The Cinema of Complicity: Reframing Narrative Authority

Teona Yamanidze, University of Melbourne, Australia

The Kyoto Conference on Arts, Media & Culture 2025
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This paper translates the central research arguments of my project into the framework of epistemic violence, examining Soy Cuba, The Antique, Russians at War, and Zygar's videos to show how digital manipulation and film aesthetics operate as epistemic mechanisms. I argue that Western festivals and liberal media institutions, through their platforms and curatorial choices, may contribute to the violation of knowledge and reproduce the systems of epistemic harm. This discussion leads to a broader question of who holds the agency to shape narratives, especially in a modern landscape where the lines between manipulation and the "democratization of information" (Castells, 1996, pp. 364–370) are blurred. Today, storytelling, whether through films or other media, has become a sphere of ideological control, presented at both the level of content and the infrastructures through which that content is rolled out.

Keywords: epistemic violence, propaganda, digital media, film aesthetics, post-Soviet memory

iafor
The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

Walter Benjamin (1968) was warning us that the technological reproducibility of images in Nazi Germany allowed the aestheticization of politics and the spread of fascist ideology. He claimed that mechanical reproduction can liberate perception or serve mass deception. However, centralized propaganda exploited cinema to raise emotions, normalize violence, and dehumanize groups. Benjamin's structure is important but insufficient today. Manipulation is now decentralized, transactional, and embedded in commercial platforms whose engagement-driven systems integrate deception into everyday life.

Irakli Beridze and James Butcher (2023) capture this shift. Beridze and Butcher focus on new information about deception within the digital media space**.** Deepfakes are presented as a new dimension of the fake news problem, enabled by AI (GANs), with its risk of extending to democracy and public trust (Goodfellow, 2020, pp. 139–144). Butcher and Beridze combine ancient propaganda with modern digital examples, showing deepfakes shift manipulation from static to dynamic, as video and audio can now be fabricated. Also, the democratization of forgery and tools like *FakeApp* make realistic manipulation possible for non-experts without needing any advanced skills (Silverman & Jane Lytvynenko, 2018). Social media allows instant spread and increases impact as well. In comparison to what Benjamin claims as centralized propaganda, some features explain why deepfakes are significantly different from past propaganda. It is also understandable why existing detection mechanisms may be insufficient. Character assassination, those "shallow fakes" (Harwell, The Washington Post*,* 2019), are used to discredit public figures. Information warfare and exploiting confirmation bias in Georgia show how the image has become a volatile instrument of deception, enabling new ideological warfare. Selective framing and algorithmic manipulation make it difficult to distinguish truth from fabrication. Russian digital tactics, now augmented by AI, distort public perception. Visibility is controlled by private corporations that reward affect over accuracy, turning cinematography into another front in the battle over historical memory. *The Antique* (2024) and *Russians at War* (2024) were accused of promoting pro-Kremlin narratives. Those films also raise complex questions of epistemic violence (Spivak, 1988) in contemporary digital storytelling. Those case studies are important for the research to show how the democratized spaces can inadvertently serve as conductors for propaganda, particularly for audiences far removed from the geopolitical contexts depicted.

Epistemic Violence and Digital Infrastructures

Spivak (1988) defines subaltern groups as those excluded from dominant systems of power, whose voices are silenced not simply through apparent repression. Facebook's algorithms increased disinformation during the 2016 and 2020 U.S. elections, and #MeToo narratives were banned in countries with repressive gender norms. These are contemporary examples of epistemic violence, when digital infrastructures filter narratives, referencing historical practices of silencing the subaltern. Today, that dynamic is reproduced through algorithms. Such filtering is interfering with the public accessibility of epistemic status, which is defined as the social conditions under which a speaker's entitlement to be believed can be recognized, and therefore it determines which narratives are granted credibility and which are severely dismissed (Matthiessen, 2013, pp. 75–97). In this situation, digital manipulation can serve as a new form of epistemic violence. Through filtering the information in the digital spaces, it reaches the public and shapes which narratives are important to pay attention to.

Gatekeeping sets hidden rules deciding which posts are seen. Manipulations mark accounts as "trustworthy." Exaggeration bias boosts quick-reaction posts; framing and metadata shape interpretation; provenance confusion blurs authorship. These mechanisms distort epistemic justice and force marginalized communities to rely on systems that undermine them. These cases show a systemic pattern: the infrastructures that shape global visibility are not neutral-they can be weaponized to reinforce power asymmetries and suppress dissent (DFRLab, 2024).

