

Jerry T.Heil

# No List of Political Assets

The Collaboration of Iurii Olesha  
and Abram Room  
on "Strogii Iunosha" [A Strict Youth (1936)]

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JERRY T. HEIL

NO LIST OF POLITICAL ASSETS:  
The Collaboration of Iurii Olesha and Abram Room on  
“Strogii Iunosha” [A Strict Youth (1936)]



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Рис. В. Козлинского

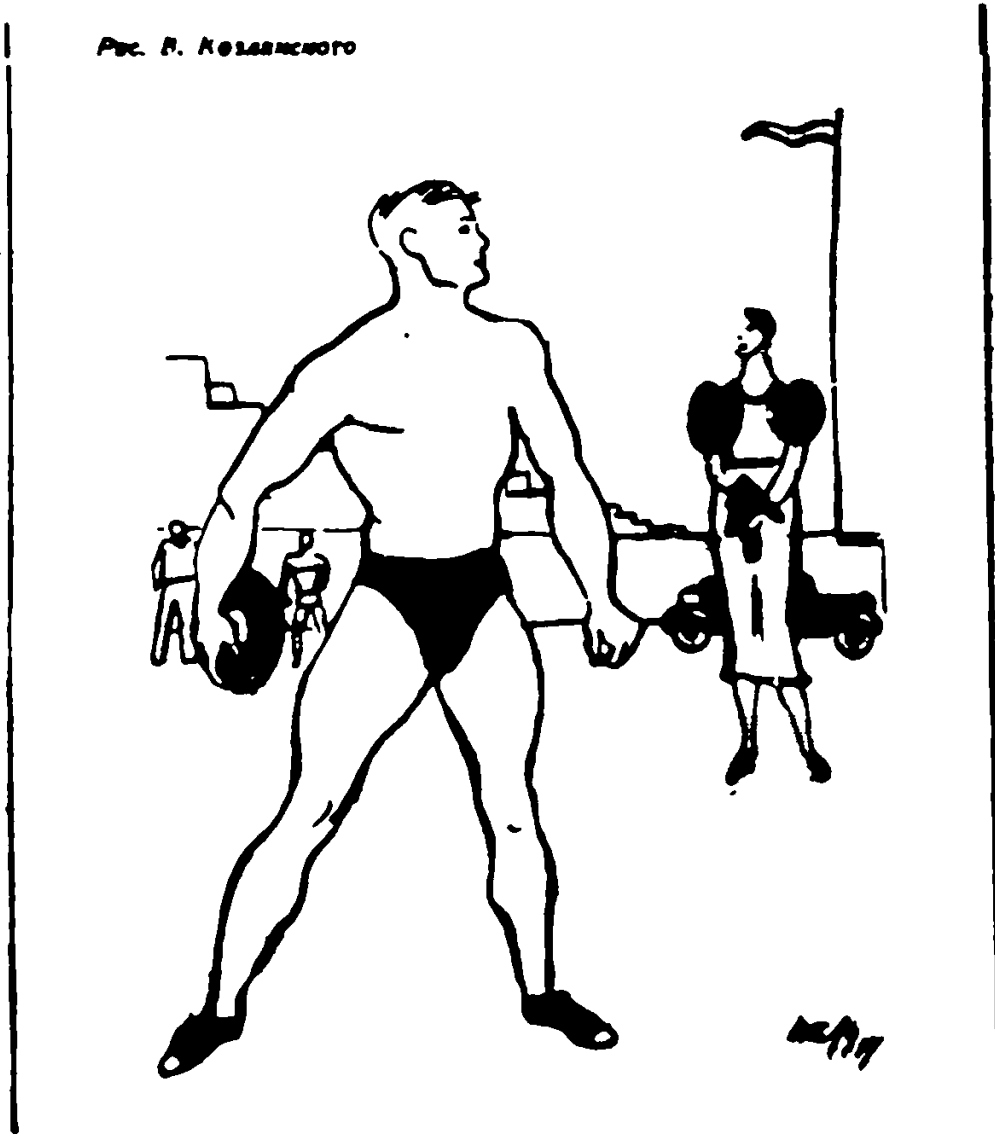


Fig. 1. Drawing by V. Kozlinskii that accompanied the published excerpt of "STROGII IUNOSHA", entitled "Diskobol. Epizod iz p'esy dlia kinematografa", in Literaturnaia gazeta, 28 June 1934.

