instead and paints a picture of both Estonians and Finns who are lonely and have no friends.

In his studies, Walter Mead also discovered that a disproportionate number of plots in English-language fiction dealing with Finns spring out of the Russian relationship (Mead 1982: 42). Just as with Estonia, the countries are inevitably entwined because of their

geographic location, and connections are found between all of them. As the neighbouring country of Russia, the attributes connected to one of them are carried over to the other, which makes Finland the ideal location for an espionage enterprise undertaking or a crime drama genre (Mead 1982: 49). Mead describes Finland as a "East European location" in which "West European traditions" rule, but also mentions that it is difficult to resist succumbing to the temptation of exposing the storyline to typical Russian issues (Mead 1982: 43). To the global reader, the geographical location of Finland in the mysterious North is by default a location for unusual activities and adventures, positioned right next to the dangerous Russia (Mead 1982: 48). Since Finland and Estonia are both rather small nations, it is inevitable that some of the characteristics of bigger countries close by get transferred over. In relation to Russia, all three of them are considered equally dark and far away Northern countries where mystical adventures take place.

As mentioned in the chapter on the fundamentals of imagology, stereotypes tend to live off of oppositions. As one of the northernmost countries in Europe, Finland finds its place in constant contrast against the South. This means that Finns are labelled as a nationality with a "cool" nature as opposed to the more temperamental southerners, and as people who use their heads to make decisions rather than their hearts, as well as being more individualistic and responsible, but also having less of an imagination than their Southern counterparts (Leerssen 2000: 276). There is no doubt that the stereotypical traits Finns have are directly correlated with their colder climate and snowy habitations. Finnish researcher Raija Taramaa claims that weather is an aspect that is capable of altering how humans act, and that half a year of dark and freezing winters is what has created a nation of pessimistic and gloomy people (Taramaa 2007: 152, also Lewis 2003: 17). Many other stereotypical traits that Finns are described to have can also be explained by the location of where they live, as the low temperatures could be the reason why Nordic people can be presented as hard working (to get the blood moving and generate warmth), prefer to think with their head (cold weather clears the mind) and do not enjoy company (upon seeing acquaintances outside, conversations have to be brief to return to warmth as quickly as possible) (Lewis 2003: 18). Estonians are also often described as having a cooler head, as well as often being somber and preferring to be by themselves, in addition to working hard, which is a trait that has been apparent since the time of serfdom.

In global literature, Finns, like Estonians, are generally not mentioned very often for obvious reasons, as it is a relatively small nation who prefer to stay in the background. In cases where they have been mentioned, the purposes have not usually been clear (Mead 1982: 43). Mead theorises that reasons for the portrayal of any, especially small nations are most likely because of chance (Mead 1976: 117) and the author's individual encounters with the countries and their people, history or even arts (Mead 1982: 43). Finnish characters never hold any major importance in the literary narratives that they are represented in, nor are they chosen to have a part in novels written by significant authors (Mead 1976: 117). Finnish researcher and cultural scholar Pasi Saukkonen summarises in his works that there is a decrease in the character of the Finn in literature now compared to 20th century English writing (2007: 153). After the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country changed so rapidly that it was easier to exclude it from fiction, rather than keep up with the "changes in the image and reality of Finland following its accession to the European Union and its new status as an information society" (*ibid.*), except for when Finns are portrayed as ultra technological due to Nokia, the Finnish multinational telecommunications company that was once the largest mobile phone supplier in the world.

1.4.3 Russia and Eastern Europe

When we interact with someone from another culture, the stereotypes we have, the perspective from which we view them and the presumptions formed in our minds before meeting them are all established by our previous interactions with the culture. In America, the main way children and adults learn about the country of Russia and its people is through the media, since the average American usually has minimal contact with Russians. This means that movies and television act as a vital part in constructing the image of Russia and Russians for the viewer (Goering 2004). This is an important notion, as I will be analysing mostly movie and television snippets that originate from the United States. In Hollywood, which is another name for the movie making industry that originates from the US, not a single nation or group of human beings have been safe from the ridicule of characterisation, but one that through time has always stayed the same and shows no change in how biased it is, is the Eastern European stereotype or the generic "Slavic bad guy" (Loveless 2015). For

the American and global audiences who constantly see most villains in TV show originate from Russia, this creates clear negative connotations for the nation by making this stereotype the new norm (Lawless 2014: 93). I will be talking about both Russian as well as the generic Eastern European stereotypes, as the Estonian ethnotype is often given these same character traits due to its geographical location and shared history.

Getting all of your information about a culture (especially as vast as 145 million people) from fiction is problematic. With Russia, the trend of portrayal tends to be on the side of enemies and spies (Goering 2004). This is mainly so because with the Cold War and a lot of the world in turmoil, the USA took the opportunity to create a "bad guy" character, the enemy of everything that the US stands for, to blame and to contrast against the noble and heroic American character, making themselves look infinitely better for their people (Davis, 1947). Northern Americans reinitiated the stereotype of the uncivilised and lesser people of Russia, defining "Them" against "Us", helping construe their own identity in the process, and so the image of a Russian KGB spy character triumphed (Goering 2004).

Although worldwide, representation studies have been growing in popularity, the studies of the Russian image in Western cinema have not been looked into as much as it should be, according to sociolinguistics scholar Katerina Lawless (2014: 83). To really understand some of the currently prominent stereotypes about Russia, we have to look into history and how the rest of the world has been seeing Russia since the earlier times. Around the same era of industrialism, within the art world, Romanticism carried the day. This meant that cultures of the Slavic regions were suddenly thought very highly of, and Russia was considered at the helm of this "emerging Slavdom" (Leerssen and Naarden 2007: 228). During the 19th century, three fundamentals surrounded the belief, which are all still relevant keywords when we look at the stereotypical image of Russia: 1) autocracy; 2) orthodoxy and 3) nationality (*ibid.*). Autocracy meant that the opposition that had formed between Russia and the West facilitated a resistance towards the Western political styles such as democracy and liberalism. Orthodoxy held the belief of "Holy Russia" and their people's self-image as guardians of Christianism. (*ibid.*) Nationality, or holding on and emphasising everything characteristic to being Russian, was and probably still is the most persistent of the three.

In the 19th century, once the Western world had transitioned with the Industrial Revolution and Russia had not, the inability to keep up, or a certain slowness grew into one of the main stereotypic traits of the country (Leerssen and Naarden 2007: 227). For people

from the West, this presented mixed emotions, as some criticised it while others found it a trope of exoticism. This "slowness" demonstrated through aspects like still depending on using serfdom for the upper class, the complete absence of a middle class, and the almost non-existent share of industry output. This resulted in Russia becoming a "transit zone" between the two industrially polar Europe and Asia, and is also around when the term "Eastern Europe" started becoming more prevalent. (*ibid.*) The term Eastern Europe is not a specifically defined geographical area, but rather a concept that can be used either to refer to the countries that are located in the cardinal direction of East in Europe, but it can also mean the countries that were either involved in the Soviet Union or even Slavic countries who share similarities between them in language and culture.

Much of what the founder of postcolonial studies Edward Said has said about orientalism and how the East is viewed and treated by the West is also relevant for other countries in the world that are not necessarily in the Oriental East, but are still viewed and contrasted with the West as the Others. Russia, as a country considered both European and Asian is an example of how these two opposing stereotypes can meet and even blend. Because of the nations inability to keep up with the progress of Europe, it was often given Oriental characteristics and described as barbaric like its Eastern neighbours (Bulgakowa 2005: 214). German essayist Alfred Kerr summarises the personality of a Russian as follows: "The Russian has two traits. First: he is soft; sensitive. Secondly: he is radical. ... First a Slav; second a Tartar. ... These two contrasts (the sensible, the barbarian) merged." (Kerr 1927: 10-11, as cited in Bulgakowa 2005: 214)

Being a part of the Tsarist as well as the Soviet rule clearly had influence over Estonia's relationship with the rest of Europe, but after becoming independent and joining the European Union with a change in the nations allegiance puts Estonia in a similar position as Russia, where the personalities of both the West and East meet, creating a "dual identity" (Made 2005: 185). Exotic Eastern nationalities who are always represented as the opposite of the civilised West are considered as untamed, which is a trait that has also been connected to Russians, who are described as having "animalistic instincts" (Bulgakowa 2005: 217, 228). This is similar to the image of the Finns as well as Estonians, who are also often represented as wild and in need for someone to enlighten them.

As a result of all this, the reputation of Russia became quite layered. At the foundation, there was still the tyranny associated with other far-away Eastern states such as

the Ottoman empire and the Qing dynasty (Leerssen and Naarden 2007: 228). Strangely, this fear went hand in hand with a new outlook on the diverse culture, a more emotional and soft, even nostalgic vision of people who have persevered; characters who were "meditative, moral and even mystical" (Leerssen and Naarden 2007: 229) In the beginning of the 20th century, the image of Russia was often similar to the one of Finns, as a vast and cold country covered in forests and wildlife, with the addition of "hostile Asians" that needed to be sometimes fought with (Fedorov 2014: 1720). Countries in Western Europe that were not so much affected by pillaging Russia were also not as repelled by their culture. Instead, they embraced the Russian literature and musical arts with applause, which reversed the image and bad name of Russia and painted the place as "refined imperial court life" instead of unsophisticated slave owners. (Leerssen and Naarden 2007: 228) But a more pleasant image of Russia did not last very long. With the communist rule and formation of the Soviet Union, the nicer aspects of Russian culture were quickly forgotten and a reputation of a ruthless, cultureless enemy prevailed once again, this time with more power alongside the help of Stalin's dictatorship, "a formula of terror and oppression exploited in countless espionage thrillers and films" (Leerssen and Naarden 2007: 229).

The James Bond movie franchise that started in the 1960s while the Soviet Union was in full force has been plenty researched from the perspective of the Russian villain (Lawless 2014; Price 1992; Bleichenbacher 2008 and others). Analysable content in the film series is mostly one-sided, with plots including Russian characters always related to war and accompanied by military vocabulary, ultimately creating the image of a dangerous common enemy for the world (Lawless 2014: 92). By emphasising the villains background and constantly alluding to the Soviet Union, a concrete line is drawn once again between the East and the West, making sure the viewers understand that Russia is the "other" in this situation. Military mentions as well as the secret police department KGB creates the stereotype of a nation of extreme government dominance with no regard for human rights and terrible living conditions for the lower classes. (Lawless 2014: 93) These characteristics go together with the stereotype that has been mentioned with both Estonians and Finns, but is probably most universally known as a trait of the Russians: the avid vodka drinker and raging alcoholic.

The post-soviet image of the average Russian man is likened to the archetype of the "criminal, the hit man, the mafioso" (Beumers 2008: 170). These are men that are powerful as well as feared as they often hold a supply of nuclear threat that could be unleashed at any

moment, but they are also portrayed as not very intelligent, which takes away from their authority and diminishes the characters to mere criminals (Lawless 2014: 93). This is an example of how Hollywood has created an image of a villain to blame and be afraid of, but also of someone who is not too scary and possible to defeat. The young Russian women are always very attractive and their looks are often used as an object of sexual desire and availability (Lawless 2014: 93–94). Both men and women have a strong Russian accent while they speak English to underline their ethnic background and they tend to be unemotional, which also translates to an unmerciful villain (Lawless 2014: 94). After the fall of the Soviet Union, another stereotype emerged in the film industry, which deformed the Russian enemy to a subject of a victimised national (Beumers 2008: 167). The men are still considered evil, but are compelled to such ways of life because of their environment. Due to the collapse of the superstate ideology and economy, the characters are now someone to be pitied and even laughed at for their failures (Beumers 2008: 169, 171). The attractive Russian women are now forced out on the streets to sell their bodies to survive, and the typecast of post-soviet prostitutes is created.

When talking about Russia and its stereotypes, one often also needs to talk about other Eastern European countries and cultures due to the historic connotation of the Soviet Union. Especially in Hollywood, the distinction between Russia as a nation versus Russia as a synonym for the Soviet Union and/or Eastern Europe is almost nonexistent (Strada and Troper 1997: xii). Since a significant number of Eastern European countries are also Slavic, they tend to be used as each other's equivalents. Despite the fact that the Baltic states do not have Slavic national languages, they are often also added to the common category of Eastern Europeans due to their long history of being part of the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union.

The Eastern European stereotype contains in it most of what has already been mentioned about Russians in general, but also other character traits that can be collectively labelled as the "Soviet mentality" (Laurušaitė 2015: 168). Eastern Europeans are likewise divided into ruthless, aggressive mob bosses and enticing prostitutes (Loveless 2015), but they are also known to have personalities that always persevere, as the long history of living in terrible conditions has shaped people who have learned to survive at all costs, as well as have the patience to wait for better days (Laurušaitė 2015: 176). To survive, Eastern Europeans are inclined to submit to illegal activities to make an income, often dealing in

drugs, arms or even people, which seems to be of no problem to them as they are frequently portrayed to have no moral conscience (Laurušaitė 2015: 174). The whole area of the post-soviet countries is most often represented with purely negative stereotypes, which creates an image of the problematic area of Europe in contrast with the more developed and democratic West.

In addition to being post-soviet, Eastern Europeans are also post-communist, which has created a stereotype of people who are used to an ideologically united nation, meaning that due to their socialist experiences, they have a deep connection to others alike. It is common for characters from various post-soviet countries to find kinship in fiction due to their shared backgrounds. Therefore, even though based on their shared history one would assume otherwise, Eastern Europeans often still identify themselves with the Soviet community, especially within the older generations. This sort of self-representation is also most likely the reason individual Eastern Europeans do not make their way into literary or cinematic mentions, as the area is usually considered to have one generic (post-)Soviet narrative, and individualistic characteristics do not exist or they are not important enough in the grand scheme to be mentioned (Laurušaitė 2018: 22).

2. Analytical Overview of Estonian Characters in the Corpus

Out of all the movie and television show episodes I found during my research, the most prevalent and interesting category that formed was Estonian characteristics. I believe that this one is the best aspect to analyse, as it is the most straight-forward and is equipped with a specific visual of how the character looks and acts on screen. For the purposes of this thesis, I will be focusing mostly on these cases of Estonians characters.

Out of all the data I could find, I narrowed it down to a list of 69 items of fictional and anglophone audiovisual content in either TV show or film form (*Appendix 1.*) that have some sort of mention of Estonia, an Estonian character or its language in it, from which specific characters who were posed as Estonian were present in 28 cases (*Appendix 2.*), where multiple episodes of a TV show are counted as separate items and cases. For the purposes of this thesis, I will be focusing on these 28 cases, out of which 23 are accompanied by a visual and 5 are only verbal mentions (*Chart 1.*). In this chapter I will be analysing the relevant snippets from 17 TV shows and 3 movies. The earliest mention of an Estonian character is from the year 1967, and the most recent one is from 2016, which creates a time span of 49 years for my corpus, with 12 cases of them being from the last decade (*Chart 2.*).

Chart 1. Categories of the types of mentions of Estonia in fictional and anglophone film and television shows 1967–2019
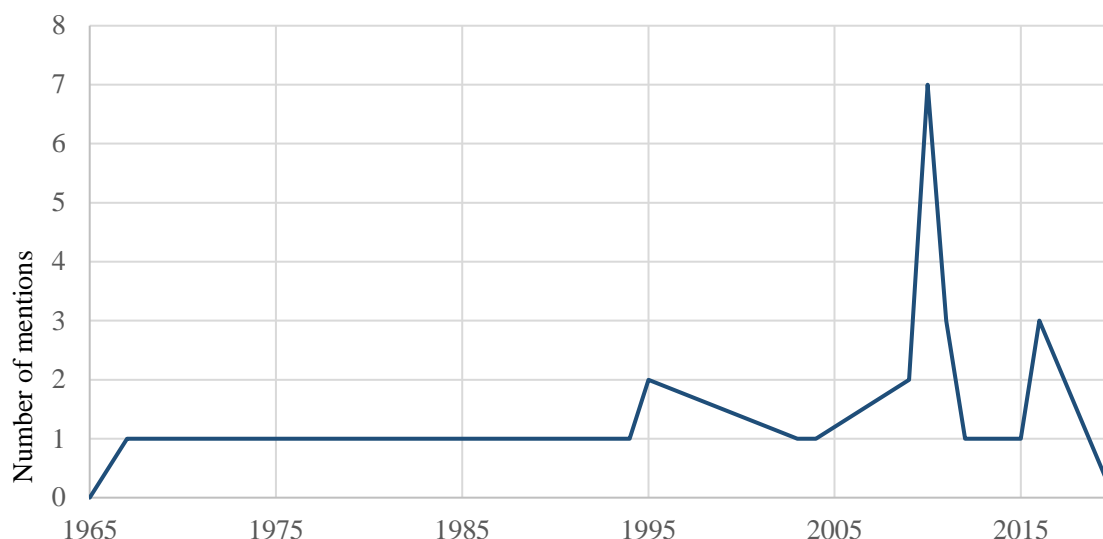
Chart 2. The trend of Estonian characters in fictional and anglophone
film and television shows 1965–2020

I used the method developed by linguist Lukas Bleichenbacher (2008) to code the following
aspects from each individual character I analysed: their importance in the narrative,
evaluation of their role, their overall character (name and gender, physical appearance,
position in the demographic), and also any linguistic features that might have been present.
In my preliminary coding table (*Table 1.*) I also included any other keywords that I noticed
to be interesting or in common with the other analysed units, as well as facts the actors'
nationality. Each following subchapter is based on the role and narrative importance of a
character, as well as the genre they are represented in. I will then apply the imagological
method to my findings and create more coherent summaries of the national stereotypes that
are created.

2.1 Murderous Main Character in the Horror Genre

Starting with what is probably the best known depiction of an Estonian character in movies,
in the horror movie *Orphan* (2009), the main antagonist, a little 9-year old Russian girl
named Esther (interestingly a very non-Russian name) who is adopted into a loving new
family turns out to actually be a 33-year old Estonian woman with the actual name of Leena

Klammer, who has a rare hormonal disorder that makes her look like a child, and who is deeply disturbed, violent and very dangerous. Leena's real identity and background is revealed near the end of the movie, where the adoptive mother finds out along with the audience about her disturbing and murderous past via a phone call from a doctor Värava who used to treat her.