Bringing up Benjamin's analysis is historically important but requires expansion. The problem is now a global, profit-driven, technologically embedded system. Any critique must address architectures of control. Strengthening provenance, building independent archives, and ensuring contextualization in cultural platforms are essential, so epistemic repair and representational justice can begin.

Soy Cuba and Affective Engineering

Considering the Soviet legacy within the agency of knowledge, it is important to bring up Mikhail Kalatozov's *Soy Cuba* (1964), a pro-Cuban revolutionary propaganda film that was not well received by the Cuban audience. Possibly because the Cuban audiences felt that it stripped them of individuality and portrayed their reality solely through a Soviet prism (Christie, 1995, 28–31). Ironically, it was American filmmakers who rescued it from the archives in the 90s. Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese saw the movie and acquired distribution rights from Mosfilm Studios. The film saw its American premiere in 1995, followed by a 4K restoration in 2019. Primarily, propaganda films are a mirror of the moment of their creation, and *I Am Cuba* is no different. It remains an ecstatic testimony of a historic time in both cinema and world politics.

And at the same time, the dissatisfaction also came from the Soviet authorities, as the film was not accepted because it did not respond to the direct notions of propaganda (Graffy, 2008, pp. 167–181). This disapproval comes from the fact that *Soy Cuba* adopted experimental cinematic techniques, particularly the elaborated montage technique and expressive camera movements, that help to shape the audience's emotional engagement. The famous funeral (see Figure 1)

Figure 1
Funeral Scene From the Roof Soy Cuba

Note. Film still from *Soy Cuba*, directed by Mikhail Kalatozov (Mosfilm, 1964).

In which the camera moves up from the coffin to survey a mass of those in grief, it embraces this approach: the technical innovation is not simply decorative, but works to saturate the image with affect and guides the viewers to experience the revolutionary moment as collective.

These complexities determine ideological control in media, where depictions can support or distort experience. *Soy Cuba* challenged propaganda through interpretive openness. The funeral scene shows systemic oppression, using first-person camera movements, with Enrique shown individually yet within the collective struggle. The shift to a rooftop shows this personal connection to the collective struggle by capturing people from the underclass of the Batista-regime Cuban society as part of this broader struggle. Kalatozov frames the crowd as inseparable from the revolutionary struggle and resistance. The viewer unintentionally becomes part of the evolving events, drawn into the parallel dimensions of this struggle.

Figure 2
Funeral Scene From Soy Cuba

Note. Film still from *Soy Cuba*, directed by Mikhail Kalatozov (Mosfilm, 1964).

Kalatozov navigates this "intentional deception" through montage and innovative camera movements, showing the tragic lives of characters under the Batista regime. Enrique's transformation reflects how digital manipulation shifts from passive consumption to purposeful distortion. *Soy Cuba's* visual language creates emotional identification, and controlled framing pushes the observer into a participatory role. In the context of digital manipulation, as Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell suggest, propaganda can be categorized as projecting deliberate lies and deception, uncertain accuracy, and semi-truth and transparency (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2019 pp. 2–3). Just as Enrique becomes part of the collective struggle, digital manipulation operates in "between areas" of deception, intentionally distorting truth through deepfakes, algorithmic dissemination of misleading narratives, and selectively edited footage to manipulate collective consciousness.

The Antique and Aesthetic Depoliticization

Rusudan Glurjidze's *The Antique* references the 2006 mass deportations of Georgians from Russia a targeted campaign of state-led ethnic discrimination involving coordinated raids, detentions, public humiliation, and the deportation of around 2,000 people.