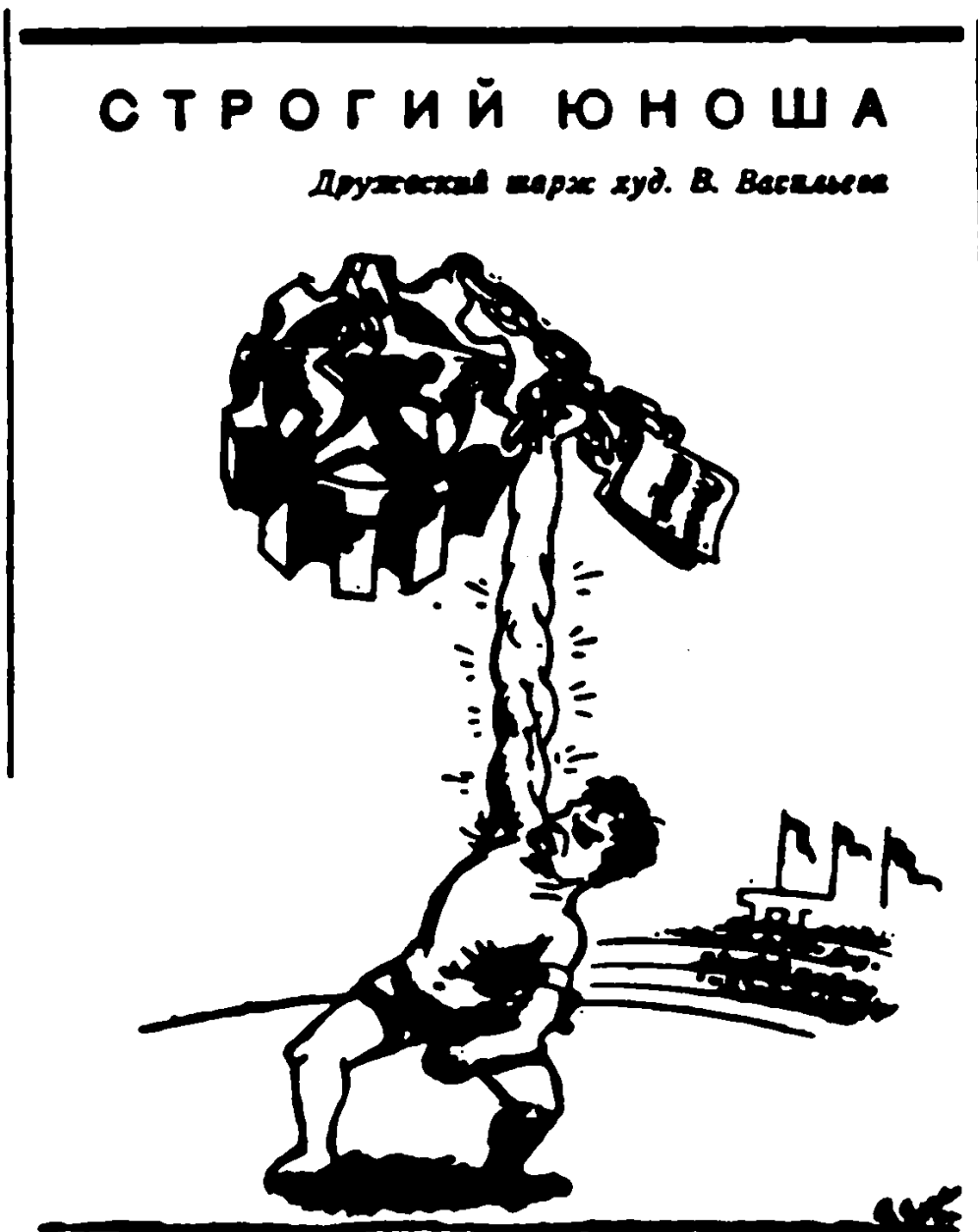


Fig. 2. A "friendly caricature" by V. Vasil'ev depicting Iurii Olesha that accompanied a review by V. Pertsov of "STROGII IUNOSHA", entitled "Zagovor vysokikh umov", in Literaturnaia gazeta, 28 September 1934.