It turns out that Leena was sexually abused by her father ever since she was an infant, but was rejected by him once it became clear that "she would never become a real woman", which resulted in Leena killing both him and his new girlfriend. Even after she was caught and put into an insane asylum called the Saarne Institute, she managed to escape and made a living by prostitution for pedophiles. When she was caught off the streets, she pretended to be a child to avoid going back to the mental asylum, and so she was put into an orphanage, where she eventually made her way to the United States and into the home of the Colemans (but not before a few unsuccessful attempts of seducing some adoptive fathers and then burning down their houses, which turned out to be her *modus operandi*, killing seven people altogether).

Starting with the name, Leena Klammer by itself is not a particularly Estonian name, but it definitely could be the name of an Estonian. According to Rain Pruul (2009), the girl's name was originally going to be Mari Mammel, which a much more Estonian-sounding name, although a little funny and not very realistic (<5 people or possibly none in Estonia with a last name of Mammel, but 34 with the last name Klammer) (Eesti Statistikaamet). For unknown reasons, the name was then switched to Veera Klammer, and then once more to Leena.

Leena Klammer (*Image 2.*) is portrayed by Isabelle Fuhrman, who is a Canadian actress, but after a deeper search turns out to also have some Eastern European ancestry. Her mother, born Elina Kozmits, escaped from formerly Soviet occupied Moldova. Leena has fair skin, freckles, dark brown hair and eyes along with a winning smile that makes the unknowing audience empathise with her, at least in the beginning. In the movie, Esther (Leena) is very specific about the way she dresses, and is bullied because of it, at school as well as at home by his adoptive brother. She insists on wearing frilly and preppy dresses with ribbons, bows and lace, nostalgic to little girl's clothing from the 1920s (Felsenthal 2012). In addition to being practical, as thicker fabric helped her hide her body's curves with the additional help of breast bandages, the overall look (besides also giving sinister vibes) makes

her look more innocent and child-like, stuck in a different era completely. Giving her clothes from a century ago may also be a reference to her Estonian heritage, which is a country assumed by many to be similarly stuck in time and somewhat outdated because of its Soviet past.

Image 2. Isabelle Fuhrman portraying Leena Klammer in *Orphan* (2009)

A common theme that will be also prevalent in my other case studies is the accent of the Estonian character. In an interview, Isabelle Fuhrman speaks about how she studied the Estonian accent with a dialect coach every day by listening to tapes, and how the resting positions of the mouth and tongue are different from English speakers, and how complex it all was (ArtisanNewsService 2009).

In addition to Esther, we see some other supposedly Estonian characters in the movie as well. When the mother Kate Coleman goes through Esther's things, she finds a German Bible with a stamp of "Saare Instituute" (a mispelled version of the Estonian word *Instituut*) on the inside of the back cover. After some Googling, she finds the homepage of Saare Instituute with a big picture of a creepy building on front, which in real life was actually Alma College, an all-girls private school in Ontario, Canada, that was burned down in 2008. Upon calling the institute, a receptionist (*Image 3.*) picks up the phone and speaks the only

few lines we hear in Estonian in the whole movie: "Saarne Instituut, kas ma võin teid aidata?", "Kuidas, palun?" and "Ma ei saa aru, oota üks silmapilk!" (translation: "Saarne Institute, can I help you?", "Excuse me?" and "I don't understand, wait one moment!"). The receptionist is played by Pia Ajango, an Estonian violin artist (Pruul 2009). She then gives the phone to a nameless worker (*Image 4.*) from the institute who explains the nature of the institute in some broken English, portrayed by Matthew Raudsepp, a Canadian actor with an Estonian last name, whose English definitely has more of a Slavic accent to it than an Estonian one. The general trope of Slavic accents functions as a way to differentiate the character from "the rest", and with the geographical connotation, other overtly negative stereotypes associated with Russians and Eastern Europeans follow.

Image 3. Pia Ajango portraying unnamed receptionist in *Orphan* (2009)

These two minor characters are the only ones in my entire research that I came upon who were portrayed by people who are of Estonian origin. The fourth Estonian character in *Orphan* was Dr. Värava (*Image 5.*), a former doctor of Esther/Leena who calls Kate once he realises who they are dealing with after she had sent some photos to the institute to try to figure out what is going on. By the way the character pronounces both his own name and the name of the institute, it is clear that there is no way this person is actually Estonian. Portrayed

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by Karel Roden, a Czech actor known for his type-cast roles as Hollywood villains with his thick Slavic accent, which is of course also present in this particular film. The choice of a Czech actor playing this role signifies to the audience that Estonia belongs in the general Slavic area of Europe and that the true nationality does not matter in this context.

Image 4. Matthew Raudsepp portraying unnamed mental institute worker in *Orphan* (2009)

Except the physical appearance and their accents, there is not much to analyse about these three characters. Of Leena, however, we find out quite a bit more throughout the movie. In addition to her great manners and sociopathic tendencies, we also find out she plays the piano beautifully, which is another stereotype of talented Slavic children brought up under strict rule. She is also quite religious, as she carries with her an old and ratty German bible, written in a gothic typeface, where she holds pictures of (assumably) her previous adoptive fathers between the pages that are barely keeping intact. It is not explained why the bible is in German, but it could be used as a tool by the director to hint to the audience that she is not actually Russian, since the German Teutonic knights were the ones who brought religion to Estonia. The old-fashioned font of the bible also adds to the trope that she is from a traditional, even old-fashioned nation. Her new alter ego that she gives herself after moving to the states is Esther, which could be an allusion to Esther the biblical figure, an orphan who

eventually becomes the queen of Persia. She also frequently talks about Heaven and prays before dinnertime. All these are obvious indications that Leena comes from a religious background, perhaps something that was instilled in her at the institute, however not very successfully, if we consider where her morals lie. It might be that this is her way of making sure she gets salvation after her demise, to counteract all her evil deeds by acting nice during the day. It is likely that Leena's religious aspect is a result of assuming that like most of the rest of Eastern Europe, Estonia has a strong Orthodox Christian population. Another reason might be just because religious themes and symbols have always been a horror movie genre favourite, often as a contrast to all the evil happening, but inevitably resulting in faith-based institutions having an ominous connotation. This is a common cinematic trope in horror movies, where a character is given the stereotype of a religious murderer. This quality has most likely been added to Leena's character less as relating to the background of the character and more to stress the convention of a thriller genre, which often deploys religious fanaticism.

Image 5. Karel Roden portraying Dr. Värava in *Orphan* (2009)

Although the writers of the film have definitely done their homework and Estonia is represented quite accurately, despite the religious character and a few Slavic accents here and there, there is another fun little nod in the movie that refers to the way Western people tend to jam all the Eastern European countries together into one big post-Soviet country. At the dinner table (after Esther prays), his adoptive brother Danny mocks her eating style, saying "Yeah, maybe [it's normal] in Transylvania or whatever country you're from". Esther happily corrects him, reminding that she is from Russia (as she is claiming to be at this point in the movie), and how Transylvania is not even a country, but a part of Romania. It is not explained why Leena offers herself as a Russian instead of Estonian, but in addition to the likely motive of concealing her identity, it could also be that it is just easier to explain being from Russia than it is to be Estonian. The switch in nationalities can also have roots in reality, as she might identify better with a Russian nationality since she was born during the Soviet rule.

Overall, Estonia is not mentioned very many times throughout the movie *Orphan*. The reason for Estonia to play a part in the movie at all is not as difficult to guess as it is for the upcoming cases. The director of the film, Jaume Collet-Serra, as well as screenwriter David Johnson are both from Canada, where there is one of the biggest collectives of Estonians outside of Estonia in the world, estimated between 24–50 000 expats and their descendants. When the script was getting its final touches, Collet-Serra sent a description of the movie to his local Estonians to "be approved" first (Aksli 2007). It is therefore not unreasonable to guess that the makers of the movie had personal Estonian connections who had inspired them in one way or another.

To conclude, in this movie there are many stereotypes represented about Estonians that are also commonly related to the generic Eastern European and Slavic ethnotypes. Leena is a villainous character who throughout the movie retains her personality as being reserved and brooding, as well as religious to the point of morbidity. She also has a criminal as well as a sex worker background which are very common traits to have for an Estonian stereotype. The other Estonian characters mentioned in this movie all have very brief and minor roles, created equally as serious as Leena and just for the purpose of providing some background to her story.

2.2 Secondary Characters in Crime Dramas

One common theme I found in a lot of my research was how often Estonia was mentioned in various crime drama TV shows. One show that loves Estonia so much it decided to use it in its plot a total of four times (two of which include Estonian characters) is *Covert Affairs*, a Canadian TV show about CIA agent Annie Walker and her adventures as she is being trained as a field agent and spy. The first mention of Estonia is as early as the pilot episode titled *Pilot* (2010), where because of her excellent skills in languages, Annie is sent to hold negotiations with a Russian spy named Stanislav Orlovski in a hotel, where she goes undercover as an upscale escort to blend in with the hotel crowd.

In the hotel, Annie meets up with a sleazy-looking dark-haired man passed out on the messy hotel room couch, wearing nothing but a white bathrobe and a pillow over his head (*Image 6.*). On first inspection, Annie thinks the man to be dead, but after shaking him he eventually wakes up. Upon seeing Annie, he smiles slyly and says "Здравствуйте, kiisu" (translation: Hello (Russian), kitty (Estonian)). They continue to talk a bit in Russian, until "Stanislav" says "English is fine, I am in your country now, baby" in a strong Russian accent and laughs. He then gets up with his robe not fully covering his naked body. When Annie points it out, he does not seem to mind and invites her to follow her while he strolls over to the drink cart. Annie is there to collect intel, so when she reminds him about that and repeatedly asks where his PDA is (the mobile phone device he has the information on), he leads her to the bedroom next to the window, where he gets shot in the head while syncing the phones.

As it turns out, who we assume to be Stanislav "Stas" Orlovski is not actually Stas at all, but an Estonian body double sent to impersonate him and give fake intel so he would get the target off his back after being pronounced dead. Fake Stas is played by Alex Karzis, a Greek descent Canadian actor, another actor often cast as a (Russian) villain in minor roles in various TV shows. We never learn the character's real name (which might not be as stereotypically Slavic), but he plays a very important role in the sense that he will always be connected to Annie's first field experience as well as a shoot-out. Albeit a secondary character, he is also of great narrative importance in the episode, as Annie feels like something is wrong due to the way he acted and while no one else believes her, she ends up saving the whole operation when she does not give up and keeps digging, with the word

"kiisu" being her only real clue. She visits her Russian college professor and asks about the word, who explains to her that it is actually a word used in the South of Estonia, near the border to Latvia.

Although Stas' scene is short, the audience gets a pretty good overview of what kind of a person he is. Fake Stas (as he is credited in the show) walks around the fancy hotel room like he owns the place, clearly enjoying living off the agency's money, feasting on expensive wine and caviar. "Not as good as Russian caviar," he mentions casually in passing, feeding yet into another Slavic stereotype. He is clearly not supposed to be a charming character and gives off a shady vibe, drunk flirting with Annie any chance he gets in a very forward and demeaning way.

This is a man who has essentially been hired to get killed. Whether or not he knew this going into the job, playing a high-risk body double to a dangerous Russian assassin is a job fit for a lower class individual who probably already has some sort of criminal background and nothing to lose. Hiring Eastern Europeans to do the "dirty work" that any other self-respecting person would never do is a common trait in both film and also literature. The image that is formed of Estonians in this episode is of immoral criminals with no real worth, as Fake Stas is used as cannon fodder for the greater good.
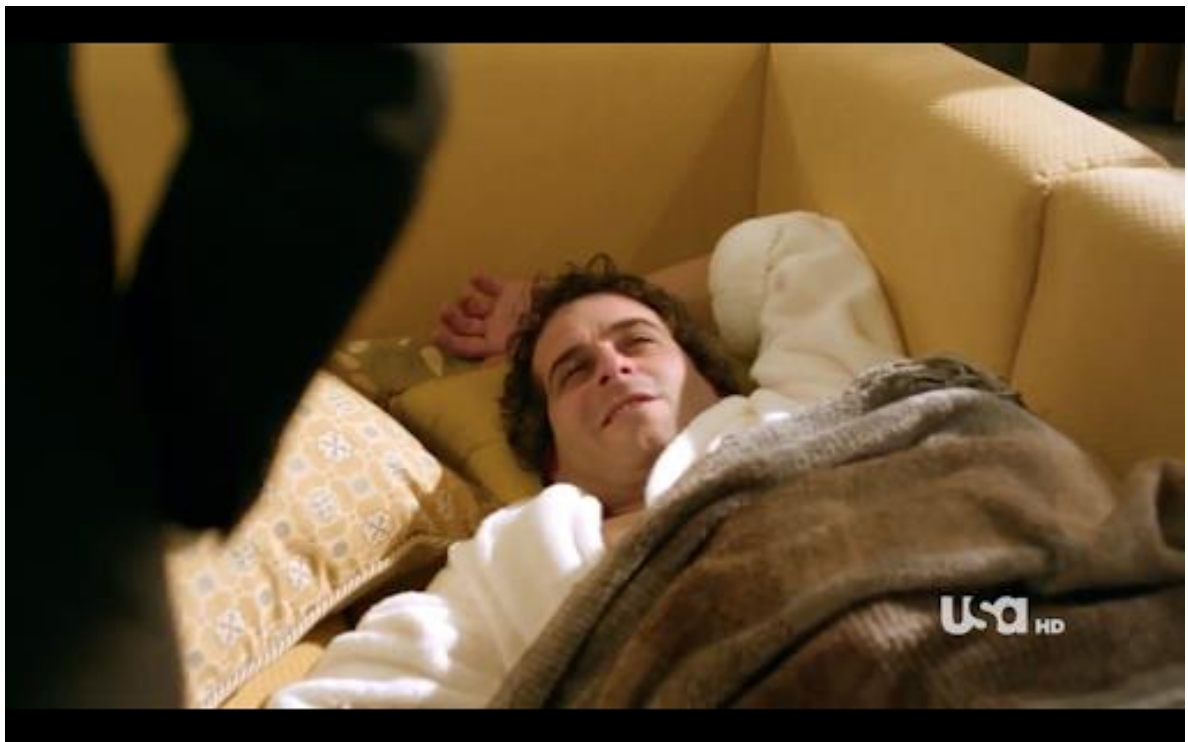

Image 6. Alex Karzis portraying (fake) Stanislav Orlovski in *Covert Affairs*, *Pilot* (2010)

The second time Estonian characters are represented in the show *Covert Affairs* is a year later, in the first episode of the second season titled *Begin the Begin* (2011). In this episode, Annie is tasked with protecting Nadia Levandi (*Image 7.*), an Estonian tennis player who has been CIA's intel asset for the last three years. For an unknown reason, Nadia has missed her last three "drops", and Annie takes on the responsibility to find out why.

When Annie and Nadia meet up during Nadia's tennis practice, they are cautiously kept an eye on by another Estonian, Alo Morozov (*Image 8.*) in the stands. As Annie's boss tells her, Alo Morozov's is "a heartwarming Estonian tale of a man pulling himself up out of abject Soviet poverty by money laundering, drug trafficking, and the occasional contract hit to pad out the 401-K." This is an example of the most stereotypical Eastern European villain trope who is from a poor background and needs to become a criminal as a result of becoming a product of his environment.

Image 7. Marija Karan portraying Nadia Levandi in *Covert Affairs*, *Begin the Begin* (2011)

Nadia Levandi is the mistress of Mozorov, and the crucial link between him and the CIA. Although he is Estonian, his file was generated on the Russian desk, as he is believed to be a facilitator between a Promethium mining operation in Estonia and the Moscow Kremlin.

Promethium is an extremely rare radioactive element, which makes the CIA believe that Russia is preparing for a nuclear attack. Promethium is not actually present on Earth in natural, measurable quantities to be possible to be mined, and is found in its natural form for example in the atmosphere of stars (Jefferson Lab Resources 2020). In addition to being motivated by nuclear power, this creates the image of Estonia as a mystical and even alien country with rare commodities.

As Mozorov is too dangerous and well-protected to approach, the CIA has been focusing on Nadia instead. Annie and Nadia meet again in the sauna of Nadia's gym, where she finds her eating some chocolate. When inquired about it, Nadia explains that the chocolate is her vice: "You used to not be able to get good quality chocolates in my country. But now that Estonia is on the Euro, we get all the good candies." For the global audience, this gives some more context about the country Nadia is from and the history of it. This reference points to the poverty of Eastern Europeans after the collapse of communism and the stereotype of the Euro-hero coming in and overcoming these obstacles of not being able to enjoy the same wealth and pleasures as the superior Westerners.

Image 8. James McGowan portraying Alo Mazorov (centre) in *Covert Affairs*, *Begin the Begin* (2011)

Since Estonia "get(s) all the good candy" now, Nadia realises that Mozorov might be interested in selling his land holdings since an opportunity in foreign investment has opened up. It turns out that Nadia's coach is in the FSB (successor agency to the infamous KGB) and has been threatening her unless she gets rid of Morozov, as he would be going against the wishes of the Kremlin. This plot twist could be symbolic of Estonia trying to become a free country outside of the Soviet Union, but still being stuck in a post-Soviet role with unbreakable ties to Russia. The trope of the Russian government being after you and not hesitating to kill you if you disobey them further creates the connection to a totalitarian system of which Estonia supposedly still belongs to.

While Annie drives the getaway car as they try to escape Nadia's coach who is chasing them with a gun, Nadia mutters under her breath (timestamp at 35:20).

- You have some mouth on you!
- You speak Estonian?
- Just the swear words.

Other than "kurat" (translation: damn, devil), there is nothing else I can decipher her saying. As an excellent linguist, it is not impossible for Annie to have learned some new Estonian vocabulary, to accompany "kiisu" that she now already knows of. It is also stereotypical for people to learn the swear words of a country first, as they are the most commonly heard ones from television and movies, especially with Russian and Polish.

At the end of the episode, Annie lets Nadia know that although the CIA can offer her anonymity and protection in the US, she will no longer be receiving monetary benefits, which means that she has to give up her tennis career. The two characters have one last exchange, where Nadia opens up a little about her national background (38:21):

- At least I can eat my chocolate bars now without a fear of recrimination.
- And you went out with a win! I know this whole thing is terrible. But this is your life now, and you're going to need to accept it.
- Thank you.
- For what?

- For not trying to make me happier than I should be. Americans are always trying to change things. But the Estonian heart is black. We know when fate has turned on us.
- So, what do you do?
- You live. It's still living.
- I don't want to just live. I want more than that.
- You are truly not Estonian.
- No. I guess I'm not.