Holly Cartner, Europe and Central Asia Director at Human Rights Watch, stated that "the Russian authorities claim that the expulsions weren't targeting Georgians but were part of the

renewed fight against illegal migration. But this was a coordinated campaign orchestrated at senior levels of government that singled out Georgians for a specific period" (Human Rights Watch, 2007). However, in *The Antique*, the political intent, the state apparatus is absent. Glurjidze relocates the deportations to the margins, allowing them to function as a vague background disturbance rather than the central moral fact. The plot centers on Medea, Lado, and Vadim. When the deportations begin, Lado is arrested and expelled, framed as a personal tragedy rather than a politically motivated act. Glurjidze's muted palette and "film filter" mediate the memory, transforming suffering into stylized nostalgia. This aesthetic choice collapses systemic violence into individual experience. For someone who lived through the deportations, this absence is alarming; these were not background events but a well-planned political assault. This is where the concept of reversed witnessing becomes critical (Felman & Laub, 1992). Reversed witnessing makes the witness both observer and narrator. In *The Antique*, Glurjidze's selective reframing suggests empathy while avoiding the systemic origins of harm. The result is a narrative that participates in what Marianne Hirsch (2012) has referred to as *post memory distortion*: a retelling that, intentionally or not, alters the moral register of the original facts (Hirsch, 2012).

There was a severe response from the diaspora. Many argued the film's "forgiving" tone reflects Kremlin narratives, especially given Glurjidze's political associations and its selection by a jury member criticized for promoting Kremlin-friendly discourse (ISFED 2023). The absence of explicit political framing becomes part of the film's ideological function, imposing sentiment over structure and allowing a form of epistemic violence to occur. Glurjidze is incorporating silence that operates through selective storytelling. The storyline in the film itself develops without adequate contextual framing, which is done intentionally. In this way, the film itself becomes a form of misinformation for the audience unfamiliar with the complexities of Russian-Georgian relations.

Glurjidze is dependent on mise-en-scène symbolism. Vadim's photo cabinet symbolizes loss but simplifies trauma. For an Australian audience with little knowledge of post-Soviet history, *The Antique* becomes a form of memory violation. Most viewers interpret its mild narrative as accurate, failing to recognize the targeted ethnic nature of the 2006 deportations. This framing erases the equality between oppressor and victim and displaces victims' testimonies. Misrepresentation distorts discourse and alienates diaspora communities. *The Antique* shows how propaganda can be aesthetically sophisticated, removing politically charged aspects from view.

Russians at War and Negative-Space Documentary

Trofimova's Russians at War operates through deliberate absence—no Ukrainian voices, no civilian testimonies mirroring Kremlin tactics and portraying soldiers as reluctant participants. This is precisely the kind of negative-space propaganda that works through absence: the audience sees the tool, but never the result, leaving the ethical implications unresolved. The violence exists off-screen, in a void where moral clarity is easily dissolved (Farrar et al., 2003, p. 12). Trofimova's appearance on the Russian-language YouTube program Tell Gordeeva (2023) offers revealing insight into the motives and messaging behind the film.

Trofimova claims neutrality and safety concerns yet shows unblurred soldiers and admits knowing the drone's purpose while deflecting responsibility. When pressed on whether the soldiers she filmed were war criminals, she responds: "War criminals are those who commit war crimes," adding that, at least from what she saw, they committed none. This refusal to

acknowledge the broader, well-documented reality of Russian war crimes is not a simple ignorance and putting a blind eye on the victims of hostilities; it is a political act of narrative control.

As I have mentioned earlier, the central controversy is unpacked when Gordeeva asks how Trofimova gained access to Russian-occupied Ukrainian territory. Trofimova vaguely recounts that she first filmed protests in Moscow and contacted the "Committee of Soldiers' Mothers," failing to specify key details, including the committee's leadership or exact location. Her narrative then becomes fantastical: she describes a surreal moment on a tram where she meets a man dressed as Ded Moroz (Russian Santa Claus), who turns out to be a soldier named Ilya from Donetsk. This figure, she claims, helped her access the front lines. She insists she entered the occupied zones without the Russian government's knowledge. Despite claiming concern for the soldiers' safety, Trofimova does not blur faces, censor unit names, or conceal locations. Gordeeva challenges her: "Did you consider that this drone might be used to kill someone?" Trofimova dodges the question and offers no real answer about including Ukrainian perspectives. She continues to justify the soldiers. When asked if the film is about "good guys," she replies, "It depends on how you feel." She later invokes Remarque and claims her film resists the binary of hero vs. war criminal. But this is precisely where the problem lies.

The manipulative power of *Russians at War* lies in its ability to use intimacy as a vehicle for ideological reframing. By focusing on the soldiers' humanity, fatigue, humor, and vulnerability, the film encourages the audience to see them as victims of circumstance. This is a classic propaganda strategy: humanize the aggressor while rendering victims invisible. There is no Ukrainian voice, no independent verification, no acknowledgment of context. The resulting emotional identification is dangerously unidirectional.