...Теперь я отстал, смотри как я отстал....<sup>1</sup>

Iurii Olesha (1899-1960) was a relative late-comer to film work, if compared to several other important fictional prose writers of the Soviet 'experimental' (modernist) 1920s.<sup>2</sup> Olesha's first major filmscript (and his first script to be filmed) was "STROGII IUNOSHA" ["A STRICT YOUTH"], written in Odessa in 29 days in May and June 1934; it was accepted by the Ukrainian Film Studios [Ukrainfil'm] and the film was scheduled for release in the first quarter of 1935. The script was first published in the August 1934 issue of the journal Novyi mir.<sup>3</sup> Production was delayed by discussions in Moscow, but the film was finally completed in 1936 in Kiev. But then the film administration ordered it to be 'shelved' after a series of evaluative discussions, i.e., STROGII IUNOSHA was banned, on 10 June 1936, before its expected release.<sup>4</sup>

The history of this film is full of sad ironies, not the least of which is that it marks the end of the still-young Olesha's truly imaginative and creative period at a time when, so far as one can judge, he was sincerely attempting to transform himself into a creator of ideologically acceptable Soviet literature. It was also the beginning of Olesha's somewhat spotty career as a writer for films, which continued, erratically, to 1942 and which was resumed in the early 1950s. None of the other films in Olesha's filmography<sup>5</sup> is comparable to STROGII IUNOSHA (I refer here both to the script and especially to the completed film) in any of the various ways that films are deemed worthy of scholarly attention. The banning of STROGII IUNOSHA may serve to spark interest in it nowadays, when "Gorbachev's cinema" is a term that has become common currency to signal a supposed liberalism in the Soviet film world.<sup>6</sup> But prurient curiosity about this forbidden film, despite the period (the mid-1930s in the USSR) and the persons involved, would not wholly justify a detailed commentary on it more than fifty years later. In any case, the film is not now banned, though it has hitherto

received only circumspect and cautious attention in the Soviet Union.

In the 1930s, the Soviet film world was subjected to increasing ideological/political demands which, with a concomitant ~~aesthetic~~ **conservatism**, placed severe limits on almost all artistic expression. Norms were established and politically enforced (the effects lasted into the 1960s and well beyond). STROGII IUNOSHA failed to satisfy both political and aesthetic expectations, its egregious errors were uncorrectable, and it could not be salvaged in revision. It remains an engaging case history. And in this writer's opinion, the film is more interesting than Olesha's published script might indicate, credit for this being due to the acute sensitivity and perspicacity of the film's director, Abram Room (1894-1976).<sup>7</sup> The principal aims of this paper are, therefore, to demonstrate that the value of Olesha's text is enhanced by considering its raison d'être, its filmed rendition--to draw attention to this film, to give it its turn to be retrieved from the obscurity enveloping it as a curiosity or as an artistic work of mere 'peripheral' significance.

Technically, "STROGII IUNOSHA" presents no impediments to a reading as a literary work (as a theatre play, or as a narrative/descriptive prose work with dialogue)--it was published, to be read, as a finished piece, unlike most film-scripts. The script is divided into forty-seven numbered sections, which organize a larger number of changing, alternating scenes or sequences,<sup>8</sup> but the sections lack the numbered, technical descriptions for shots or camera set-ups [kadry, plany], which are found in a shooting script [rezhisserskii stsenarii] or in a post-production, written description of a film [montazhnye listy, or, to use a term more familiar to Western scholars, the découpage]. The dialogues are quite brief, composed mostly of short sentences. The shot descriptions (indicating the objects in the pro-filmic space and how they are to be recorded by the camera) are expectedly numerous, but are laconic, 'minimalist', in their prose, usually in sentence form, and frequently with literary traits which have an important functional relationship to 'cinematicness'. There are several themes and motifs in the script which show an obvious continuation of some long-recognized themes and motifs from

Olesha's earlier prose fiction; there are marked divergences as well. The specialist in Russian cinema will detect that Olesha was an advocate, of sorts, of the so-called 'emotional scenario' [èmotsional'nyi stsenarii], a method of film-script writing that eschewed the more technical and rigid form of the 'iron-clad scenario' [stal'noi stsenarii], while it presupposed an intellectual and emotional rapport with the film's intended director<sup>9</sup> (while there is just as much evidence that this script was informed by the techniques of writing for the theatre). These are usually instances when it is justified to refer to the director as auteur, one who imbues a film's aesthetic and ideational aspects with a discernible personal stamp (ironically, the actual writer frequently remains ignored or barely mentioned, but in this case, Room collaborated, to an undetermined extent, with Olesha on the script).<sup>10</sup> Briefly put, Abram Room's rendition demonstrates without question that the director was intellectually and emotionally attuned, to a remarkable degree, to Olesha's literary output and to his personal and creative psychology. Olesha was given 'his director', though this fortunate circumstance proved to be a collective error in political judgment by 1936.<sup>11</sup>