This exchange implies that it is a precondition for Estonians to have no soul or empathy, as if it is embedded in the genetic memory of Estonians. This scene activates the trauma and survival narrative of the victimised Estonian nation, referencing the many horrible regimes and hundreds of years of occupation, as well as the depressive characteristics associated with Nordic countries. This exchange is spoken with a feeling of moroseness, but also with a sense of pride for being able to survive everything and to stay realistic about negative situations without the need to sugar-coat things as the Americans do. Here we see a case of reverse imagological opposition where the contrast is not created by the "Us" as it usually tends to be, but where the Estonian Nadia, who has been portrayed as the "Other" so far, creates the distinction between her and the West herself by explaining the auto-image of her native country.

Nadia Levandi is portrayed by the dark-haired Serbian actress Marija Karan, which is another example of how Eastern Europe is treated as one. She is a semi-successful tennis player, which is another Slavic stereotype where talented tennisists make their way in the West, and her position in the demographic is foremost an athlete, but her involvement with Morozov and the suspicious activity of the Russian government puts her in another stereotypical Eastern European character position. Even though the real bad guy that needs to be captured is Mozorov, the other Estonian Nadia clearly plays a more prominent role in the episode narrative. Overall, this episode forms two major stereotypes, of the mafioso Alo and the unkind and serious Nadia, but both of them are constantly stressed to be as they are because of the failure and aftermath of the Soviet Union.

Person of Interest is another TV show that belongs in the crime drama department, but this time with a twist of science fiction. In the ninth episode of the second season titled

C.O.D. (cash upon delivery) (2012), it is the mission of protagonist Harold Finch and his team of former CIA agents to protect Fermin Ordoñez, a taxi driver who sold a laptop that was left in his cab by a Russian criminal Vadim Pushkov. It turns out that the laptop contains some extremely sensitive information of stolen identities that could be used by foreigners to enter the USA without detection. Pushkov was supposed to sell the laptop to the Estonian mob, but left it in the cab while he was trying to negotiate a higher price for the product because of how dangerous it was. The Estonian mob was clearly "not in the mood" for negotiations and killed the man instead. Since the mob is already in the US, the motivation behind acquiring this information is likely to make money through illegal human trafficking, a deeply embedded stereotype that often follows the Eastern European mafia content.

One of the people the unsuspecting taxi driver gives a ride for is a blonde woman (*Image 9.*). Usually Finch would use the planted system to connect to the mobile phones of the clients, but this one he cannot access, meaning she either does not have one or it is switched off. The blonde woman gives directions to drive to a suspicious and isolated place where she starts questioning Ordoñez about her "friend" Pushkov. To the global viewer, whether or not Pushkov and the woman were actually friends, the connection between the Russian criminal and the Estonian mob establishes also a geographical and cultural context, and a deal between the two might even encourage a link between them and the Russian mob.

Image 9. Larisa Polonsky portraying Irina Kapp in *Person of Interest* (2012)

When Ordoñez fails to give answers, the woman makes a quick phone call of just one sentence "Koristage see jama ära", accompanied by subtitles translating it as "Clean this up", before getting out of the car. The taxi driver is then blocked in by multiple cars that surround him with Estonian gunmen getting out and starting to shoot at him (*Images 10 and 11.*). The woman speaks with a thick foreign accent when she speaks Estonian, and it is difficult to understand what she is saying. In direct translation, the phrase would be something more in the lines of "Clean up this nonsense". The use of a rare foreign language for cryptic messages further deepens the secrecy and mystery of the situation.

After this interaction, Finch is seen listening to the blonde woman's cryptic sentence on repeat, while he ponders "Can't quite make it out... But I believe it's Estonian". It is unclear whether Finch is good with languages, or if he is running it through a system that detects this result for him. Reese, who is at this point is disabling the GPS tracker from inside the car so they could not be tracked, replies "Estonian mob? I recognize their methods. It was a kill box. Had a similar experience in Russia. Didn't work out too well for them," referring to the ambush they just escaped from. This further establishes the connection between the Russian and Estonian mobs, especially by his use of "their", referring to them as one entity, as he had an analogous encounter in Russia.

Although they figure out Ordoñez does not have the laptop anymore, Finch and Reese come to the conclusion that "the Estonians" will kill the taxi driver anyway for just being aware of it. Here and elsewhere throughout the episode, characters are using plainly the nationality interchangeably as a synonym for the mafia gang. This creates a stereotype of all Estonians being mobsters and like-minded criminals. Meanwhile, the NYPD detective Jocelyn Carter finds out that the mysterious blonde woman is the Estonian operator Irina Kapp, who has a red notice issued on her by the Interpol six months prior. Carter finds this out after she pulls out an analytical brief on "the Estonians", which leaves unclear whether they have their briefs at the department based on nationalities and she looked through all documents connected to criminals from Estonia, or if they have a separate file on this specific mob.

All together there are three fights between the heroes of the show and the mob. In two of these, the blonde who "runs point for them" appears at the start, drops a few provoking

words and then lets her henchmen (*Images 10.–12.*) deal with the actual brawl and shootings while disappearing herself. The many men that accompany her and represent the rest of the mob do not have any speaking role, except for one "Nice try" with a strong Slavic accent during the final fight at a pool bar. These are all markers that they are there only as muscle and lack any actual decision-making power, but also reflects on the stereotype of Estonians as a violent and unintelligent nation, as they are slow and incapable of independence. The men hired look quite nondescript, big burly men dressed all in black, as you would assume a group of mobsters from a country you have never heard of would look like. In the stereotypical cases of Baltic-born emigrants who move to the West, they tend to take their post-Soviet mentality with them (Laurušaitė 2015: 174). In one of Lithuanian comparative literature scholar Laura Laurušaitė's examples, the character Goda from *Londono vėjas* (*The Wind of London* by Zita Čepaitė, written in 2013) is "immoral, aggressive and deceptive", and she names this archetype the "homo postsovieticus", just like the Estonian mafia characters in this example. This is an adaptation of the phrase "homo sovieticus", which was popularised by Russian author Aleksandr Zinovyev. Immigrants born in the Baltics who leave for a search of a better life in the Western world tend to learn dirty and illegal ways of making a living from "back home", for example trafficking arms, and continue getting by like that elsewhere they go (Laurušaitė 2015: 174). On *C.O.D.*'s Image Movie Database web page under trivia, it is mentioned that no "Estonian mafia" exists in reality, which two people have found interesting.

Although Irina Kapp has a speaking role and is clearly the boss in this situation, there is not much else we learn about her than the fact that she likes men with glasses. Since she made a phone call in the taxi, she definitely had a phone that was not shut off with her, although Finch could not access it, so one could assume she is smart. She also wears all black and wears dark sunglasses, which add to her vibe of wanting to stay fairly incognito. In the bar scene with the final fight, she somehow manages to get away again unscatched as in the first killer box situation. This is also confirmed by the NYPD agent, who later says she is still alive and nowhere to be found, which further supports the speculation that she is smart, as well as creates a feeling of suspense in the audience, as the heroes did not manage to get rid of the enemy completely, which means that they could resurface at any point.

Image 10. Unnamed Estonian mafia characters in *Person of Interest* (2012), picture 1

Image 11. Unnamed Estonian mafia characters in *Person of Interest* (2012), picture 2

The image of the Russian mob is one of the most common Eastern European stereotypes and because of how overused it is, it lacks some of its former power. Swapping the "Russian" to "Estonian" builds a more unique and interesting character with an exotic and rare background as a film trope, but enables the stereotype to remain the same in every other aspect. In *Person*

of Interest, the Estonian mob is used as the enemy and the Other who is still represented in connection to its previous imperial power Russia.

Image 12. Unnamed Estonian mafia characters in *Person of Interest* (2012), picture 3

The Mentalist is a police crime drama show with a former psychic Patrick Jane helping out the Investigation Bureau in California (CBI) to solve crimes. In the second episode of season four *Little Red Book* (2011), the story starts with a young man named Markus Kuzmenko (*Image 13.*) who was found murdered in his front yard. Kuzmenko was originally from Estonia, where he was a swimmer on the Estonian national swimming team but became a naturalised citizen of the States in 2002 and worked as a gym trainer for almost nine years before his early demise. Similarly to Nadia from Covert Affairs, Markus is an example of an athlete in search of more success in the United States. Initial comments by Jane is that he was a narcissist and a serial seducer, based on the fact that he is a "jock with manicured nails, too much cologne, too tight of pants and he drives a 20-year old muscle car". His boss at the gym describes him as being a real people person, charming and it not being possible to say no to him. She even goes as far as saying he was the most successful trainer they ever had. Therefore Markus is portrayed as a successful and positive character with charming personality traits, but those same characteristics are also used against him, as it is revealed he often slept with his clients as well as his boss.

Image 13. Eddie Davenport portraying Markus Kuzmenko in *The Mentalist* (2011), picture 1

While speaking with a client of Markus Kuzmenko, she describes him as "funny and charming with a faintly wicked quality, amoral" which an agent defines as "unaware of moral precepts as opposed to being purposefully bad." At this point, although we never see him alive, which puts him in the position of a secondary character despite the whole plot of the episode circling around him, the audience gains a pretty good overall picture of his personality and way of life. Regardless of his womanizing ways, Markus Kuzmenko seems like a nice man who did not enjoy his life as a professional swimmer, and decided to come try out the American Dream instead. His client also mentions that he never hit on her, but that she seduced him. When he called a week before his death to talk about a business venture, he had seemingly forgotten their affair and did not realise why it would not be the best idea to start a new company with the help of her husband, which adds some naiveté to his character.

While some audience member might feel at this point in the show that Kuzmenko was probably innocent and just a stereotypical pretty boy with a simple mind, we also learn that because of his competitive background and highly compulsive record keeping, he also jots down records of his sexual partners (his clients), accompanied with a coded rating system. When Finch finds this "little red book", the audience gets a glimpse of Kuzmenko's

living conditions as well, which seems like a nice apartment, decorated with plenty of pictures of himself and newspaper clippings from his achievements, which supports Jane's assumption of his narcissism. In one of the pictures, you can see Kuzmenko sporting the blue-black-white colours of the Estonian flag at what seems to be an awarding ceremony (*Image 14.*).

Kuzmenko's coworker Mike Vilanueva says that he was stealing Vilanueva's clients with his "looks and talk" because he apparently needed the cash for an unknown reason. However, when he went to confront him about it, Kuzmenko said he suddenly had a lot of money and did not need the clients anymore. "That's Markus, man", Vilanueva says as he explains that he did want to beat him up, but they ended up partying and getting wasted instead. The questions of why Kuzmenko needed the money and also why he suddenly did not make Kuzmenko's character feel suspicious. The agents following the case leap to assumptions that Kuzmenko slept with one of his high-prominence clients and then blackmailed her for huge amounts of money in exchange of keeping the affair a secret from the public, possibly assuming this based on his nationality.

It turns out that a few days before Kuzmenko was killed, he made 4 phone calls to Oleg Mostovoi, a loan shark, so he could start his own gym. His boss who he used to have sexual relations with tried reminding him of "what they meant to each other", but similarly to Kuzmenko's client, he had seemingly forgotten all about their sexual encounters, as if she had "been deleted" because there had been so many girls since her, which led her to killing him. The stereotype that is created here is of a successful womanizing athlete who does not care how or who he uses on the way out of his native country and to the top of the Western world.

Contrary to the previous few characters I have analysed in this subchapter, Markus Kuzmenko has no criminal background despite the show's genre and assumptions that the CBI agents make about him. This remains so until the end of the episode where the audience finds out about the big loan. Using a loan shark means that the borrowed money was obtained through probably illegal means. Adding a Russian name to the "shark" signifies that even though Kuzmenko had naturalised in the US and was a successful gym trainer, he was still somehow involved in the criminal underground of Eastern European origins. A connection to a Russian illegal loan system is something that he either already had when moving to the country in 2002, which would push into a stereotype that all Eastern Europeans are criminals,

or he acquired them while abroad, which would still hint at the possibility that it was easy for him to find such contacts because of his nationality.

Image 14. Eddie Davenport portraying Markus Kuzmenko in *The Mentalist* (2011), picture 2

In the television show *CSI: Cyber* episode 9 of the first season titled *L0M1S* (2015), the audience is presented with an Estonian character who eventually turns out to be someone else. The plot of this episode revolves around a cyber attack that is believed to be launched by an infamous cyber criminal who goes by the screen name L0M1S, whose real identity no one knows. The only few clues the CSI has about this mysterious person is that he is believed to be an Estonian man in his thirties, which feeds into the stereotype of an Eastern European criminal, and although not present in any of the other examples in this thesis, also the stereotype of a technologically advanced country of Estonia. At the end of the episode, it is revealed that the hacker is actually a 16-year old girl and not Estonian at all, but it is likely that the created image still stays with the audience, since it was prevalent for most of the episode.

Two very brief and similar mentions of Estonian characters can be found in the police procedural TV shows *Monk* and *Castle*, where the main protagonists and detectives each hypothesise that the victim in a crime scene is Estonian after Mr. Monk is told that the casualty originates from somewhere in the Baltics (*Mr. Monk Gets Fired*, 2004) and Castle

is told the same but the region is Eastern Europe (*The Dead Pool*, 2011). In both cases, the victims do not end up being Estonian, but the connotations of a Baltic and an Eastern European country remain, along with the connection to crime and victimisation.

In this section, the characters considered are all related to crime in one way another, as this is the genre that they are found in. This further deepens the stereotype of an Estonian villain and criminal, who is also almost always somehow tied to Russia, in that same criminal context. The four TV show episodes analysed here include both women and men who are all connected to murder somehow, either they are killed or it is them who (attempt to) do the killing. All of the characters are constantly in a morose mood, which usually goes together with the villainous and mafia stereotypes.

2.3 Female Sidekicks with a Dubious Past

Continuing with the theme of secondary characters in many ways similar to the ones I have already analysed, there are also a few cases where an Estonian character is important to the narrative, but where the genre of the show or movie is less involved with crime and more with drama. The earliest piece of data I analysed is the second episode of the drama show *The Prisoner* titled *The Chimes of Big Ben*, which was released in 1967. The story revolves around a resigned British intelligence agent dubbed Number Six, who gets abducted and put into the "Village", a fabricated countryside settlement where resigned people are put for the government to spy and whose lives to control while trying to figure out why they had left their jobs.

In the second episode, there is a new prisoner added to the Village nicknamed Number Eight with the real name of Nadia Rokovsky (*Image 15.*) who is put next door from the protagonist. Number Six invites her for a night cap to his house, which she happily accepts, and when asked for a preference of "genuine non-alcoholic" drinks, she chooses vodka, the cheaper option as well as the one most connected to Eastern European drinking habits. "You Russian?" he asks after he pours the drinks, probably referring to the interesting accent she has. "Estonian," she replies with a sigh, smiling shyly. "Russian." confirms Number 6 also with a knowing smile. Nadia looks up from her drink quickly suddenly with

a more serious face. "We don't think so," she replies quickly. Number Six swiftly dismisses Nadia's comment and moves on to compliment her English, which she accepts nonchalantly.

This exchange is particularly interesting because so far in my research, no Estonian character has really been very passionate about either being likened to Russians or not. Compared to Esther's character in *Orphan*, where she voluntarily presented herself rather as Russian than Estonian, and *Covert Affairs* and *Person of Interest* characters who have been working besides Russians despite trying to escape from the Soviet control, it is the first time a character has drawn a direct line between the two nationalities. It is probable that this is so because in the 1960s when *The Prisoner* was released, exiled Estonians were more avid to resisting certain stereotypes and to break free from the Soviet connotation while the country was experiencing a more liberal atmosphere in the USSR due to the Khrushchev's Thaw, whereas now, without the imminent threat and occupation of the large neighbouring country, the inevitable connection to Russia due to the nations history is something that has been more accepted, although reluctantly.

Reminiscent of the athletes Nadia from *Covert Affairs* and Markus Kuzmenko from *Person of Interest*, Nadia Rokovsky is also an international swimmer, and was even an Olympic bronze medalist at already the young age of 17. This comes into context when she seems to try to escape from the Village by swimming out of the beach. After being captured and taken into questioning, Number Two claims to Number Six "I really don't want to be hard on her, she's not at all important. I'm surprised they even sent her here." Nadia's story at this point is not yet known and this exchange could make her role in the narrative clearer to the audience watching, as she is present only in this episode. By the end of the episode, it is revealed that Nadia was playing a double agent and was not on Number Six's side after all, but instead was planted in the Village to get close to him and keep him from trying to escape.

One evening, number Six and Eight meet and she tells him that the location of the Village is in Lithuania, just 30 miles from the border of Poland. Reinforcing the Baltic connection makes it more believable for the audience that she would know this by working for the government. She describes a small fisher village Braniewo who are against the Village and that she has a contact there that could help them, so they decide to escape via a boat that he builds. As they sail, great big mountains are seen in the landscape where they are aiming towards, although this area, much like the rest of Baltics, should be very flat. They meet up

with Nadia's Polish contact Karel, and the two speak Russian to each other. This signifies to the audience that as they are both from the Eastern Bloc in the 60s, they must have a common language. The Eastern European "common collective memory" represents itself often through linguistics (Laurušaitė 2015: 174). Russian is a significant way for Eastern Europeans to identify themselves and also each other, strengthening their unity and bringing about a sort of an alliance (*ibid.*). The actress Nadia Grey (née Kujnir) was born in Romania, and had to coach the British actor of Karel to speak grammatically correct Russian in the local dialect he was supposed to have (IMDb 2020). It is also pointed out on the Internet Movie Database website under "character error" that although Nadia's character is supposed to be Estonian, her name on the show is ethnic Russian, and when she speaks Russian with Karel, she does not have an Estonian accent (*ibid.*).

Image 15. Nadia Gray portraying Nadia Rokovsky, Number Eight in *The Prisoner* (1967)

At the end of the episode, Number Six realises he is in fact not back at London at all and still in the Village. He then sees Nadia with Number Two, which makes it clear to him that she was an accomplice and not actually on Six's side all this time. Before Nadia leaves the Village, she tells Number Two that the plan was a good idea, and that she shall "stress it in [her] report". Her real backstory is never revealed and remains a mystery.