In the Australian context, the dangers are higher by the composition of festival audiences. Antenna attracts a diverse crowd: cinema-lovers who trust the curatorial process; academics and journalists; students with limited background knowledge; politically engaged viewers; and diasporic communities. Within this mix are vast differences in political literacy and historical awareness. For those without this background, *Russians at War* can create a persuasive illusion of moral equivalence. For viewers who lack the resources to interrogate the framing, the film can seed narratives that normalize the aggressor's perspective. Adam Henschke's analysis of "grey zone" warfare clarifies how this works: the objective is not to replace truth with outright falsehoods, but to saturate the information space with ambiguity, making moral distinctions unstable (Henschke, 2025, pp. 199–226). *Russians at War* presents the soldiers' personal hardships as unquestionable fact while keeping their actions and the broader political context in deliberate obscurity, creating a false symmetry between aggressor and victim and exploiting audience trust in documentary settings.

Once granted a platform by a reputable festival, the film benefits from institutional legitimacy and circulates into reviews and cultural discourse without being properly interrogated. For Australians encountering the conflict through mediated cultural products, *Russians at War* does not simply offer "another perspective." It legitimizes a Kremlin-compatible narrative in a country geographically distant from the war but politically connected (The Guardian, 2024; Kyiv Independent, 2024). The uncritical exhibition becomes complicity in soft-power disinformation, shifting the lens through which a distant war is understood.

Zygar and Cartographic Erasure as Epistemic Sabotage

Mikhail Zygar's case reveals how Western institutions embrace dissidents transactionally, reinforcing Russian revisionist tendencies and a Cold War-era moral binary, exposing contradictions within supposedly critical, anti-regime narratives. As Miranda Fricker argues in *Epistemic Injustice*, credibility is a form of power (Fricker, 2007, p. 13). Western platforms risk naturalizing dissident narratives still bound to imperial worldviews.

This phenomenon is not unique to Russia. Anti-apartheid exiles from South Africa sometimes reproduced patriarchal or ethnonationalist frames in exile (Msimang, 2017, pp. 45–47). Opposition to a regime doesn't erase inherited imperial epistemic structures; Zygar exemplifies this.

Though analyzing his YouTube history "re-educational" videos, I think one of the examples that I would like to bring in this paper comes from Zygar's *The Conquest of the Caucasus: Shamil, Hadji Murat, the Genocide of the Circassians and Armenians, Revolution, and "Friendship of Peoples"* (2023). In discussing the brief independence of the Georgian Democratic Republic (DGR) (1918–1921), Zygar uses a map (see Figure 3) that significantly distorts the historical borders of DGR. Zakatala, Sukhumi, Batumi, and the Tao-Klarjeti region-territories recognized as Georgian under the Moscow Agreement of 7 May 1920-are absent.