The basic story line--the fabula, as defined in Iurii Tynianov's work<sup>12</sup> --of "STROGII IUNOSHA" is very simple, and its filmed version shows little variance from the published script in this respect. The cast list<sup>13</sup> is short and their characters are 'types', presented whole, but who have complications and experience some change, and whose facets are gradually revealed through their interrelationships. This film was conceived as an idealization of a future morality. It provides room for tolerance of judgmental error, philosophical doubt, psychological apprehension, a sentimentality vis-à-vis the past that befuddles 'class consciousness', and of ideological and even of psycho-sexual 'unsuitability' to the new epoch. The work as a whole is a sophisticated effort to deal with simple, politically exigent notions of the Soviet 'New Man/Woman' [novyi chelovek]. STROGII IUNOSHA presents an ideal but it cannot conform to the official concept of the ideal. It is not in overt political adversity, but it does present a multifarious psychological profile, emanating from its creators, and its surface transparency attracts attention while it obscures an intricate pattern of contrary meanings.

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The story begins with the introduction of the main protagonists, a 'living group' consisting of Dr Iulian Stepanov, his wife, Masha, and their ubiquitous live-in 'guest', Fedor Tsitronov. The seeming balance of this threesome's arrangement is disrupted by the arrival at Dr Stepanov's summer dacha, as Masha's guest, of Grisha Fokin, who is introduced in the text merely as 'the young man' [molodoi chelovek]. Grisha might seem to be distracted by the considerable fruits of laudable, and officially rewarded, contributions (Dr Stepanov's) to humanity. But it is Masha, not material pleasures, who distracts him from his path, and eventually he tries to pull away, to remain within his own world (he is not successful). Grisha's contrasting world consists of a community of enthusiastic Young Communist League members [komsomol'tsy], most prominent among whom, after Grisha, are Kolia, nicknamed "Diskobol" ["Discus Thrower" (whose Russian name is retained here)], two komsomolki, one named Olga and the other identified as "the Girl" [Devushka] and by her name, Liza. Their extended relationships include Grisha's mother, Diskobol's uncle (a tailor), Olga's husband (a sailor), and her father (a worker). Some of the actors in main roles were well known, especially Maksim Shtraukh (1900-1974) as Tsitronov,<sup>14</sup> Olga Zhizneva (1899-1972) as Masha Stepanova,<sup>15</sup> and Dmitrii Dorliak (1912-1938) as Grisha Fokin.

The biography of Dmitrii Dorliak might suggest some abstruse clues to the difficulties of STROGII IUNOSHA. The Dorliak family had descended from refugees from the French Revolution. His mother, Kseniia Nikolaevna Dorliak (1881-1945) had once been a lady-in-waiting in the last Romanov court, but she had stayed on in Soviet times (implausible as it seems) to achieve prominence in Moscow's politically informed music community as Chair of Vocal Music at the Moscow State Conservatory. Both she and her daughter (Dmitrii's sister), Nina L'vovna Dorliak (b. 1906), had estimable reputations as singers and pedagogues. Nina Dorliak was married to the pianist, Sviatoslav Richter (born 1914). Dmitrii Dorliak was an actor in the Vaghtangov Theatre Company. He won immense recognition and popularity apparently less for his acting abilities than for his extremely handsome physique and exquisite bearing.

Apparently after his part in STROGII IUNOSHA had been filmed, Dorliak was given a role in ZORI PARIZHA [TWILIGHT OF PARIS (1936, released in March 1937)], during which he was supposed to have begun a romance with the actress Antonina Maksimova (who was also in that film).<sup>16</sup> He became notorious after an article in the newspaper Kino, entitled "A Vulgarian from the Vakhtangov Theater", condemned his "moral turpitude", allegedly for cruelly jilting Maksimova, whereupon Boris Shumiatskii (responsible for the newspaper denunciation, Head of the Main Motion Picture Administration, and Sergei Eisenstein's nemesis)<sup>17</sup> forbade any future work in films for Dorliak.

Dmitrii Dorliak was as close as ever one has heard to a Soviet 'matinee idol', and a biographer describes him in sincere but near-rapturous tones, attesting as well to the adoration bestowed on him by the public. In recalling a portrait of the actor that had once hung in the Vakhtangov Theatre, Iurii Elagin [Jelagin] said that Dorliak was

a strikingly handsome young man. True nobility was reflected in the fine, aristocratic features of his face that had been painted in profile. Everything about it was in harmony and perfection. No sculptor in the world could have conceived a more beautiful face....