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During the 1960s, the Soviet Union was mostly closed for travel, both in and out. Estonia was one of the first countries from the Soviet countries to open up for international travel just a few years before this episode of *The Prisoner* was filmed (Viivik 2005), which might be the reason why an Estonian character was chosen to represent the USSR. The exceptions of people that were allowed out of the country were mostly athletes going to compete in sporting events, which could also explain how Nadia made her way out of Estonia, since she was an Olympic swimmer when she was younger. This is also one of the Eastern European stereotypes of successful athletes as well as artists escaping their native countries to try and make their way in the West. In the 60s, the practice of espionage was also prevalent between the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom (popular spies from this era include the Cambridge Five, George Blake, Oleg Gordievski, etc), where this TV show is filmed and produced, which could explain why Nadia has been given the spy trait.

Moving on from all the TV shows I have analysed so far, I also came upon the movie *Transporter Refueled* (2015) in my research. In *Transporter Refueled*, Ed Skrein plays Frank Martin, who delivers packages with questionable content in Monaco for a living. While he makes a deal with a woman named Anna, her sidekick Maria is seemingly stuck on the street, trying to get a spare tire out of her car's trunk, wearing high heels and a short white dress that is flying in the wind, conveniently on the way of Frank's father's walk. Frank Sr stops to help the woman, who then tases him, exposing the "princess in distress"-act to be just a ruse.

Maria kidnaps and chains Frank's father to a chair to hold him as hostage as leverage against Frank Jr. When the group gets to an abandoned warehouse where Frank Senior is held captive, Maria pulls a gun out on Junior once he gets out of the car, to check if he is armed. Frank Sr, who admits he was sucker punched by a girl for the first time in his life, introduces Maria, as they have been getting to know each other (*Image 16.*). "She is Estonian. From Tallinn," he says while sipping on some beer. "I've done some funky shit in my time down there, I can tell you. Actually they've got very, very good vodka," he continues. Frank Sr is a retired secret agent, so here he must be implying that he had some crazy missions in Estonia during his career. He seems to want to get along with the woman and decides to compliment her home country with a random detail he could remember, while also trying to break the tension of the situation with some fun facts. He could have been reminded of the vodka since he is at that moment also drinking alcohol. Just as in *The Prisoner*, vodka is directly connected to Estonia, enforcing the stereotype that it is the preferred choice of drink

for Estonians. The "funky shit" Frank Sr refers to can also be interpreted as Estonia being a country where outrageous, maybe even illegal things can happen, as opposed to the civilised West.

Anna, Maria and the other girls used to worked for Arkady Karasov, a Russian crime lord who makes money through illegal prostitution. They have now decided to run away and that it is time for payback. All the girls wear matching necklaces with a pendant that is the mark of Karasov. Anna tells Frank she is from an impoverished village and that she was bought from her mother into Karasov's service at the mere age of 12 for just 500 dollars. Although we do not learn anything else about the other girls' backstories, it is likely that they suffered a similar fate, including Maria from Estonia.

Image 16. Tatiana Pajkovic portraying Maria in *Transporter Refueled* (2015)

For a second time during the movie, the first three girls travel in a pack when carrying out a mission, while Maria works alone. Wearing a short red bodycon dress, she walks in a dark and dodgy alleyway and hires some men off the streets for a thousand euros each to carry out a job. She then proceeds to a bar where she sits next to a pilot sitting at the counter, smiles seductively and proposes they go to his room. When they get there, she once more pulls out a gun to get him to do what she wants. This is the second time Maria uses her looks and

revealing clothing to seduce a man to then take advantage of him, as she uses her sexual nature which seems to be apparent because of her background as a prostitute to work in her favour. She also seems to prefer working alone, which correlates with the Nordic stereotype.

In a hijacked plane, Maria seduces yet another man and plants some sleeping powder in his drink to then steal his fingerprints. When Frank Sr and Maria exit the plane, one of the security men shoots Maria in the side of her stomach. While they manage to save her life this time, only a few hours later when the group goes on Karasov's yacht to save Frank Sr who has been kidnapped again, Karasov shoots at Anna and Maria jumps in front of her, causing her to die.

At the very end of the movie, we see Anna a month after the events on the yacht, transferring some of the money stolen from Karasov to the families of the three now dead sidekicks. We are also shown short clips of each of the families receiving 75 million dollars, including of Maria. On the screen of Anna's tablet which she uses for the transfers we see Maria's full name, which turns out to be Maria Katju. Although a fairly Russian-sounding name, this last name is actually most popular in India. The receiver of Maria's portion of the money is received via text message by someone who might be her younger sister (*Image 17.*). She is shown in a dirty bathroom with peeling wallpaper, sitting on a chair in her underwear and filing her nails. After receiving the text, she yells out for "Mama!" in Russian. As Maria was mentioned to be from Tallinn, the audience can assume that this is a representation of a typical Tallinn apartment that she used to live in. The unkempt bathroom is stereotypical of the Eastern European living conditions, as the area is often shown to have big and grey apartment buildings that always look as if they were falling apart. It can also be suggested that the money was obtained so Maria's sister does not have to go through the same fate as she did.

As Maria is merely a secondary character, the audience does not get a very in-depth view into her life story and most of her remains somewhat a mystery. One can assume that she was probably sold into prostitution early in her life and "saved" from poor living conditions with a promise for a better life. This can be related back to Leena in *Orphan*, who was also driven out on the streets of Estonia to make a living as a prostitute. As Frank Jr and Sr discuss, life must be horrible for one to try and take down a Russian crime lord – "being sold into prostitution with death as your only way out" and nothing to lose. Although Maria ultimately escaped the working conditions she was forced into, there are several traits about

her that signify her position in the social demographic. As is common for characters that are associated with prostitution, the main way she managed to stand out and be memorable for the audience was the way she dressed, in bright and revealing clothing, emphasising her outsider status among the regular people of Monaco. In addition to the way she dressed and carried herself, the way she acted with others around her, especially the way she gazed at men, which was always fearless (Rose 2001: 151). However, she did also meet her end in the movie, and in an illegal shootout, which could be the typical way a prostitute character usually "pays for her sins" (*ibid.*).

Image 17. Uncredited actress portraying Maria's sister in *Transporter Refueled* (2015)

We also know she cared deeply about her friends, as she was willing to literally take a bullet for them, which she did, twice. She was clearly skilled with winning over men with her good looks and charm, which she also managed to do multiple times during the movie. Overall, the character of Maria could be summarised as classic femme fatale archetype: sexy and badass, but nonetheless mysterious, and a lethal temptress. She was also involved in various criminal activities throughout the movie, such as robbing a bank, stealing fingerprints, holding people at gunpoint and so on. Her origin however implies that these traits are once again the consequences of her past, which has created another stereotypical Eastern European victim.

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As the last case study in this section, I will be looking at the character of Yvetta from *True Blood*, a drama series about vampires who roam the earth alongside humans. In *Bad Blood* (2010), the opening episode of season three, the local vampire nightclub Fangtasia hires a new exotic dancer from Estonia. As the protagonist Sookie runs into the basement of the nightclub, she finds Yvetta tied up, with her and bar manager Eric engaging in sexual relations for the past six hours (*Image 18.*). As Eric walks away from her to talk to Sookie, he tells Yvetta to "stay" in Russian, as you would tell a dog. Eric introduces her to Sookie, while she is still hanging from the ties, naked, and Yvetta greets her in Russian. Fangtasia's co-owner Pam is seen checking out Yvetta as well, admitting she likes what she sees. After Sookie and Pam leave and Eric is pondering into the distance, Yvetta is seen hanging in the background in a submissive and degrading position.

Image 18. Natasha Alam portraying Yvetta (right) in *True Blood*, *Bad Blood* (2010)

In the same season in episode three *It Hurts Me Too*, there is a quick scene where Yvetta is sitting on a table while Pam the co-owner is performing cunnilingus on her and the phone rings. After Pam finishes her phone call, she says "Lie back, sweetheart, and think of Estonia," before continuing. This is a continuation of the actions from the previous episode, where Pam showed an interest in Yvetta. In the next episode *9 Crimes*, while Yvetta does a

private pole dance for Eric, he daydreams of Sookie instead. "You want more? Or I boring you?" she asks in broken English before being dismissed by a distracted Eric (*Image 19.*). She is clearly upset about that when she leaves. Compared to the previous two times she has had screentime, she looks visibly more miserable and worn out, older and even trashy. In the prostitute archetype, it is common for them to lose their looks over time (Rose 2001: 151).

Image 19. Natasha Alam portraying Yvetta in *True Blood*, *9 Crimes* (2010)

All three of these scenes are examples of where Yvetta plays a secondary and fairly unimportant role, but they are also all situations where she is being used in sexual ways. Although her job is being an exotic dancer for clients of Fangtasia, she seems to be more of a toy for the club owners. The first time she is introduced to the audience, we do not even see her face, which is mostly covered by her tousled hair, which signifies that she is just a faceless body.

In episode ten of season three *I Smell a Rat*, Eric prepares a will where he leaves his entire estate to Pam. The lawyer requires Eric to have another witness to this, so he calls over Yvetta. "Are you mentally competent and under no duress at this time?" Eric asks, to which she replies yes in Russian. He takes her hand and signs the document with it. When Yvetta realises what is happening, she starts yelling at Eric in Russian for leaving Pam everything when he allegedly promised to take care of Yvetta. "I promised you a job and good sex. That

is all," replies Eric, also in Russian (translated via subtitles). When Yvetta asks if she means nothing to him, he replies that she means less than nothing, "you gold-digging whore", switching to English for the latter part, to which Yvetta replies by kicking his chair and storming off. This implies that Yvetta and Eric had some sort of a relationship off camera, where she expected more of him than he was willing to give. There seems to be no respect towards her from him though, because the way he used her hand for the signature implies she is too simpleminded to do it herself and that he has complete power over her.

Episode eleven of season three titled *Fresh Blood* is the last episode where the audience sees Yvetta. Eric has captured Sookie and is holding her hostage in the basement of Fangtasia. Yvetta, who is fed up with both Eric and Pam at this point, goes downstairs to free her. If earlier it could be argued that maybe Yvetta spoke Russian to have a common tongue with Eric who also speaks it, it is now clear to the audience that Yvetta is indeed of Russian descent, as she is thinking in Russian when Sookie reads her mind. Another reason she might be thinking and speaking in Russian might be because the producers of the show assume that Estonians speak Russian, or that she should speak it for the audience to gain some insight into where Estonia might be located, or likely because it is easier to find an actor who speaks Russian than Estonian. This could also be a presentation of a more specific stereotype of a Russian-Estonian who cannot be bothered to learn the Estonian language.

"Rush, quick, I help!" Yvetta calls out, while struggling down the stairs in high heels and a fur shoulder wrap, which are both stereotypical pieces of attire often attributed to young Russian women. "Big, blonde stupid, I hate!" and "Bastard and bitch Pam!" she mutters in her broken English while unchaining Sookie, and together they attack Pam once they get back upstairs. In the nightclub, Yvetta takes over for Sookie and strangles Pam with a silver chain, which makes her vampire skin burn and smoke. When Sookie and her boyfriend Bill start to leave before Eric leaves, Pam yells out "Don't leave me alone with this idiot immigrant!", referring to Yvetta, who still has her in a chokehold. Yvetta laughs at that sarcastically, and lets her know that in Tallinn, she is a cardiologist. Later, Pam tells Eric that Yvetta cleaned out the cash before she left.

Yvetta used present tense while speaking about her life as a cardiologist in Tallinn, which could mean that she still has some sort of life in Estonia. However, it is more likely because of her imperfect English skills that she is talking about a past life. This joke could be based on the archetype of an Eastern European moving to the US for the "American

Dream", but not finding it. This trope is quite common in character construction, for example of someone who used to be someone highly esteemed at home, but now cannot even get a cleaner's job after escaping their country for various reasons. Although she still makes an honest living at the nightclub at first and did not resort to illegal means as many other characters of this archetype often do, she still robs the place in the end when she takes all the cash with her while Pam is tied up before leaving for good.

Although Yvetta's character is a more minor than secondary one, I have categorised her under this chapter, since she is a fairly mysterious character, with not a lot known about her past, and she disappears from the show as swiftly as she came. In the beginning, her role as a sidekick or assistant was connected to Fangtasia and especially to Eric, with whom she seemed to think she had a partnership. In the end, however, her loyalties changed, and she became of assistance to Sookie in her mission to escape and pay back Pam and Eric.

In *True Blood*, the stereotype that forms of Estonians through the representation of Yvetta is of a low-standard country where sex workers come from, with a substantial connection to Russia, especially linguistically. Her main and possibly only role in the show is producing sexual content. Yvetta's image is strongly embedded into the opposition of the Other, she is portrayed as a hard-working immigrant who has come to the United States to work a lower-class job to make a living and is forced to do so due to the collapsed economy of where she is originally from. Eric the bar owner treats her like absolute trash and sometimes even as an animal, which shows how little value Estonians have as people. She has no hesitation when attacking Pam, which implies an emotionless and cold personality, maybe she has even done it before, alluding to a criminal connotation as well.

To conclude, all the Estonian characters analysed in this section are women that have mysterious backgrounds who take part in criminal or otherwise suspicious activities. All three actresses are from various places in the world: Nadia Grey is a Romanian immigrant, Maria is played by Tatiana Pajkovic, who is a mix of Danish and Montenegrin descent and Yvetta is portrayed by Natasha Alam, who is from Uzbekistan. Romania and Montenegro are both considered Balkan countries in the Southern part of Eastern Europe, as well as post-communist. Balkan countries are often confused with Baltic countries, but they are all involved in the larger and more generic Eastern European stereotype. Uzbekistan is another former soviet country like Estonia, but located in Central Asia.

True Blood's Yvetta and Maria from *Transporter Refueled* share the stereotype of an Eastern European sex slave with promiscous attire, they also do not back down in case of confrontation. Even though both of them are attempted to be pushed into submission, the girls fight back ruthlessly and eventually leave the undignified situations they are in, which can be related to the stereotypical Eastern European trait of perseverance and ability to suffer through difficult situations.

2.4 Punchline Characters for Comedic Relief

In contrast with the previous two chapters where Estonian characters have played secondary roles in various drama shows and movies, another category can be made where the Estonian nationality has been bestowed upon minor characters with only a few seconds of screen time, created with the sole reason of comedic relief. In these cases, the character interactions are not essential to the narrative and could easily be cut out from the story without the plot changing.

The first of these examples and the longest scene in this section with Estonian characters is in the fourteenth episode of season four of the British show *My Family* (2003) in the Christmas special titled *Sixty Feet Under*. After doing their Christmas shopping, the Harper family get stuck in the underground metro, which is where the entire episode takes place. To avoid getting bored, the mother Susan decides to make friends with the people they are stuck with and strikes up a conversation with the two men who sit across them (*Image 20.*).

Although their names are never mentioned in the episode, in the list of cast and crew they are credited as Jaak (left on *Image 20.*) and Arvo (right). Jaak is reading a book, while Arvo is looking nervously at the ceiling. "Hello! Lovely day," Susan starts with a big smile. The two men look up at her with disdain and look away again, indicating that they do not want to engage in a chat. This reaction earns a spurt of laughter from the audience. "Where are you from?" she presses, forcing the men to look up again. The fact that she asks this could indicate that something about the way they look is foreign to her. One might also argue that she is just making small talk and could be asking about the region in the UK that they are from, since they are currently travelling on a train. "We are from Estonia," Arvo replies,

still clearly feeling uncomfortable about the situation he has now been forced into. "Estonia!" Susan exclaims, "That's nice. I love Estonia".

Jaak, who until now has not said anything but is clearly sceptical of this woman trying to talk to them, looks at her and asks, scowling: "You've been to Estonia?" Both of the Estonian gentlemen have distinct accents, which alters the way Jaak speaks in a way that makes it sound like he says "You've been to Estonié?". Different pronunciation of the name of the country by someone portraying a national signifies to the audience that it is the correct way to enunciate it. "In a sense," Susan replies, stalling, taken aback a little by the follow-up question and realising she is caught in her lie of trying to sound educated. "You have not been to Estonie," Jaak affirms while staring at Susan, followed by an audience laugh track.

Image 20. Philip Brodie and Robert Webb portraying Jaak (left) and Arvo (right) in *My Family* (2003)

For the average audience, the geographical location of Estonia is likely a hazy concept, so in this situation they can empathise with Susan, who is trying to be friendly and pretending to know about the country of the two men, rather than accidentally insult them and admit the contrary. "It certainly has a rich and varied history," says Susan, attempting to make amends by saying something complimentary but vague enough that it could be true about any nation.

"Go on," challenges Arvo, now interested how long she will keep this up for. "Did you host the Eurovision Song Contest in… uhm, once?" stutters Susan, clearly scrambling for any piece of information in her memory that she remembers about Estonia that could apply here. The episode aired in 2003, so it was filmed only about a year after Estonia hosted the Eurovision in the spring of 2002, making the memory still fresh in the minds of the European audience and giving something to remember to the public at home who might also realise they know nothing about Estonia. This answer unfortunately is not good enough for Jaak and Arvo who share a fed up look and scoff (06:35).

> – Great. We struggle under the Soviet yoke for nearly 50 years and this is all we are remembered for, hmm?
> – Not our beautiful lakes or forests? Or the medieval glories of Tallinn?
> – Our thriving music scene? Our 222 species of breeding birds?
> – Or even our lively love-hate relationship with Finland?
> – I'm sure it's lovely.
> – How are you sure? You've never been.

In this example, Jaak and Arvo are actually the ones using stereotypes about themselves, bringing out the victim trope while talking about the struggle against the Soviets, as well as the Nordic tropes of a country near Finland that is filled with lots of forests, lakes and birds. This self-image that they create is put in contrast with Susan's hetero-image which is much more vague, mentioning its varied history and participation in a continent-wide song contest.

At this point in the conversation, when Susan realises the chat is getting unfavourable, she turns to her husband and asks for help. "I'm not helping you out, I don't know anything about Estonia. Don't know where it is, and frankly, I couldn't care less!" replies Ben, to which Susan cries out his name in a warning voice. "No, we like him. He is honest. You are a patroniser," interrupts Jaak using a disapproving tone. Susan, not sure what to say to such a blunt insult, smiles a big fake smile, turns back to Ben and sighs, "Don't they speak beautiful English?", continuing with the patronising and through her surprise reinforcing the stereotype of how Eastern Europeans usually do not speak English very well.

Throughout the episode, as the whole thing takes place in one room, and the two men are sitting opposite the main characters, you can see their reactions to various things, mostly

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looking disapproving and sometimes even disgusted, whispering to each other. Only at one point when a random Romanian folk dance group dances through the carriage, Jaak and Arvo are shown smiling, dancing in their seats and clapping silently. This might imply that as another Eastern European country, the dance and music are something they are used to and possibly reminds them of home.