Figure 3

Distorted Map of the Democratic Republic of Georgia Used in Zygar's Video

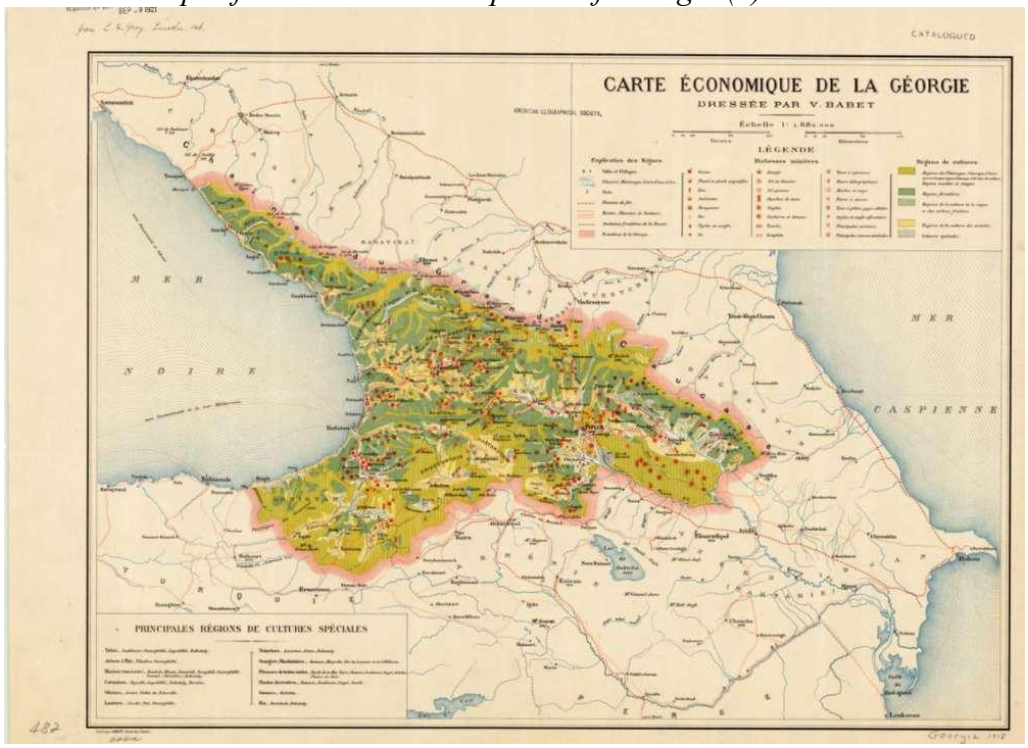
Note. Screenshot from M. Zygar, "The Conquest of the Caucasus" (YouTube, 2023, 1:17:31).

Figure 4

Economic Maps of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1)

Figure 5

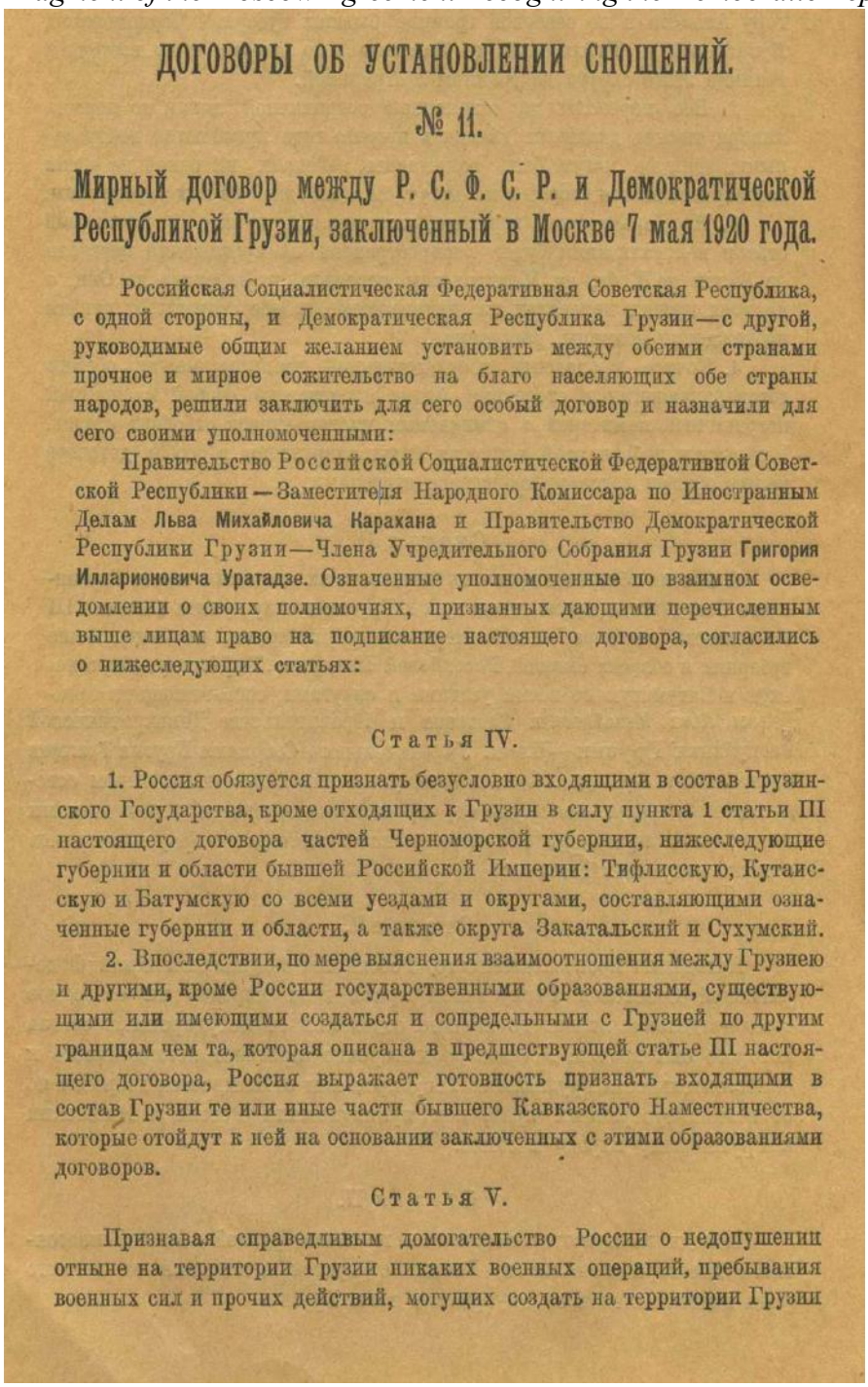
Economic Maps of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (2)