In another situation, while Ben goes off on another train traveller, the two Estonian men laugh approvingly and repeat that they like him because he is rude. Ben, who is known to be a sarcastic and morose character in the show is visibly happy about this validation, and a connection is created. These characters, like Nadia from *Covert Affairs*, accentuate the stereotype that Estonians appreciate truth and honesty several times, which might come off as cold-hearted and mean. This typically Northern stereotype is further encouraged when the old man who Ben was being rude to earlier starts being rude back, and both Jaak and Arvo get up to protect their new friend. "Hey, get off his case, granddad!" shouts one and "Maybe the old dame is screwy, eh?" shouts the other, while circling their temple, referring that the old man's wife is out of her mind. A fight ensues between the Estonians and the older gentleman, while Ben stands between them and tries to hold them off each other. When the train conductor announces that they have finally been cleared to continue their ride, Arvo hugs Ben and also shakes the hand of the older man to suggest a truce. In the end of the episode, Ben is sitting away from Susan and has seated himself between Arvo and Jaak instead, which further signifies the relationship that was created out of the mutual misanthropy that they share.

This example of two Estonian men who do not wish to be bothered on the train is perhaps the best one to portray the stereotypical cold and poker-faced nature that is often appointed to Northern European countries. The way they use intermittent sarcasm and how well they get along with Ben is a very straightforward representation of a country where small talk sociality is not held in high regard.

How I Met Your Mother was another incredibly popular sitcom in the 2000's. In season five, episode twenty four *Doppelgangers* (2010), one of the main protagonists Barney drives around in a taxi, trying to pick up women to attain his goal of sleeping with a woman from each country on the planet. He pulls down a map that has been integrated into the taxi to show his friend Marshall, with red tick marks marking countries that he has already checked off. "Wow, you're doing surprisingly well in the Baltics," comments Marshall. The

tick marks around the Baltics states are a little bit off, it looks more as if one is located somewhere on the border of Poland and Belarus, and another on the very northern border of Belarus. One could argue though that they are supposed to be on Lithuania and Latvia, and were maybe drawn in a rush, leaving only Estonia unchecked.

Later in the episode, Barney is seen on the street wearing a ginger and curly wig with some eyeliner, and juggling some knives in a carnivalesque outfit. "I am simple street performer from Estonia," he claims in rough English when his friends approach him, in a very strong fake Slavic accent. When questioned, Barney contends that his name is Kristof Doppelganger, and he does not know what a blog is, recommending they take an "American chill pill". This sort of behaviour from Barney implies that his vision of a stereotypical Estonian is someone with poor English skills, inadequate knowledge of web technology, and because of his choice of occupation of a travelling street artist, it is also likely to have a large population of Romani people, as is common in a lot of other European countries.

After his friends leave and Barney begins packing up his things, a blonde woman in a red cheongsam or Chinese dress approaches him (*Image 21.*). She tells him, in the same thick Slavic accent as Barney was using before that she overheard their conversation earlier and that she is also a street performer from Estonia, proceeding to demonstrate it by swallowing one of his knives and taking it back out again. Barney, who checks the map from the taxi that is now in his backpack, realises a woman from Estonia would "close out the Baltics", and seemingly passes out when seeing her swallow the sword, the insinuation being that he is imagining what she could do in the bedroom with those skills. This is yet another example of an Estonian character, usually with some Russian or Slavic connection, to be used as the target of a sexualised joke. Here the connotation is also of someone from an exotic country which is contrasted through her clothing, as well as being a jester of some sorts, entertaining the audience with her sword swallowing skills as if they were at a circus.

Although the woman, whose name is never mentioned but who appears as Petra in the credits, claims to also be from Estonia like Barney/Kristof, they still speak to each other in English. This is done so it would be easier for the audience to understand what they are saying, and of course because Barney does not really speak Estonian, although realistically, if Petra really thought that Barney was Estonian, she would probably approach him in either Estonian or possibly Russian.

Image 21. Brianna Belladonna portraying Petra in *How I Met Your Mother* (2010)

Another example of a minor Estonian character in a comedic TV show is in *Silicon Valley*, which was a popular series about a start-up company Pied Piper in San Francisco. In season three, at the end of episode five titled *The Empty Chair* (2016), the group of men involved with the startup realise that they need to hire a lot of coders to finish their project on time. Instead of hiring a few from Silicon Valley for a lot of money, they decide to hire more people from around the world for much less. During the last few minutes of the episode, the new coders have a group video call with Pied Piper, where they go around and introduce themselves. In addition to Gleb from Bulgaria and Sanjay from India, the third and last to introduce themselves is Elisabet Kirsipuu, who is speaking to Pied Piper from Estonia. Elisabet speaks English with a strong accent, but it is difficult to pinpoint where it is from. She starts saying thank you for the opportunity, but gets cut off by the CEO falling down with his new chair, and that is where the episode ends.

Continuing with episode six, *Bachmanity Insanity*, Elisabet gets a little more screen time. After another video call meeting, one of the programmers Dinesh asks Elisabet to stay after the call. He compliments the last commit she did, as well "as the fingers that typed it". Dinesh also reminds her that they will be talking more the next day. After the call ends,

Dinesh's coworker Gilfoy points out that she wasn't really flirting with Dinesh, but was just being nice because she is getting paid to work for Pied Piper.

The next day, Dinesh and Elisabet are speaking via video call again and are shown doing a playful back and forth. After the call ends, Gilfoy asks him about his end goal, wondering if he is dreaming that she is going to "hop on a plane, fly halfway across the world" and sleep with him. The average viewer at this point most probably does not remember where Elisabet is from, as it has not been mentioned since briefly in the previous episode, during which other things were going on the screen. This reminds the audience that Elisabet is hired as cheap labour from a far away, possibly second or third world country.

Dinesh mentions how she is the type of girl who does not even know how beautiful she is, to which Gilfoy reminds him that Dinesh does not know how beautiful she is either, as "packet loss over Estonian broadband is terrible", which essentially means that the internet connection is so bad in her location that the video call quality has dropped a significant amount. While hiring Elisabet was initially a positive representation of the IT-savvy people of Estonia, Gilfoy has now gone back to poking fun at the slow broadband connection of the country, implying that Estonia is behind with their technology development, similarly to what Barney was implying in *How I Met Your Mother* while talking about blogs.

Later in the episode, Dinesh is claiming to be "hacking for fun", when he is clearly working on their video chat resolution to see Elisabet's stream in a clearer way. Gilfoy mocks him, saying "If you worked half as hard on the platform as you do trying to ogle strange Slavic women, maybe our shares would finally be worth something." It is unclear if it is supposed to be a joke, or if Gilfoy does not know where Estonia is, which is equally plausible. If the audience does not remember where Elisabet is from, this exchange would give them a vague geographic location. He also calls her "strange", but it is likely that is related to Gilfoy's often mocky relationship to Dinesh, so he thinks she is weird because she likes Dinesh, not necessarily because of where she is from.

The next time Dinesh and Elisabet talk later in the episode, Dinesh is using the new, crystal clear video chat protocol for the first time, smiling big, as he is undeniably happy with what he sees. What Dinesh does not take into consideration is that although Elisabet's video stream is clearer, so is his. Once Elisabet (*Image 22.*) sees what Dinesh really looks like, she is taken aback, and starts quickly talking about how she will tell her boyfriend/husband all about this new chat protocol, and finishes the conversation.

Image 22. Sigrid Owen portraying Elisabet Kirsipuu in *Silicon Valley* (2016)

What starts out as an example of the successful image of "E-stonia" turns out to be a representation of cheap workforce from a poor and undeveloped country with a bad internet connection, in relation to other countries such as India and Bulgaria. Elisabet is yet another Estonian woman who is merged into a Slavic stereotype and who has sexual jokes made about her that stem from her attractiveness.

The 15th century setting British show *Blackadder* also has some of its jokes based on an Estonian character. The character has no name and they never appear on screen, but they manage to come up twice in the fourth episode of season one, *The Queen of Spain's Beard* (1983). The protagonist's brother, Henry, Prince of Wales is supposed to marry the Spanish Infanta, but he reveals that he is already engaged. Henry pulls out a long list,where he reads out all the international women he has already promised to marry, which also includes Jezebel of Estonia. The parchment appears to be smudged, as Henry has to take a double take and corrects himself to "Jeremy of Estonia", which is followed by laughter, as it is clearly a male name.

Because Henry is already involved with so many women, it means that the protagonist Edmund must marry the Infanta instead. While he waits to be introduced to

someone who he imagines to be young and extremely beautiful, the Infanta approaches him from behind, and starts speaking to him with the help of an accompanying translator. Edmund, who notices just the translator saying "I am the Infanta!", laughs and replies that he did not realise the Infanta has a beard. "Must be Jeremy of Estonia!" giggles a friend of Edmund, referring back to the earlier joke of a male fiancée of Henry's. Although on the Filmiveeb webpage (Kermit 2010), some Estonian nationals were bothered by how Estonians were made fun of in this episode as someone being so stupid that they must be from Estonia, this is not the case. In *Blackadder*, the Estonian character plays a very insignificant role and is there to be laughed at by the other characters and the audience, but not for reasons that have anything to do with his or her nationality. This is an example where Estonia is used for probably no other reason than as dialogue filler as a random country or area on the map and as an exotic and unknown country name that adds to the joke of a bearded infanta with a male name. The name Jezebel, which is the name that Henry originally gives his Estonian fiancée, is from the Bible, where she is often associated with sexual promiscuity, which is another covert stereotype of Estonians and Eastern European women.

In the medical show *Scrubs*, an attentive viewer can spot a minor Estonian character in season eight, episode three titled *My Saving Grace* (2009). Doctors Elliot and J.D., two of the main characters are shown to be complaining about their new Chief of Medicine. Elliot jokes that the new policies made by the new chief are so ridiculous that they might start charging the staff for candy at the gift shop. When J.D. points out that they do in fact charge doctors for the candy, Elliot is confused as to why the gift shop clerk Johann (*Image 23.*) always gives her everything for free. "Because he wants to make you his wife and bring you back to Estonia," explains J.D. while Johann waves to her. "That's why he's always asking me if I'm comfortable around oxen!" exclaims Elliot in return. The usage of "taking" her back and "making" someone their wife with the imagery of oxen signifies to the viewer that Estonia is located in a rural area and is a traditional and backwards country, possibly a place where multiple wives or forced marriages are common. Since oxen cannot be found in Europe anymore, this could be somewhere in the Middle East.

Later in the episode, another staff member flashes Johann her upper chest area and asks for some chocolate, to which Elliot calls him a "slut", to which he shrugs his shoulders in reply. Although most likely a friendly joke from Elliot's side and not meant as an actual comment on Johann's many intimate partners, the implication that he exchanges products

for sexual behaviour does signify that he is yet another Estonian character with a promiscuous behavioral trait (see: *Orphan*, *Transporter Refueled*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *True Blood*, etc).

Image 23. Uncredited actor portraying Johann (right) on *Scrubs* (2009)

Just as *Blackadder*, the extremely popular medical show *Grey's Anatomy*, although primarily a drama, has an Estonian character who is joked about twice throughout the eighteenth episode of the tenth series, but is never shown on screen. In *You Be Illin'* (2014), doctor Shepherd is preparing for a big speech on the topic of brain mapping, for which other doctors from all over the world are coming to observe. There is a massive wave of flu going around, and his translator has to call in sick. Noticeably troubled because of this, Dr. Shepherd asks a nurse to call all the colleges to see if anyone speaks "it". Dr. Grey, his wife, walks by and asks him if he is okay. "Uh, if you can speak Estonian," he says in a sarcastic tone and explains the situation. Dr. Grey does not answer his hypothetical question. This situation is amusing, because it is obvious to the audience that she does not speak such a weird language. Finding a translator who speaks Estonian turns out to be a difficult task, and Dr. Shepherd is hoping he can find someone, perhaps an international student or a linguistics professor at a university nearby, similarly to how Annie in *Covert Affairs* approached her Russian teacher to make sense of this weird language.

As the episode progresses, Shepherd also catches the flu, and Dr. Grey gives his speech for him, unbeknownst to Shepherd, while he is passed out. Once he comes to and asks if everyone was mad, Grey tells him that it went quite well and they all "seemed sold, except for the Estonian guy. He was lost." This exchange refers back to the beginning of the episode, implying that they did not manage to find the translator they were looking for earlier. To the viewer, this creates a humorous image of an esteemed international surgeon from far away Estonia, who came all the way to the US to hear a speech that he did not understand a single word of. From an imagological perspective, Estonia is used in this example as a random exotic country that is utilised as a symbol for the epitome of far away strangeness.

Last but certainly not least of the medical shows, the show *E/R* which had only one season in 1984 also starred an Estonian character on their fourth episode titled *My Way*. In this episode, a man comes to the Clark Street hospital who does not speak English, so the staff has a difficult time figuring out what he wants or needs. Just like in *Grey's Anatomy* as well as *Covert Affairs*, one of the staff members calls up an acquaintance who is a college professor to see if they could help. Turns out he could, and after a brief conversation with the patient, the professor translates the necessary details to the staff. There have been no subtitles accompanying the patient's speech, so to the regular global audience, they have no idea what is going on, just as the hospital workers. Dr. Sheinfeld, the emergency room physician lets everyone involved know that the patient is Ivo from Estonia (*Image 24.*), that he arrived to the US the day before and that he had swallowed three dimes, which is why he needed some medical advice. Ivo is then put in a wheelchair and taken to X-ray by a nurse.

The whole scene takes a little over two minutes, and has no major plot lines in it, serving only comedic effect. Ivo from Haapsalu is played by Henry Polic II, an American actor, who seems to have been learning his Estonian lines from paper, possibly with a little help from a vocal coach. Most of the words are pronounced with the stress in the wrong place, often in a way that does not make sense and it is difficult to decipher what he is saying a lot of the time.

As Ivo enters the hospital, he is asked to stay behind the designated white line. After he does not comply, a security guard takes him aside and threatens him. Ivo then replies to him in Estonian, a language that to the viewer could easily sound as gibberish, which makes it clear that he has no idea what they are saying to him, and earns a laugh from the laugh track. The receptionist speaks another language back at him, and when he does not reply, she

confirms that he is not Filipino, which is another small and exotic nationality almost equally as obscure.

Image 24. Henry Polic II portraying Ivo (left) in *E/R* (1984)

After Ivo gets admitted, with no one still having any idea what is wrong with him, a nurse ponders how strange it is to have a man sitting in front of them and not being able to communicate with each other. This provides the basis for a joke by another nurse, who then complains about his husband at home. Before the phone call, he does not say much other than repeating that he needs help and that he swallowed some money. On the phone, Ivo replies to the professor in short phrases, such as "Estonia", "Haapsalu", "Just nii" (translation: just like that; just so). He does not actually tell him when he got to America, but that he got there recently. He then thanks the professor and hands him back the phone.

This is where Ivo's character changes a bit. Before, his character was more timid and looked mostly scared. After he is able to talk in Estonian, he instantly perks up. When he hears Dr. Sheinfeld repeat his name, he chimes in with "Jaa! Ivo!" and starts shaking everybody's hand enthusiastically, introducing himself to the crowd of staff that has gathered around him. As Dr. Sheinfeld explains the situation, Ivo cuts in with a few more "Jaa! Haapsalu!" and "Jaa! Eesti!"-s, getting more and more excited as people are beginning to understand his problem. When one of the nurses asks the doctor how he managed to swallow

the coins, Sheinfeld tells her to ask Ivo. She turns to Ivo and starts asking, but then suddenly stops and pouts as she realises that he of course cannot understand her, which serves as another lighthearted joke for the audience.

Before being wheeled away, Ivo thanks the doctors and nurses, saying that his heart is now at peace and that they are very good doctors. The way he drags the words and looks at the female doctors while he says it, could seem to a non-Estonian as if he is commenting something about their looks, maybe even something sexual. "Yes, she is pretty for a doctor!" "translates" Dr. Sheinfeld, claiming that he "cleaned it up", as if he spoke Estonian and that Ivo actually said something dirty. Once Ivo sits down in the chair, he gasps, "Oo, meil need on Eesti! Haapsalus, jaa!" in broken Estonian, which essentially means that they have wheelchairs where he is from as well, but to the viewer and to the doctors, this continues to sound incomprehensible, so they just wave and say bye. Ivo's enthusiastic characteristics, inability to speak the language as well as funny and emotive facial expressions make him feel like he has a weird and simple-minded persona. This stereotype is further encouraged by how he swallowed money, which creates an image of a nation who does not know how to use it. However, this could also be the stereotypical tourist-archetype from the 1980s, and have nothing to do with where he is meant to be from.

Moving on to animated sitcoms, in the pilot of Bordertown which was a short-lived American series, an Estonian character was inserted for a few seconds for a quick joke in the episode called *The Engagement* (2016), when the nephew character J.C. comes home from college by taxi. The car stops in front of a house and as J.C. is getting out, he tells the taxi driver in a condescending tone, "Look at me. I'm no better than you. Don't ever forget it. It's the working class that keeps Spaceship Earth running." "I used to be president of Estonia," replies the driver (*Image 25.*) while taking the money and drives away. This swift punch-line makes fun of both J.C. as he was being patronising, but mostly it is mocking the taxi driver, who has fallen from an honored position to a blue collar worker. This is another example of the Eastern European immigrant archetype that we saw earlier in *True Blood*, where an Estonian citizen has fallen onto a low-paying job after being in a position of high value back home. No name is given to this taxi driver, nor is the voice actor credited in the cast and crew of this episode.

Image 25. Unnamed taxi driver (right) in *Bordertown* (2016)

On *The Simpsons*, another animated sitcom, there are thousands of characters that have appeared on screen in the span of 31 seasons, so it is not that surprising that you can find characters from all over the world. One of *The Simpsons* characters called Estonian Dwarf stars in four different episodes. In just one of them, however, is his nationality mentioned, otherwise no references to Estonia are made. Back in 1994 in season five, episode eighteen titled *Burns' Heir*, the plot revolves around Mr. Montgomery Burns who chooses Bart, the son of the main protagonist family as his new prodigy and heir, but Bart starts missing his family. Mr. Burns, afraid Bart will leave him, decides to fabricate a video of his family talking about how much better they are doing now that Bart is gone. Bart feels like something is off about the video, which prompts Burns to leave to the next room, where it is revealed that the living room couch is just a stage set up and the family is being played by actors with masks on. The actor playing Lisa takes off his mask to reveal a short bald man, who then starts smoking a cigar (*Image 26.*). "Hey, you know we are getting into golden time," he says, which, as I understand it, means that the sun is setting and it is getting late. Golden time can also be a synonym for the prime time television slot, so he might want to go home already to watch television.

Image 26. Estonian Dwarf in *The Simpsons*, *Burn's Heir* (1994)

At the end of the episode, once the Simpsons family is united once more in their real living room, Homer the dad tells Bart that they were not really on TV, but only portrayed by actors. When Bart asks how they know this, they tell him that the actors were following them around for about a week, trying to get their character down. "That midget taught me a lot about his native Estonia!" adds daughter Lisa. This means that "off camera", Lisa and the Estonian Dwarf spent some time together, and Lisa, who is enthusiastic about the world, was probably asking him a lot of questions about where he was from. Here, the Dwarf's nationality is used as a random strange-sounding name that adds to the oddness of the whole situation.

While Estonia does not come up any more in *The Simpsons*, the minor character is reused in various other scenarios. Earlier in this same episode of *Burns' Heir*, when Bart takes a ride with a car that Burns buys him, he drives it through Santa's Village, the amusement park in the area. One of the elves who works there gets run over and flattened against the windshield of the car, then slides away. In the episode *Homie the Clown* from 1995, Estonian Dwarf is hired to play the Krusty Burglar, who is a parody of the Hamburglar character made by McDonalds. In the sketch that he acts in, Homer misunderstands the situation and attacks him. Another episode from 1995, *Radioactive Man* (season seven, episode two), is an episode where Bart's best friend Milhouse gets cast to play a superhero's

sidekick in a movie. In one scene, Bart sees Milhouse being run over by a car – when he runs over to check on him, it turns out it is the Estonian Dwarf, this time wearing a blue wig. "Hey, you're not Milhouse!" he says. "No, I'm just Milhouse when he gets hurt," groans Dwarf, who has been hired to play his stunt double, and gets dragged away by other crew members, who then replace his position with real Milhouse to continue filming. All three of these scenes are examples of how the Estonian Dwarf character is used as a laughing stock for the audience as someone uses violence on him or when he is getting hurt.

At the end of the *Radioactive Man*, Bart and Milhouse are in class, after Milhouse has decided to give up on his acting career. When Bart leans over and asks if it was hard giving up the famous life, Milhouse turns to him and reveals it is again the Estonian Dwarf with the blue wig: "Quiet! Maybe I can get my citizenship."

In episode twelve of season twenty one *Boy Meets Curl* (2010), the Simpsons family go to the Olympics. Lisa meets a girl there who has dropped one of her collectable Olympic pins, which Lisa points out and then receives as a gift. Back behind a pin-selling kiosk, the girl takes off her wig and reveals herself to be a short man in disguise. He is referred to as Mr. Wee Wee, but many believe that this is also Estonian Dwarf in action.

Whether or not Estonian Dwarf is present in three or four episodes of the Simpsons, all the roles he plays are quite similar. This seems to be another case of an eager Eastern European character who has come to the US with the dream of becoming a famous actor, but ends up filling minor character roles which no one else wants to do, such as a stunt double who always gets hurt, a burglar character for a cheap fast food franchise sketch aimed for children, an elf in Santa's village and possibly playing a little girl to swindle visitors and get them hooked on a product he helps sell (the pins). This is further supported by him sitting in class in *Radioactive Man*, trying to get an American citizenship, which creates the stereotypical image of a stupid immigrant, as a fourth grade classroom is clearly not where to be getting information for a citizenship test. If Mr. Wee Wee from *Boy Meets Curl* is also supposed to be Estonian Dwarf, it is revealed how he used to previously work as a chief purser on a cruise ship, similarly to some other characters I have analysed who back home had a high-paying or important job compared to now. "Someday, I'll be the tall guy," he says angrily after his boss refuses him the ability to take control of his paid position, implying that he dreams of a time where he can be his own boss once again, but phrases it as an oxymoron, as he himself is very short, which makes the punchline.

One cannot talk about Estonian characters in movies and not talk about *Encino Man* (1992), which is one of the three movies analysed in this thesis and also one of the rare examples where the Estonian character has a much more central role in the narrative. Two high school boys from Encino, California, are digging a pool and discover a prehistoric man, frozen in a block of ice. The block melts and the boys, Dave and Stanley (Stoney) introduce their new friend to the world. When asked where he is from, as he acts odd and does not speak any English (or any other language, for that matter), Dave and Stoney claim he is from Estonia, and name him Linkovich "Link" Chomovsky. This movie is probably the most well-known example of Estonians being mentioned in a Hollywood movie or TV show because it is one of the earliest, and compared to others I've analysed so far, the Estonian component also plays a more prominent role.

After the man in the ice block has melted free and Dave and Stoney have created a secure connection between them, the boys give him a bath, a haircut and dress him in some clothes to make him look like a regular teenager (*Image 27.*). Dave convinces his parents that Link is an exchange student who they promised to house already months ago, so he would have a place to stay. This is the first scene where Link gets labelled with a nationality – Stoney blurts out "Estonia" as his origin country when Dave explains to his parents about how he travelled all the way from far away. After some consideration, Dave's father says to his wife: "We practically feed the entire neighbourhood. Why not part of Estonia as well, huh?" He is referring here to the fact that Stoney often stays for dinner, so one more mouth to feed would not be so bad. However, the way he formulates this sentence as a hyperbole implies that Estonia is a poor country that is not able to feed itself, and needs their help.

In another scene, when Link finally goes to school with the other boys, he jumps off an indoor balcony and runs up to a girl to grab her hair. Everybody of course thinks this is extremely weird, but it gets brushed off when Dave explains he is from Estonia and that he is thinking of becoming a hairdresser. Despite his caveman-like behaviour, the girls he approaches seem to be fascinated by him. "Is this dude totally fundamental, or what?" asks Ella, the girl who got her hair pulled. Although in this context, this phrase is used as 90s slang commentary on how cool Link is, fundamental is also a synonym for primal, which relates back to his origin story.

At hockey practice, Link is drawing big-breasted cave painting-style people on the arena glass, using bottles of mustard and ketchup, adding a crude trait to the character. Ella,

who is trying to get Link to invite her to prom, tries having a conversation with Link, and assumes that the sketch of the woman is his girlfriend from Estonia that he misses. She reminds him that Estonia is "a long ways away", and that he should forget about her. By the end of the movie, Link is crowned prom king, and even though his real background is exposed, no one seems to care.

Image 27. Brendan Fraser portraying Linkovich Chomovsky in *Encino Man* (1992)

Throughout the movie, every time someone inquires about who this mysterious new student is, it is replied to with something along the lines of "This is Link, he is from Estonia," which makes his fake nationality his entire identity. Even though he is not actually from Estonia, Link's character and the country inevitably converge, and the way he acts becomes one with the nationality's stereotype, both in the movie, and for the target audience, in the real world. Link is inherently simpleminded, as a caveman would unquestionably be if he got transported into the 20th century. He does not talk, and the way he acts is closer to an ape than to a human, being fascinated by simple everyday objects and sometimes even using his hands to walk around in addition to his feet. The whole film is filled with scenes that mock his prehistoric ways and are designed to make the character laughable, starting with a scene where Link tries to fight the postman with a shovel while covered in red mud and only

wearing a loincloth, until the end when he finds himself in a museum, gets confused among the Stone Age exhibition and tries to make fire with a couple of sticks.

It is possible and also probable that Estonia was chosen as the random country for Link to be from is for the sole reason of a pun about him being from the E-"Stone"-ia Age. The name he is given by Dave and Stoney is unique, it seems that it started with the American nickname "Link" which is short for Lincoln, to which they added a Slavic -ovich ending. The last name Chomovsky seems to be of similar origin. *Encino Man* creates the image of Estonians being slow and primordial, sort of stuck in the past, similarly to Elisabet (*Silicon Valley*) and Barney's alter ego Kristof (*How I Met Your Mother*), who are technologically inept, as well as Ivo from *E/R* who swallowed money. Based on this movie, Estonians are simple people from a possibly poor country far away with Slavic names, which might help the American audience place the mysterious country somewhere on the map. It is possible that many viewers do not even realise Estonia is a real country, as everything else about Link has been fabricated.

In this section, there are various stereotypes created about Estonians. Surprisingly, almost none of these comedic examples include Russian connotations, except for in *Silicon Valley*, where Elisabet is called Slavic, and the ambiguous accents here and there. In comedy, Estonians are rather used as a stark contrast for the average character with their emotionless faces, strange habits and weird backwards country. It is also interesting that none of these cases include references to any criminal activity, which has been connected to Estonians so often in the drama genre, often along with the ties to Russia. Here, the roles of Estonian characters tend to be shorter in length and lesser in importance, with the function of an exotic country that can be used to laugh at with the minimal real life consequences.

In this analysis chapter, I have outlined snippets and relevant imagological information of 28 different movies and TV show episodes that have portrayals of Estonian characters, each followed by analysis. There are many prevalent stereotypes that have surfaced from my findings, which will now be further discussed in a comparative fashion in the next discussion chapter.

3. Comparative Synthesis of the Images of Estonians in the Corpus

As British geographer William Richard Mead said in his last book about Finland, to be from one of the biggest and most powerful countries in the world is not easy when trying to write about a small new country in the world (Mead 1982: 52), as the authors do not know what it is like. Similarly to what Michael J. Strada and Harold R. Troper write in their book *Friend or Foe?* about Russians, the Estonians represented in American films and TV shows are one-dimensional characters that lack any complexity to them (1997: 201). Interactions with Estonians in fictional television shows and movies are brief, usually lasting only a few seconds to a few minutes, and they leave as swiftly as they entered, rarely having any real importance within the narrative or causing any consequences.

Writing this thesis, I decided to categorise the pieces from my corpus into chapters based on the role and the importance the Estonian character had in the narrative, since I hypothesised that I would find the most similarities between those groupings. It was surprising to me to find that the most prevailing traits were scattered around in almost every category that I created, with seemingly no patterns to it. I have decided to keep the analysis chapters as they are, but I will attempt to create in what follows an imagological taxonomy by branching together examples where the stereotypical tropes are repeated most clearly. While analysing my case studies, since I am looking at cultural relations, I also always need to be using a critical approach and be aware of the embedded power relations that are constructed (Rose 2001: 4). The images of stereotypes are developed as constructions of meaning that directly reflect historical, political and social factors (Syndram 1991: 186, as cited in Kõvamees 2006: 665).

Although Estonians have a very different language and culture from the rest of the Baltics, Eastern Europe and Russia, as assumed, they still end up merged into one generic post-soviet stereotype. This is further supported by the case that Estonian characters are almost never played by Estonians, but instead by other Eastern European nationalities, such as Serbians (*Covert Affairs*), Czechs (*Orphan*) and Romanians (*The Prisoner*), or English-speaking actors, in which case they put on a strong Slavic accent (*My Family*, *How I Met Your Mother*). The actor choices show that for the average television show director, the

countries are all the same as nationality does not actually play an importance to the plot. Throughout history, Russian characters are also often played by other nationalities, as Russian actors were lacking, which might be the reason also in these cases, as available Estonian actors in the United States are only a few.

The use of an accent or a different language is a method the theatrical arts have used for centuries, as it helps to construct a character's background in a quick and relatively easy way (Lippi-Green 1997: 84). When speaking English, the diversity of their voice does not matter as much, but if the English they speak is accompanied by a specific foreign accent, it usually means that it is an integral part of the character and could not be left undone (Lippi-Green 1997: 82). Linguistic scholar Rosina Lippi-Green has found in her research that accents from specific locations and discriminated groups are often connected to negative plot lines and incentives of the characters (1997: 101). I believe it is safe to say that the generic Eastern European accent that has been created by Hollywood is one of these accents that in most cases is used alongside those same negative characterisations as the rest of the stereotypical Eastern European personality traits in character construction. The stereotypical Estonian character is most often presented with a Russian or Slavic accent (*Orphan*, *Covert Affairs*, *My Family*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Person of Interest*), which creates a connotation of those cultures for the viewer, and assumes that the Estonian accent is the same or similar. In other cases, the accent is dropped almost completely and the character simply speaks Russian instead, with the stereotype being that everybody in the Eastern European countries speaks it (*True Blood*, *Covert Affairs*). For example in *Covert Affairs*' episode *Pilot*, the Estonian character of Fake Stas is played by Canadian actor Alex Karzis, who starts off with speaking Russian, but then switches to English with a thick accent, to make it easier for the audience to follow along with the dialogue. In *The Prisoner*, when Nadia meets up with a Polish man, they speak Russian to each other, forming an image of kinship between the Eastern European countries. Many of the Estonian characters also have Russified names, such as Nadia (*Covert Affairs*) Rokovsky (*The Prisoner*), Morozov and Stanislav (*Covert Affairs*), Kuzmenko (*The Mentalist*), Yvetta (*True Blood*), Petra (*How I Met Your Mother*), Irina (*Person of Interest*) and Linkovich Chomovsky (*Encino Man*). Distinctly Estonian names include Alo and Levandi (*Covert Affairs*), Jaak and Arvo (*My Family*), Johann (*Scrubs*), Elisabet Kirsipuu (*Silicon Valley*), Kapp (*Person of Interest*) as well as Ivo (*E/R*).

Characters who speak some Estonian are Irina (*Person of Interest*), Nadia (*Covert Affairs*), Ivo (*E/R*) and the unnamed receptionist from *Orphan*, who is the only Estonian character played by an Estonian actor. The first three are non-Estonian actors, and the Estonian they speak is difficult to understand due to their native accents. Only Irina has her short Estonian line accompanied by subtitles, as for the other three, the content of what they are saying is not important, and is used only for the comedic effect of the silly tourist Ivo and the panicked swearing of Nadia, or in the case of *Orphan*, where it is used for some added mysticism for Leena's character.

Although the Soviet Union has collapsed and the Cold War has been over for almost three decades, most of the plots that are connected to Estonia involve unlawful villains involved in some sort of criminal activity or work for a corrupted government, like timid Nadia from *The Prisoner*, who is revealed to be a spy all along at the end of the episode. In *Covert Affairs*' pilot episode, Fake Stas is directly involved with the Russian mafia, as well as the cold-blooded Irina Kapp and the unnamed Estonian men in *Person of Interest*. Even though Markus, the murder victim from *The Mentalist* was not presented as a criminal *per se*, it was alluded that he obtained money to start a new gym through illegal ways. Alo from *Covert Affairs* episode *Begin the Begin* is a mobster directly associated with the Kremlin, and although his girlfriend Nadia is originally working with the CIA for insider information, she too, ends up almost being a murderer. In *Orphan*, in addition to Esther/Leena being constantly brooding and very serious, her adoptive family also discovers her murderous, arsenous and psychopathic past, as well as that she used to sell herself on the streets in Estonia, which is another prevailing stereotype.

The mafia characters already mentioned are often involved with human trafficking, which is how various Eastern European women end up in the Western world. The best example of this is probably from *True Blood*, where Yvetta, who was formerly a doctor in Estonia, is now making her living as an exotic dancer in a vampire club, where she is constantly taken advantage of sexually by her superiors. Although Yvetta is not a vampire herself, her exotic background definitely adds something to the overall fantastical theme of the show. Another mythical motif that is often connected to the Eastern European prostitute is of the "ancient siren" (Sarsenov 2008: 189), also known in film as the archetype of the *femme fatale*, the beautiful woman who seduces a man before she kills him. This trope is seen in *Transporter Refuelled*, where Maria, the escaped sex worker who usually stands behind

the other girls in the movie, uses her beautiful looks many times to seduce someone briefly for personal gain, as well as being repeatedly involved in various criminal activity. In *Person of Interest*, the beautiful blonde Irina is portrayed as the ruthless frontwoman of the Estonian mob, and although she does not seduce anyone, chaos and destruction follow her around wherever she goes. Although directly not involved in sex work, a few other Estonian characters have also been given traits of a sexual nature, often inappropriate and there to make the audience laugh (*Covert Affairs*, *The Mentalist*, *Silicon Valley*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Scrubs*, *E/R*).

The Cold War and mafia tropes most connected to brutal villains combined with the prostitute archetype create another stereotype of the victimhood that has shaped the people of Estonia after hundreds of years of oppression by various different nationalities, but most often by the Soviet Union. This stereotype includes both the women selling their bodies (*Orphan*, *True Blood*, *Transporter Refueled*) as the men who typically turn to a life of crime (*Covert Affairs*, *The Mentalist*, *Person of Interest*) or resort to low class jobs (*The Simpsons*, *Bordertown*, *True Blood*), all because of the environment that they were raised in. This victim trope can also be applied in situations where Estonian characters have accepted this as an auto stereotype. Nadia (*Covert Affairs*) is perhaps the best example here, as she explains at the end of the episode to the main character Annie about the black heart of Estonians, as well as Jaak and Arvo from *My Family*.

An important geographical notion to consider from the imagological perspective is how the opposition between the North and the South is portrayed on the screen. As usual, since the Estonian national is from the North, the stereotype is accordingly cold, serious and individualistic. In *My Family*, the unsmiling and blatantly honest to the point of rude characters are what underlines the running joke, as the contrast between Jaak and Arvo against the usually chirpy Susan creates an amusing situation. In *The Simpsons* and *Bordertown*, in the brief encounters with the Estonian Dwarf and taxi driver, the animated characters both stay reserved and completely emotionless throughout the interactions. Since warm islands in the South are the perfect location for a passionate love story (Pérez-Gil 2018: 4), then a distant and cold country would obviously be ideal for the opposite.

In addition to the North and South oppositions, the other binary opposition that can be pointed out is what is called the central vs peripheral constructions. The target group for all of my analysable items is likely global, but created with a more Western audience in mind.

In the case of my corpus, the viewer represents the West and the anglophone world as the central place in World history while Estonia is considered the peripheral, old-fashioned and backward country where time stands still. The obvious example here is *Encino Man*, where the Estonian character is literally from the Stone Age. This can be related back to the 18th century discussed in the theory chapter, when the prevailing stereotype about Estonians was as if the areas surrounding the German manors and towns were still wild and savage, even hostile, still waiting to be civilised (Hein 2019: 139). Estonian peasants were described with colonialist expressions that were otherwise used to characterise the "dark skinned pagan people" that had recently been discovered from far-away lands, even though the Estonians in question were white Europeans living on Christian land already for 500 years (*ibid.*). They were often likened to "extinct peoples" and "mythical savages" who needed to be enlightened and educated (Plath 2006: 41).