Note. Economic map of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, published in French in 1918, the year Georgia declared independence from the Russian Empire under a social democratic government.
Source: Library of Congress.

Figure 6

Fragment of the Moscow Agreement Recognizing the Democratic Republic of Georgia



ДОГОВОРЫ ОБ УСТАНОВЛЕНИИ СНОШЕНИЙ.

№ 11.

Мирный договор между Р. С. Ф. С. Р. и Демократической Республикой Грузии, заключенный в Москве 7 мая 1920 года.

Российская Социалистическая Федеративная Советская Республика, с одной стороны, и Демократическая Республика Грузии—с другой, руководимые общим желанием установить между обеими странами прочное и мирное сожительство на благо населяющих обе страны народов, решили заключить для сего особый договор и назначили для сего своими уполномоченными:

Правительство Российской Социалистической Федеративной Советской Республики — Заместителя Народного Комиссара по Иностранным Делам Льва Михайловича Карахана и Правительство Демократической Республики Грузии—Члена Учредительного Собрания Грузии Григория Илларионовича Уратадзе. Означенные уполномоченные по взаимном осведомлении о своих полномочиях, признанных дающими перечисленным выше лицам право на подписание настоящего договора, согласились о нижеследующих статьях:

Статья IV.

1. Россия обязуется признать безусловно входящими в состав Грузинского Государства, кроме отходящих к Грузии в силу пункта 1 статьи III настоящего договора частей Черноморской губернии, нижеследующие губернии и области бывшей Российской Империи: Тифлисскую, Кутаисскую и Батумскую со всеми уездами и округами, составляющими означенные губернии и области, а также округа Закатальский и Сухумский.

2. Впоследствии, по мере выяснения взаимоотношения между Грузией и другими, кроме России государственными образованиями, существующими или имеющими создаться и сопредельными с Грузией по другим границам чем та, которая описана в предшествующей статье III настоящего договора, Россия выражает готовность признать входящими в состав Грузии те или иные части бывшего Кавказского Наместничества, которые отойдут к ней на основании заключенных с этими образованиями договоров.

Статья V.

Признавая справедливым домогательство России о недопущении отныне на территории Грузии никаких военных операций, пребывания военных сил и прочих действий, могущих создать на территории Грузии

Note. Fragment of the Moscow Agreement of May 7, 1920, in which Soviet Russia formally recognized the Democratic Republic of Georgia and its territorial integrity.
Source: Georgian National Archives.

Maps can clearly be the instruments of political storytelling (Hall, 1997; Harlow, 2006). By removing these territories from the visual narrative, Zygar's video aligns with contemporary Russian revisionist positions disputing Georgia's territorial integrity. The map functions as a quiet form of epistemic sabotage. The same pattern appears in Zygar's treatment of the Georgievsky Treaty of 1783, positioning it as a mutual agreement while leaving unspoken the betrayals that followed the annexation. The General Totleben's withdrawal at the Battle of

Aspindza (1770) a move that left King Erekle II's outnumbered troops to face the Ottomans alone, is especially significant (Epadze, 2022).