Animalistic features which are often equated to the Russian, Finnish and Estonian stereotypes alike are especially prevalent in *Encino Man*, where the primitiveness of an unknown country from a remote corner of the world is the underlying joke. In *Begin the Begin*, Nadia tells Annie about how difficult it was to get any chocolate or good candies in her country, which creates an image of an underdeveloped country for the viewer, still struggling with the aftermath of the Soviet Union and stuck in time as a result. Both Yvetta (*True Blood*) and the unnamed taxi driver (*Bordertown*) used to have high-paying jobs in Estonia, but are now portrayed as lousy immigrants with simple jobs, which insinuates that the standards in Estonia are lower and not as advanced. The constantly stagnant nature of Estonia is also presented through the aged style of clothing of Leena from *Orphan*, as well as the image of a country full of oxen in *Scrubs*.

The materials of my corpus stretched over 49 years from 1967 to 2016, but not a lot of relevant changes can be observed in the national image of the Estonian today as compared to the one from 1967, which suggests that the stereotype has remained mostly the same. The main and most evident change in this period of time is how the mentions of Estonians have grown in frequency, as almost half of the examples I have provided are from the previous decade but just three occurred before the year 1990. In the case of the older examples, the Estonian character is portrayed as someone from an exotic country of unknown origin with an incomprehensible language, but after the Soviet collapse, the stereotype switched to one

that gets often confused with the Russians and Slavs, becoming a part of one big Eastern Europe.

Although time goes on and stereotypes can change, the old images are not destroyed, but just tentatively put into the backgrounds in our minds, ready to be activated again at the right moment (Kõvamees 2006: 665). This is further supported by the fact that while comparing the findings of my analysis to the theoretical part of the thesis, some similarities can still be found. The descriptive national image of Estonians from the 18th and 19th centuries that I summarised can also be somewhat related to the present-day image. The paintings and the short descriptions of Estonians that accompanied them were created mostly by travellers who lived in Estonia for a short while, as well as the local Baltic German lords. This is a stark contrast against the Western TV producers and the global audience of audiovisual fiction of the 21st century, so there is a discontinuity between the two series of images, as from an imagological perspective, it is highly unlikely that one affected the other in the creation of these stereotypes. It is therefore that much more interesting that many of the stereotypes emerging in the 18th and 19th centuries are similar to the ones prevalent today. The main reason for the portrayal of Estonian peasants in the first place was because of their innate exoticism, which is also one of the reasons Estonians can be represented in movies and television (*Encino Man*, *Black Adder*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *E/R*). The same neanderthal-type portrayal of Estonians by historian Johann Christoph Petri is seen reflected most distinctly in *Encino Man*, as well as the poor and lower class stereotype seen repeated in the illustration of various other examples that also relate to the image of the Eastern European stereotype (*Bordertown*, *Transporter Refueled*, *True Blood*). The distinction between a serf and its superior lord was mostly through language, which is also used as a marker in TV shows to contrast the Other, in this case the Estonian (*E/R*, *Person of Interest*, *Orphan*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *True Blood*).

Compared to the 18th century image, one of the things that has changed the most is perhaps the physical appearance of Estonians. With the exception of Irina (*Person of Interest*) and Petra (*How I Met Your Mother*), the stereotypical striking blonde Estonians with blue eyes that were described in the early travelogues are nowhere to be seen. This is most probable since of course, the appearance of the "Estonian face" has changed in the past three centuries and is more varied now due to multiculturalisation. The other reason is that the actors who played Estonian characters were almost never Estonians, but were all from

among the more Southern parts of Europe where dark hair and eyes are more prevalent. This might also be because of how Estonia is usually associated first and foremost with Eastern Europe rather than its Northern neighbours, where the blonde stereotype is much more universally known. Nothing about any of the Estonian characters' appearance or dress is particularly different from any other character, which does not give the audience any early clues about their nationality. The drinking stereotype that Karl Ernst von Baer mentions was also not found. Vodka was mentioned in two examples in relation to the Estonian women (*The Prisoner*, *Transporter Refueled*), but only one of them drank a sip of it.

The corpus of this thesis is built from anglophone mentions of Estonians in audiovisual media, which include sources of 20 different TV shows and movies which were mostly produced in the United States, but there is also three from Britain (*Blackadder*, *The Prisoner*, *My Family*) and two from Canada (*Covert Affairs*, *Orphan*). The target audiences for all of them, however, is likely a wider global audience. Some of the general stereotypes that are created by the whole corpus are used in all of these examples without difference, but it could also be pointed out that none of the British examples actually involve portrayals of Estonians as criminals, immigrants, sex workers or slow and backwards people, and instead the underlying trope seems to be exoticism. Looking only at the Canadian examples, the image of Estonians that is created seems to be more detailed compared to the Hollywood ones, as the characters play more prominent roles and have more history and background involved in the explanations, such as authentic Estonian names (Levandi, Alo, Leena, Dr. Värava). As mentioned, in imagology the origin of the stereotype can be just as significant as who the stereotype is about, as it can show what sort of image a particular nation can have of another. One of the biggest expat Estonian communities in the world is in Canada, which means more direct contact with Estonians than for example the average person from the United States would have.

The caricatured images of nationalities we see on television are unavoidably the basis for our knowledge of the world, and the stereotype that has been created of the typical Estonian is likely the only thing that a significant amount of people know about Estonia. However, the Estonian stereotype is just as ridiculed and twisted as any other minor ethnotype, although in its specific ways. In the time of political correctness, it is difficult to create a movie or television character to make the villain or the laughing stock without upsetting a lot of people. It is much easier to pick a random small Eastern European country

to demonise without fearing too much of a backlash, as opposition after the fact is rare and usually subdued. Even in the case when an Estonian is portrayed on TV as someone with only negative character traits, Estonians will undoubtedly talk about it but the reaction is usually pleased for the attention their country is getting, and it will be taken as something humorous rather than deeply offending to the point of lawsuits, which has happened with some other nationalities. While the overall stereotype of the Estonian seems to be overtly negative, there are also some examples where the nation is used sympathetically to make fun of the patronising Western European attitude, like in the Jaak and Arvo example of *My Family*, although other negative traits were not absent from this case either. The overall image that is created by all of these 28 examples is rather complex and multifaceted, yet coherent, as none of them contradict each other. Some of the most often occurring stereotypes of the Estonian can be formed using synthetic imagological labels, such as the "criminal with a Russian/Slavic connection" (*Covert Affairs*, *Person of Interest*, *Mentalist*), "sexual object with a troubled or mysterious past" (*True Blood*, *Transporter Refueled*, *Orphan*), "Eastern European immigrants working lower-class jobs" (*True Blood*, *The Simpsons*, *Bordertown*), as well as the "exotic (and backwards) jester" (*Encino Man*, *E/R*, *Scrubs*, *How I Met Your Mother*) and the contrasting "gloomy and sarcastic hermit from the North" (*My Family*, *The Prisoner*, *Transporter Refueled*, *Covert Affairs*) (*Table 2.*).

Conclusion

It is not easy to represent others in entertainment. It does not matter how hard and tactfully authors or screenwriters try to create a representation as true to real life, there will most probably be someone in the audience who does not agree with this presentation and will be insulted, especially if they identify somehow with the nationality that is being portrayed (Richardson 2010: 7–8). This is natural, as people are always going to have differences of opinion and points of view, and it is impossible to present all of them in a single image. National characters, however, have been present in the world since the beginning of literature, which Leerssen argues (2000: 268) is also the best place to find them as literature has the ability to portray entire nationalities. I would add to this claim also the medium of television and film, as in addition to the traits that literature has, the cinematic experience includes the visual senses, which add another whole dimension to the representations of characters.

As a multimodal and mass-produced form of discourse, cinema has the immense power to project images as well as the values behind them to massive audiences at a time. The stereotyping of those images is an unavoidable part of cinema as it is a part of all other art forms, since it is a key part of the "organisation and anticipation of experience". (Lawless 2014: 80) The prejudices we have about certain nationalities and groups of people are not something we are born with, but it is something that we learn, and movies as well as television shows as the most popular form of entertainment are currently also one of the main vessels through which prejudices are allocated to us.

These created images that imagology studies are inherently subjective, and reflect as much about the stereotyped as it does of the people who are doing the stereotyping, and so the historic and political context must be kept in mind, in addition to keeping in mind that these images are only projections and not what the nationalities are like in true life. This means that if one would analyse the same national image from another point of view, for example Russian cinema instead of Hollywood, it is possible that a completely different image would form, as a stereotype created is extremely variable based on the context of its creation. One of the assumptions of imagology is that by viewing and analysing national

images, by taking them apart and showing how they are constructed, a better understanding of each other would prevail (Dukić 2012: 118).

This thesis is an overview of Estonians as represented in fictional Western film and TV series, based on a 28-item corpus from the last half century (*Appendix 1*.). The list of analysed items was developed through careful original research of all the mentions of Estonia that I could find, and although I narrowed my analysis to only characters and did not analyse all of my foundings (see *Appendix 2.* for the complete corpus), the list I created is of bibliographical value, as it may be used for further research. Many 21st century imagologists (Leerssen 2000: 269; Richardson 2010: 12) prefer to not create exhaustive lists of the mentions of nationalities in fiction since those lists are constantly being added to, but it was possible to more or less create one in the case of this thesis, as the mentions of Estonia are not as numerous as for example Russia or Germany. Currently, the works of contemporary imagologists focus on the way of using these lists of examples to then see how the stereotypes are formed, but this further analysis of course could not be done without an initial corpus, which is why this first step needs to be done before it is possible to move on to further and deeper imagological analysis.

The results of my analysis overlap largely with the previous imagological research that was summarised about Estonia as well as the close cultural areas such as Northern and Eastern Europe. Despite the large time jump between the 18th century portrayal of Estonia peasants vs today, many of the stereotypes are still relevant and used in modern fiction. Just like painted through the eyes of the foreign travellers and the local landlords, Estonians are still viewed as exotic and strange, but also as being of lower class, with the distinction of the Other created by the use of the weird Estonian language that divides them from the intelligent Us or the audience watching.

Ethnotypes are not always generated through specific fictional texts, sometimes it happens that they are brought over from a neighbouring country (Dukić 2012: 123), which is why I also analysed the national images of other countries in my theory. From Finland and the North, the main stereotype that has been carried over to Estonian characters is that of the brooding and sarcastic, cold-natured hermit who lives somewhere deep in the forest and does not like to be disturbed by other people. Finland also seems to be the root for the laughing stock archetype from a strange-sounding home country and language who seems to be stuck in some old-fashioned past with their weird personality traits.

From Estonia's biggest and most prominent neighbouring country comes the impact of the Russian stereotype, where the connotations are evidently of the dangerous enemy of the United States as the villainous East as opposed to the heroes of the West, and of the victims of a post-communist nation struggling with the aftermath of the economic collapse of the Soviet Union. From the general area of the Eastern European stereotype, Estonian characters are often appointed with the image of unintelligent immigrants with thick Slavic accents who turn to the occupations of drug lords and prostitutes because of that same Soviet Union aftermath , but also of a nation of perseverance under the worst possible conditions. This is a generic trope where it does not matter if the character or the actor who portrays them is Estonian, Czech or Uzbek, as it is all one and the same shared melting pot of Eastern European nations.

The ridiculed or oversimplified way Estonians are presented in television and the movie industry is nothing new, as this is what happens to every nationality, big and small (but mostly small). No one likes to be portrayed as a simplified archetype, as the traits that would remain rarely end up being the same as the image that you have of yourself. If someone does end up being pleased with their portrayal, it is most probably because it is not true to their nature but rather created as a flattering presentation and does not represent the various broader traits of the person or nationality (Richardson: 2010 11).

The amount of people a screenwriter might offend is also something that they must take into consideration if they are setting out to portray a stereotype of a minority group where the negative traits are most prominent. Estonia is an easy scapegoat in the sense that with a small nation and relatively little global presence, the ramifications would be minimal. Post-colonialism theory and many arguments that have been developed about race can also be applied to the stereotype of an insignificant nation in terms of the social difference aspects that are often underlined. In television, characters are often created with the purpose of the audience either finding someone to relate to, or someone to oppose against, which is usually when the use of Othering appears most often.

One of the aims of this thesis was to produce a comprehensive corpus of all the mentions of Estonia in Western movies and television, which I believe I managed to successfully do, though most of the examples that I found (*Appendix 2.*) did not fit in the focus of the analysis, which was narrowed down to the presentation of specific Estonian characters that were mostly accompanied by visual representation, where the appearance and

body language of the characters could be taken into consideration as well. I would suggest further developing these findings by also looking more into the rest of the interesting cases where Estonia is mentioned either as a location or where the Estonian language is used in audiovisual anglophone entertainment. The linguistic aspect could also be developed by applying critical discourse analysis to analyse the power of the language and how that affects the character dynamics, or studying the specific kind of vocabulary used in relation to Estonia and its characters using a quantitative approach. In addition to this, other possible further research could be of course into literary texts, as this is what the imagological method is originally created for, as well as video games, which could be an interesting discourse to explore.

All the examples where Estonian characters were present can be broadly categorised into two based on their genres: drama/crime or comedy. These are also both the genres where in general the most national stereotypes are found (Leerssen 2007b: 354), as these provide the ideal settings for brief encounters with minor characters where there is no time for the audience to get to know them, so a quick two dimensional introduction is done instead and the characteristics of them get reduced to just the exaggerated few, with nationality being one of them. These are also genres where oftentimes a character is needed to take the fall, either as the villain or the jester, respectively. Estonia is still relatively free of very specific stereotypes, as well as being a mostly unknown location to the average American, which is possibly one of the reasons why it is used in television, as it is difficult to pin down to a specific place and the viewer is therefore allowed more freedom to make assumptions.

Estonian author and documentary film producer Olev Remsu has claimed (1996) that Estonia has not yet had enough time to really determine or set their position in relation to the Western world. As a country that has had more changes in leadership than years of steady independence, Estonia has had to rebuild their national identity numerous times just like the rest of Baltics, and are yet to have their own national stereotype developed that is not borrowed, spread to or haunting them by their neighbouring countries and occupants. An image of Estonia should have a balance between the multifaceted heritage of Estonia's varied history as well as the experience of the various occupations (Made 2005: 182), which is not an easy task. Breaking down how someone else has constructed an image of an Estonian, through my analysis and interpretation of what I see, I am in turn creating another level of construction, or an image of an image (Kõvamees 2006: 668). In addition to when the image

is created, the analysis is also affected by the time period that I am analysing it in (*ibid.*). Complete impartialness is impossible, as the stereotypes I have experienced most often are also the ones that I will most likely notice in analysis, as although one might try to remain unbiased, stereotypes that are embedded into us by the various omnipresent media that we consume cannot be eradicated, but are only lulled in our conscious just to be awakened again once the situation calls for it, which is what makes stereotypes so durable and difficult to break. Their resilience is also not due to how true they are, but is created through their longevity, as stereotypes you have repeatedly heard before or that have any historical context create that "aha"-feeling, which fabricates a sense of truthfulness to it (Kõvamees 2006: 666). Although imagology often points out the negative effects of the construction and use of national images, it must also be remembered that this is our reality and it is not something that can be "fixed". Images can change through time not because the nations are changing, but because the attitude of the spectant changes towards the spected (Kõvamees 2006: 664) based on the historical, political and sociological situations currently actual in the world.

Lithuanian imagologist Laura Laurušaitė has written that one of the main tasks of imagologists writing about the individual Eastern European countries is creating knowledge about them, which helps with the visibility of the small countries that tend to get mixed into one (2018: 24). This is exactly what I tried to do by writing this thesis. Bringing attention to the fictitious national images that can spread negative prejudice about a country is increasingly pertinent in a time where more movies and TV shows are produced and available to the global audience than ever before.

Kokkuvõte

Kui rääkida väikerahvastest, siis tavaliselt kiputakse neid käsitlema suuremate naaberriikidega koos, sest neil on harva endale ainuomaseid ja laiemalt tuntud iseärasusi (Beller 2007a: 14). Suuremate poliitiliste või geograafiliste liitudega ühinemine hägustab rahvusvahelisi piire veelgi ja inimesed tunnevad vajadust võidelda oma identiteedi ja teistest eristuvuse nimel (*ibid.*).

Kirjanduses taandatakse enamasti tegelaskujude mitmekülgsed ja keerukad iseloomujooned tulenevalt piiratud lehekülgede arvust ja soovist lugejat liigsetest detailidest säästa vaid paariks olulisemaks, aga samas pealiskaudseks tunnuseks (Beller 2007a: 7). Seevastu teleekraan annab võimaluse kujutada etnotüüpi palju mitmemõõtmelisemalt kui kirjanduses, sest autoritel pole vaja ennast piirata sõnade arvuga, ja visuaalselt on võimalik teavet pakkuda kiiremini ja suuremas mahus. Samas on kiiresti vahelduvate visuaalide puhul oht produtseerida pilte, mis on lihtsustatud ja triviaalsed. Kuna tegemist on valdavalt passiivse meelelahutusvormiga, millele lisandub eri voogedastusteenuste kättesaadavus ja odav hind, on meedia ja selle kaudu ka eksootiliste kultuuride tarbimine tänapäeval lihtsam kui kunagi varem.

Minu lõputöö *Ebaseaduslikud Ida-Eurooplased või eksootilised narrid? Eestlaste kuvand ingliskeelsetes mängufilmides ja telesarjades* eesmärk on imagoloogilist meetodit kasutades uurida, kuidas on kujutatud eestlast ingliskeelsetes telesarjades ja filmides. Lõputöö jaoks kogutud korpus koosneb kahekümne kaheksast eri filmist või teleseriaali episoodist, kus mainitakse eestlastest tegelasi (*Lisa 1.*). Kuigi imagoloogilist meetodit kasutatakse enamjaolt kirjanduse uurimiseks, kasutan ma oma töös seda eesmärgiga uurida audiovisuaalmeediat. Imagoloogiale lisaks rakendan ma teise peamise vahendina diskursusanalüüsi meetodit, mis on ideaalne selleks, et uurida, kuidas teatav sotsiaalne diskursus tekib kuvanditest, kuidas tekkinud sotsiaalsed konstruktsioonid ennast veenvaks muudavad ja millise efekti nad endast maha jätavad (Rose 2001: 140).

Mulle teadaolevalt ei ole eestlaste kohta loodud võõrakuvandi (*hetero-image*) teemal telesarjadel ja filmidel põhinevaid imagoloogilisi uuringuid seni tehtud, puudub isegi ülevaatlik nimekiri kõigist eestlaste mainimistest filmides ja seriaalides. Viimase paarikümne aasta jooksul on imagoloogiliste uuringute populaarsus hüppeliselt kasvanud,

paraku Eesti ja eestlastega seotud tunnuseid on seni pigem eiratud, liites need kas üldisele Ida-Euroopa stereotüübile või jättes üldse tähelepanuta. Stereotüüpe, mis üldiselt põhinevad alati vähemalt mingil määral reaalsusel, luuakse nii, et võetakse väike detail, mis kehtib ühe inimese või olukorra puhul, ja antakse sellele maksimaalne tähendus (Stanzel 1997: 12), üldistades seda kogu rahvale või kultuurile. Paljud meie kollektiivses teadvuses kinnistunud stereotüübid on subjektiivsed ega põhine faktidel. Filmi- ja telerežissööride konstrueeritud rahvuskujundid võivad kajastada nii seda, kuidas seda stereotüpiseeritud rahvust nende poolt tajutakse, kui ka seda, kuidas loodud stereotüüp võib muuta ülemaailmse vaatajaskonna nägemust selle rahvuse suhtes.

Imagoloogia eesmärk ei ole ebaõiglaste etnotüüpidega seotud eelarvamustest või erapoolikusest lahtisaamine (*ibid.*) ega nende valeks või õigeks kuulutamine, vaid näidata, kuidas üks rahvas on oma kujutuses andnud teisele rahvale konkreetsed omadused (Leerssen 2007: 27). Ehkki minu eesmärk ei ole välja tuua, kas eestlaste stereotüüp on tõene või mitte, on imagoloogilises mõttes siiski oluline rahvuslik etnotüüp osadeks lahti võtta ning näidata, kuidas need tekivad.

Aja jooksul võivad stereotüübid muutuda, kuid vanad kuvandid ei hävine, need nihkuvad esialgu vaid tagaplaanile, valmis õigel hetkel uuesti aktiveeruma (Kõvamees 2006: 665). Peamine põhjus, miks Eesti talupoegi hakati 18. sajandi kunstis ja kirjanduses kujutama, oli ennekõike nende eksootilisus, mis on endiselt üks peamisi põhjuseid, miks eesti tegelasi filmides ja televisioonis üldse mängu tuuakse. Pärisorja ja tema isanda eristamine toimus enamasti keele kaudu, mida kasutatakse ka praegu telesaadetes ühe markerina, et vastandada eestlasi ehk "neid" publikule ehk "meile". Samasugune neandertallaslik kuvand, mida kasutas ajaloolane Johann Christoph Petri 1805. aastal oma esimeses eestlasi kujutavas teoses, samuti stereotüüpsena rõhutatud vaesus ja kuuluvus alamklassi korduvad meelelahutuses tänapäevalgi ning on tihti tugevalt seotud ka stereotüüpse idaeurooplase kuvandiga üldisemalt.

Põhjanaabritelt, eelkõige soomlastelt on eestlastele üle kandunud nende peamine stereotüüp – sünge ja sarkastiline, emotsioonitu erak, kes elab kuskil sügaval metsas ja kellele ei meeldi, kui teda teised inimesed segavad. Samuti näib, et algselt Soomest pärineb ka naerualuse arhetüüp, see imeliku nimega kodumaa ja veidra keelega tegelane, kes oma pentsikute isiksuseomadustega tundub olevat takerdunud mingisse vanamoodsasse minevikku. Antud korpuse puhul esindab seriaali või filmi vaataja läänemaailma kui

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maailmaajaloo keskpunkti, samas kui Eesti osaks on olla perifeerne, vanamoodne ja tagurlik riik, kus aeg on justkui seisma jäänud.

Eesti suurimast ja silmapaistvaimast naaberriigist pärineb meile laienev Vene stereotüübi mõju koos oma loomulike kõrvaltähendustega: USA verivaenlane nr 1, kriminaalne ida *vs.* lääne kangelased, ning endised kommunistlikud riigid, kes kannatavad Nõukogude Liidu majandusliku kokkuvarisemise tagajärgede all. Ida-Euroopa üldisest stereotüübist lähtuvalt on ka eestlastest tegelaste kuvandiks sageli kange slaavi aktsendiga ebaintelligentne immigrant, kes on olnud sunnitud valima narkoparuni või prostituudi elukutse, tulenevalt eelmainitud Nõukogude Liidu kokku kukkumisest, aga ka näitena visast rahvast, kes on võimalikult halbadest tingimustest hoolimata püsima jäänud.

Kõik minu lõputöös toodud näited võib žanriliselt jagada laias laastus kaheks: draama ja komöödia. Need on ka üldisemas mõttes populaarseimad žanrid, kust võib leida kõige rohkem rahvusvahelisi stereotüüpe (Leerssen 2007x, 354), kuna pakuvad ideaalseid olukordi lühikesteks kohtumisteks vähemtähtsate tegelastega, keda publikul ei ole aega tundma õppida, mistõttu piirdutaksegi kiire kahemõõtmelise tutvustusega, kus tegelase isikuomadused taandatakse rõhutatult vaid paariks kõige olulisemaks, mis hõlmab tavaliselt ka tegelase rahvust, kui see erineb tavapärasest. Ka on just draamades ja komöödiates kõige sagedamini vaja tegelasi, kes kehastaks pätti või narri.

Eesti on väga spetsiifilistest stereotüüpidest endiselt suhteliselt vaba, samuti on see keskmise ameeriklase jaoks enamasti tundmatu paik. Siit võib ehk otsida ka üht põhjust, miks Eestit telefilmides kasutatakse: vaatajal on raske konkreetset kohta täpsemalt kindlaks teha ja tal on seetõttu rohkem vabadust mitmesuguste oletuste tegemiseks. Karikeeritud rahvuskuvandid, mida meile televiisorist näidatakse, kujundavad paratamatult meie teadmisi maailmast ja tüüpilise eestlase kohta loodud stereotüüp on tõenäoliselt ainus asi, mida märkimisväärne hulk inimesi maailmas Eesti kohta teab. Naeruvääristatud või ülilihtsustatud viis, kuidas eestlasi televisioonis kujutatakse, pole filmitööstuses midagi uut, sest seda tehakse iga rahvusega, nii suurte kui ka väikestega (kuigi enamasti just väikestega). Kellelegi ei meeldi, kui teda kujutatakse lihtsustatud arhetüübina, kuna tunnused, mis jäävad kõlama, ei lange enamasti meie omakuvandiga kokku.

On lihtne karikeerida juhuslikku Ida-Euroopa riiki, kartmata liiga suurt tagasilööki, kuna loodud piltide vastu protestimine on haruldane ja ka siis enamasti summutatud. Isegi juhul, kui eestlast kujutatakse televiisoris kui isikut, kellel on ainult negatiivsed

iseloomujooned, kommenteeritakse seda Eestis niikuinii, ja eestlased on enamasti isegi rahul selle tähelepanuga, mida neile on pööratud. Kõigi mu töös sisalduva 28 näite poolt loodud üldpilt on üpriski keerukas ja mitmetahuline, ent siiski järjekindel, kuna ükski neist ei ole ülejäänutega vastuolus. Kõige sagedamini esinevaid eestlase stereotüüpe saaks ehks kokku võtta sünteetiliste imagoloogiliste siltide abil, näiteks „Vene/Slaavi seostega kurjategija“, „Probleemse või salapärase minevikuga seksuaalobjekt“, „Migrant Ida-Euroopast, kes töötab madalama klassi töökohtadel ”, aga ka „Eksootiline (ja tagurlik) narr”.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. List of anglophone fictional TV shows and films that have specific character who were presented as Estonians

<u>TV Shows:</u>

1. Blackadder S03E01 (1987)
2. Bordertown S01E01 (2016)
3. Castle S03E21 (2011)
4. Covert Affairs S01E01 (2010), S02E01 (2011)
5. CSI: Cyber S01E09 (2015)
6. E/R S01E04 (1984)
7. Grey's Anatomy S10E18 (2014)
8. How I Met Your Mother S05E24 (2010)
9. Mentalist S04E02 (2011)
10. Monk S03E04 (2004)
11. My Family S04E14 (2003)
12. Scrubs S08E03 (2009)
13. Silicon Valley S03E05, S03E06 (2016)
14. The Person of Interest S02E09 (2012)
15. The Prisoner S01E02 (1967)
16. The Simpsons S05E18 (1994), S06E15 (1995), S07E02 (1995), S21E12 (2010)
17. True Blood S03E01, S03E03, S03E04, S03E10 (2010)

<u>Movies:</u>

1. Encino Man (1992)
2. Orphan (2009)
3. Transporter Refueled (2015)

Appendix 2. List of anglophone fictional TV shows and films that have some sort of mention of Estonia, an Estonian character or the use of the Estonian language[2]

<u>TV Shows:</u>

1. 30 Rock S06E22 (2012)
2. Alias S02E07 (2002)
3. Billions S01E05 (2016)
4. Bitten S01E03, S01E05 (2014)
5. Blackadder S03E01 (1987)
6. Bob's Burger S04E17 (2014)
7. Bordertown S01E01 (2016)
8. Brooklyn Nine Nine S01E01 (2013), S01E15 (2014), S05E22 (2018)
9. Carter S02E06 (2019)
10. Castle S03E21 (2011)
11. Covert Affairs S01E01 (2010), S02E01 and S02E02 (2011), S03E11 (2012)
12. CSI: Cyber S01E09 (2015)
13. Elementary S04E23 (2016)
14. E/R S01E04 (1984)
15. Family Guy S11E16 (2013)
16. Felicity S01E12 (1999)
17. Gilmore Girls S06E14 (2006)
18. Grey's Anatomy S10E18 (2014)
19. Homeland S05E09 (2015)
20. House of Cards S04E04 (2016)
21. How I Met Your Mother S05E24 (2010)
22. Law & Order S18E17 (2008)
23. Mentalist S04E02 (2011)
24. Monk S03E04 (2004), S04E12 (2006)

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[2] After the completion of this thesis, it has been brought to my attention that in my compiled list I have missed the third season of the TV show *Berlin Station*, which entails 10 episodes that feature some Estonian locations and characters (2018–2019), as well as TV show *DCI Banks* S04E01 (2015), which includes the portrayal of an Estonian character named Ines Vesik, who is played by the Estonian actress Kersti Kreismann.

25. Monkey Dust S02E02 (2003)

26. Mr. Robot S01E10 (2015)

27. My Family S04E14 (2003)

28. Parks and Recreation S06E12 (2014)

29. Peep Show S04E05 (2007)

30. Pretty Little Liars S03E15 (2013)

31. Scrubs S08E03 (2009)

32. Sherlock S02E03 (2012)

33. Silicon Valley S03E05, S03E06 (2016)

34. Spooks S07E02 (2007)

35. The Blacklist S01E13 (2014)

36. The Brink S01E10 (2015)

37. The Magicians S01E01 (2015)

38. The Person of Interest S02E09 (2012)

39. The Prisoner S01E02 (1967)

40. The Simpsons S05E18 (1994), S06E15 (1995), S07E02 (1995), S21E12 (2010)

41. True Blood S03E01, S03E03, S03E04, S03E10 (2010), S05E03 (2012)

Movies:

1. American Hustle (2013)

2. Black Dawn (2005)

3. Encino Man (1992)

4. Eleven Men Against Eleven (1995)

5. Escape Plan: The Extractors (2019)

6. Candles in the Dark (1993)

7. Conspiracy (2001)

8. Grosse Pointe Blank (1997)

9. Orphan (2009)

10. Kill Your Darlings (2013)

11. Playing God (1997)

12. The Brood (1979)

13. The Transporter Refueled (2015)

Table 1. Coding table for preliminary corpus analysis

	CHARACTER NAME	GENDER	SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS	NARRATIVE IMPORTANCE	NARRATIVE EVALUATION	PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	LINGUISTIC FEATURES	ACTOR NATIONALITY	KEY CODEWORDS	GENRE
ORPHAN	Leena Klammer	F	criminal on the run	main	mixed	dark hair, fair with freckles, 1920s dress	Estonian (?) accent	Canadian-Moldovian	presents herself as Russian	horror thriller
	unnamed receptionist	F	mental institute staff	minor		red hair	use of Estonian	Estonian	speaks Estonian	
	unnamed staff	M	mental institute staff		neutral	dark hair	Slavic accent	American-Estonian		
	Dr. Värava	M	mental institute staff	secondary			Slavic accent	Czech	Eastern European actor	
COVERT AFFAIRS PILOT	(fake) Stanislav Orlovski	M	mafia	secondary	negative	dark hair	speaks Russian, Estonian	Canadian	presents himself as Russian, speaks Russian	drama action
COVERT AFFAIRS BEGIN THE BEGIN	Alo Morozov	M	mafia	minor	negative			Canadian	chocolate, mentions USSR. curses in Estonian	drama action
	Nadia Levandi	F	athlete	secondary	mixed	dark hair	curses in Estonian	Serbian		
PERSON OF INTEREST	Irina Kapp	F	mafia boss	minor	negative	blonde	speaks Estonian	American	speaks Estonian	crime drama
	mob henchmen	M	mafia	minor	negative	generic		unknown		
THE MENTALIST	Markus Kuzmenko	M	athlete	minor	mixed	dark hair		American	not a criminal but ends up having conections	crime drama
THE PRISONER	Nadia Rokovsky	F	undercover spy/athlete	secondary	mixed	red hair	speaks Russian	Romanian	labelled Russian. mention of vodka	thriller
TRANSPORTER REFUELED	Maria	F	runaway sex slave	secondary	negative	light brunette hair, seductive clothing		Danish-Montenegrin	mention of vodka	thriller
TRUE BLOOD	Yvetta	F	exotic dancer	secondary	negative	constantly half-naked, fur shawl and high heels	speaks Russian, broken English	Uzbek	speaks Russian, immigrant	horror drama
MY FAMILY	Jaak	M	rides the subway	secondary	mixed		forced accent of some sort. English skills are complimented	British	mocking of the patronising West	sitcom
	Arvo	M								
HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER	Petra	F	street performer	minor	positive	Chinese dress	"Estonians" but speak English to each other, strong Slavic accent	unknown	sexual connotation	sitcom
SILICON VALLEY	Elisabet Kirsipuu	F	IT tech/cheap labour	secondary	mixed	dark hair	foreign accent	American	labelled Slavic. IT-specialist stereotype gone wrong	comedy
BLACKADDER	Jezebel/Jeremy	N/A	royal	minor	negative	N/A	issues with name	N/A	absurd woman with beard from absurd country	sitcom
SCRUBS	Johann	M	gift shop cashier	minor	negative	dark hair		unknown	oxen. no dialogue	sitcom
GREY'S ANATOMY	unnamed doctor	N/A	doctor	minor	neutral	N/A	university professor needed to decipher language	N/A	absurd language	medical drama
E/R	Ivo	M	tourist	secondary	neutral	dark hair	university professor needed to decipher language	American	absurd language	sitcom
BORDERTOWN	unnamed taxi driver	M	taxi driver	minor	neutral	dark hair	foreign accent	unknown	cartoon. immigrant president	sitcom
THE SIMPSONS	Estonian Dwarf	M	stunt man	minor	neutral	bald midget	foreign accent	American	cartoon. man of many jobs	sitcom
ENCINO MAN	Linkovich Chomovsky	M	cave man	main	neutral	tall Neanderthal	not intelligent enough to talk	American-Canadian	from the Stone Age (pun)	comedy
CSI CYBER	L0M1S	N/A	hacker (IT)	secondary	negative	N/A		N/A	a myth, not a real character	drama
CASTLE	N/A	M	victim	minor	N/A	N/A		N/A	still connected to crime and Eastern Europe	crime
MONK	N/A	F	victim	minor	N/A	N/A		N/A	still connected to crime and Eastern Europe	

Table 2. Conclusive overview of the recurring multifaceted representations of Estonians

	COMEDIC RELIEF	DRAMA GENRE	RUSSIAN/SLAVIC CONNECTION	NORDIC ATTITUDE	CRIMINAL TENDENCIES	SEXUAL CONNOTATION	BACKWARDS TRAITS	FOREIGN ACCENT	NAME	ROLE	IMAGOLOGICAL LABEL	YEAR
ORPHAN		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Estonian, German	main	RUSSIAN CRIMINAL	2009
COVERT AFFAIRS PILOT		x	x		x	x		x	Russian	secondary	RUSSIAN CRIMINAL	2010
COVERT AFFAIRS BEGIN THE BEGIN		x	x	x	x		x		both	secondary	RUSSIAN CRIMINAL	2011
PERSON OF INTEREST		x	x	x	x			x	both	secondary	RUSSIAN CRIMINAL	2012
THE MENTALIST		x	x		x			N/A	both	secondary	RUSSIAN CRIMINAL	2011
THE PRISONER		x	x	x				x	Russian	secondary	RUSSIAN SPY	1967
TRANSPORTER REFUELED		x	x	x	x	x			Global	secondary	EASTERN EUROPEAN SEX WORKER	2015
TRUE BLOOD		x	x	x		x		x	Russian	minor	EASTERN EUROPEAN SEX WORKER	2010
MY FAMILY	x		x	x				x	Estonian	secondary	EXOTIC JESTER/ SARCASTIC HERMIT	2003
HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER	x					x		x	Russian	minor	EXOTIC JESTER	2010
SILICON VALLEY	x		x					x	Estonian	minor	CHEAP AND BACKWARDS LABOUR	2016
BLACKADDER	x			N/A				N/A	English	not on screen	EXOTIC JESTER	1983
SCRUBS	x					x	x	N/A	Estonian	minor	EXOTIC JESTER	2009
GREY'S ANATOMY	x	x		N/A				N/A	N/A	not on screen	EXOTIC JESTER	2014
E/R	x							x	Estonian	secondary	EXOTIC JESTER	1984
BORDERTOWN	x			x				x	N/A	minor	LOWER CLASS IMMIGRANT	2016
THE SIMPSONS	x			x	x			x	"Estonian"	minor	LOWER CLASS IMMIGRANT	1994, 1995, 2010
ENCINO MAN	x				x		x		Russian	main	EXOTIC JESTER	1992
CSI CYBER		x		N/A	x			N/A	N/A	minor	FILLER/ IT-SPECIALIST	2015
CASTLE		x	x	N/A	x			N/A	N/A	not on screen	FILLER	2011
MONK		x		N/A				N/A	N/A	not on screen	FILLER	2004