This event shows the fragile, transactional nature of Russian "protection," serving imperial interests over allies. By excising such episodes, Zygar produces a softened imperial history that allows annexation to appear benevolent. A further example lies in Zygar's portrayal of Prince Kelesh Bey Shervashidze (Caucasus Survey 10, 2024, 324–346). Stripped of his role in the historical integration of Abkhazia into Georgian statehood, Shervashidze is reframed in ways that align with the colonial narrative (Epadze, 2022). Shervashidze's image is contested, yet Zygar's framing tilts toward the version favorable to Russian geopolitical goals. At this point, the shift to digital epistemic violence is clearly detectable. Zygar's content silences by selective presence: Georgia and other Caucasian nations appear only through frames reaffirming their subordination to Russia's narrative. In digital environments, such portrayals can become default references. In Australia, limited knowledge allows a distorted narrative to enter classrooms and media commentary unchallenged, especially as these videos circulate widely with English subtitles. Representation, according to Stuart Hall, is not passive reflection; it is an active process of constructing meaning (Hall, 1997). For members of the Georgian or other minority diaspora, Zygar's references are recognizable as erasures. For viewers without prior exposure, these nuances are invisible and dangerously effective. In multicultural societies like Australia, this unevenness feeds epistemic inequalities. When an influential dissident's video erases territories or sanitizes imperial betrayals, it shifts the baseline of public understanding.

Conclusion

As The Antique, which reframes deportations as non-political suffering, and *Russians at War,* which humanizes soldiers, Zygar's videos participate in a broader ecology of digital memory warfare**.** Each case removes or reconfigures key elements of historical truth, creating emotional identification with aggressors, moral equivalence between oppressor and oppressed, or diminished visibility for colonized nations. The manipulative techniques differ in these cases: cartographic erasure, sentimentalization, and selective voice inclusion, but the outcome is the same. It is a reframed history that reduces the moral and political costs of imperial violence. In the post-truth environment, this is a structural policy. By shifting the narrative lens, these works create certain futures in which imperial logics persist, easier to imagine, and others that require genuine decolonization, harder to conceive.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

I declare that ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used to assist with restructuring the manuscript to match conference proceedings formatting requirements and to refine language for clarity and concision. The use was limited to editing and rephrasing, and no AI tool was used to generate the research claims, interpretations, or evidence base. The ideas, analyses, and conclusions are derived from the author's research and critical framework.

References

Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 31*(2), 211–236. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211

Antenna Documentary Film Festival. (2025). *Russians at war*. https://antennafestival.org/films/russians-at-war/

Benjamin, W. (1968). The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. In H. Arendt (Ed.), *Illuminations* (pp. 217–252). Schocken Books.

Beridze, I., & Butcher, J. (2023). When seeing is no longer believing. *Nature Machine Intelligence, 5*(1), 1–2. https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-022-00684-0

Blöser, C., Janvid, M., & Matthiessen, H. O. (2013). *Defeasibility in philosophy: Knowledge, agency, responsibility, and the law*. Brill.

Castells, M. (1996). *The rise of the network society*. Blackwell.

Criterion Collection. (2020, February 14). *I am Cuba: The filmmakers who came in from the cold*. https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/8451-i-am-cuba-the-filmmakers-who-came-in-from-the-cold

Curry, D. (2025, September 17). South African women in exile. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*. https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-1524

Digital Forensic Research Lab. (2024, May 2). *Georgia's ruling party flooded Facebook with ads to push controversial law*. Atlantic Council. https://dfrlab.org/2024/10/25/georgia-ruling-party-facebook-ads/

Epadze, K. (2022). Reconstructing a national hero in the post-colonial memory politics of Abkhazia: Debates over Kelesh Bey Shervashidze. *Caucasus Survey, 10*(3), 324–349. https://doi.org/10.30965/23761202-20220015

Europa Film Festival. (2025). *The antique*. https://www.europafilmfestival.com.au/films/the-antique

Felman, S., & Laub, D. (1992). *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history*. Routledge.

Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press.

Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. (n.d.). *Russian expansion*. https://gfsis.org.ge/publications/russian-expansion

Gillespie, T. (2018). *Custodians of the internet: Platforms, content moderation, and the hidden decisions that shape social media*. Yale University Press.

Goodfellow, I. (2020). Generative adversarial networks. *Communications of the ACM, 63*(11), 139–144. https://cacm.acm.org/research/generative-adversarial-networks

Graffy, J. (2008). Soy Cuba: A film out of time. *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema, 2*(2), 167–181.

Groeneveld, J. (2020, May 7). *Georgia's phantom treaty*. Civil Georgia. https://civil.ge/archives/350291

Group of Georgian Emigrants and Filmmakers. (2025, March 6). *Letter to the Europa Film Festival regarding the selection of The Antique by Rusudan Glurjidze*. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RHVeoqw_YVcFoyXbPlB7pRJEcSS3HYo36Jbo1LfKEDw

The Guardian. (2024, September 7). *Documentary "Russians at War" accused of false picture of soldiers invading Ukraine*. https://www.theguardian.com/film/article/2024/sep/07/documentary-russians-at-war-accused-of-false-picture-soldiers-invading-ukraine

Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Sage.

Hall, S. (2006). Representation and the media. In J. Storey (Ed.), *Cultural theory and popular culture: A reader* (2nd ed., pp. 52–54). Pearson Education.

Henschke, A. (2025). Foundational moral and political values. In *Cognitive warfare: Grey matters in contemporary political conflict* (pp. 199–226). Routledge.

Hirsch, M. (2012). *The generation of postmemory: Writing and visual culture after the Holocaust*. Columbia University Press.

Human Rights Watch. (2007, September 30). *Russia targets Georgians for expulsion*. https://www.hrw.org/news/2007/09/30/russia-targets-georgians-expulsion

Human Rights Watch. (2025). *Georgia*. In *World report 2025*. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/georgia

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy. (2023, January). *Facebook posts with propagandist and discrediting content*. https://www.isfed.ge/eng/diskreditatsiuli-da-propagandistuli-gzavnilebi

Jowett, G. S., & O'Donnell, V. (2019). *Propaganda & persuasion* (7th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Kyiv Independent. (2024, September 6). *Is Russians at War propaganda? We asked seven people in film who saw it*. https://kyivindependent.com/is-russians-at-war-propaganda-we-asked-7-people-in-film-who-saw-it/

Kyiv Independent. (2024, September 6). *Outright propaganda: Dutch university to screen Russians at War and host panel with controversial director*. https://kyivindependent.com/outright-propaganda-dutch-university-to-screen-russians-at-war-and-host-panel-with-controversial-director/

Library of Congress. (1918). *Economic map of the Democratic Republic of Georgia* [Map]. https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_15666/

Matthiessen, H. O. (2013). Entitlement and public accessibility of epistemic status. *Grazer Philosophische Studien, 87*(1), 75–97.

Meta. (2023, April). *Coordinated inauthentic behavior report*. https://about.fb.com/news/tag/coordinated-inauthentic-behavior/

Msimang, S. (2017). *Always another country: A memoir of exile and home*. Text Publishing.

OC Media. (2025, April 2). *Georgian cinema is in danger: Filmmakers take on the culture ministry*. https://oc-media.org/georgian-cinema-is-in-danger-filmmakers-take-on-the-culture-ministry/

Oxford Internet Institute. (2024, February). *Professor Sandra Wachter shares her insights on the rise of deepfakes and AI-generated online content*. https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/news-events/safer-internet-day-2024-professor-sandra-wachter-shares-her-insights-on-the-rise-of-deepfakes-and-ai-generated-online-content/

Sontag, S. (2003). *Regarding the pain of others*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). University of Illinois Press.

Trofimova, A. (2023, November 21). *"They are not animals": Russians at war* [Interview]. *Tell Gordeeva*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knPIwpqaDKo

Tsurtsumia, M. (2024). Reinventing Kelesh Bey: Memory politics and cultural resistance in Abkhazia. *Caucasus Survey, 10*(3), 324–346. https://doi.org/10.30965/23761199-12350063

Zelizer, B. (2001). *Remembering to forget: Holocaust memory through the camera's eye*. University of Chicago Press.

Zygar, M. (2023, April 5). *Conquest of the Caucasus: Dagestan vs. Iran, Russia vs. Turkey—What does Napoleon have to do with it?* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mw4x_QRH5_U

Zygar, M. (2023, April 5). *The conquest of the Caucasus: Shamil, Hadji Murat, the genocide of the Circassians and Armenians, revolution, and "friendship of peoples"* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/shorts/2ZH4OlZObFY