And he added that Dorliak

began a rapid climb up the theatrical ladder of success because of his physical appearance. There was no other young actor in Moscow who had Dmitrii's superb and powerful physique....<sup>18</sup>

Dorliak was further described as a dashing habitué of Moscow's expensive restaurants (then, as now, this habit presupposed political connection and fiscal means), as "the only healthy young man in the Soviet Union who walked around with a cane", as one who stood in contrast to the affected proletarian vulgarity of others by the "striking simplicity" and "faultless taste" of his attire. One might suspect that such beautiful males, attractive in the way that the 'peasant poet' Sergei Esenin had been, are not always heterosexually inclined. Elagin wrote that Dorliak "seldom took any ladies to the restaurants, though women played an important role in his life. He preferred to go out with men". But this male-bonded socializing is common in Russian

culture, as it is in other cultures. In any case, after his official moral fall from grace, Dorliak lost the large income that films had provided, though he continued to act in the theatre. And in late summer 1938, he died, from typhoid, in Irkutsk while touring Siberia with a Vakhtangov group. (Elagin, writing in 1950, did not question the cause of Dorliak's death in 1938, at the height of Stalin's purges.) His Moscow funeral was a thronged event that filled the Arbat, a spectacular, unofficial outpouring of popular affection.

Judging from Elagin's account, Dmitrii Dorliak was a logical, already popular choice, even physically typecast in the role of Olesha's and Room's 'New Soviet Man'. It is apparent, however, that his selection as a role model was eventually politically unacceptable. Dorliak's personal troubles may not have had a direct bearing on the problems of STROGII IUNOSHA, though the evidence suggests that they did, and the public disgrace over the Maksimova affair sounds suspiciously like a trumped-up charge. But the film's treatment of male physicality (with Grisha and Diskobol) did come at an historically inauspicious moment.

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Grisha Fokin's (Dorliak's) arrival at Stepanov's dacha [sections 5-11]<sup>19</sup> is heralded by the whistle of the train which has brought him into the resort community; Masha rides to the station to meet him, but they by-pass each other; Fokin walks to the dacha, where they meet up. At the script's end, Grisha meets Masha in a hyper-romantic dream sequence, as it seems [45-46]. Nowhere in these or in the intervening parts of the script is there an explanation for the pairing of this handsome and apparently innocent young man with the older married woman. Nowhere is their first encounter described, nor is there a definite final parting. Nothing of their mutual physical and emotional attraction is given an articulated rationale in the text. Olesha's script relies on distinctive, non-equivalent descriptions of Grisha and Masha to make the points, elliptically, that the film will make in images. Their first 'on-camera' meeting [11] is mediated by Olesha's scripted, associative prompting:



There is a type of male appearance which has developed as a result of the development of technology, aviation, sport. From under the leather peak of a pilot's helmet, a pair of gray eyes, as a rule, look out at you. And you may be sure that when the pilot takes off his helmet then it will be fair hair that will be gleaming before you. A tank is moving along the street. The ground trembles beneath your feet. Suddenly a trap-door opens in the back of this monster, and a head appears through this trap-door. This is the tankman. And, needless to say, he will also be pale-eyed.

Light eyes, light hair, a thin face, a triangular torso, a muscular chest--such is the modern type of male beauty. This is the beauty of the Red Army soldiers, the beauty of the young men who wear the GTO emblem on their chests.<sup>20</sup> It comes about from frequent contact with water, machines and gymnastic equipment. Such is the appearance of the young man who now stands before Masha, on the grass, in the midst of camomile, in the bright sun-shine.

The meeting....

Olesha's film-script functions to guide the director, and at this point his literary prompting functions to associate his hero with a standard image of masculine beauty, attired, significantly, in a disciplined/disciplining outfit. In the immediate context, it is pragmatically motivated as an image to which a woman, Masha, is attracted. In the broader concept of the script, however, this description—one of two longest single passages in the entire script—is homo-erotic and centers on the gaze of both the writer and the potential viewers. And there are other passages in the script which isolate the attractive male as an object of the gaze; one example is narcissistic, another is homo-erotic (innocently, but certainly idealizing). Immediately upon returning home from Stepanov's dacha [20], Grisha Fokin encounters a young girl (from a neighboring apartment, Sosedka) whose own reflection in a mirror she finds unattractive. Grisha encourages her by saying that whoever

has been told "I love you" by someone is beautiful. Whereupon Grisha takes the mirror, looks into it, and this brief dialogue follows:

[SON]: "Mama, am I good-looking [krasivyi]?"

MOTHER: "Well, of course you are."

SON: "But nobody has yet said to me, 'I love you'."

NEIGHBOR: "But all the same, you are good-looking."

Nowhere in the script or film does anyone say to Grisha, or to Masha, "I love you". In the sections with his mother [20, 28, 33], Grisha is identified as "the son" [syn], an example of Olesha's subjective prompting. There is another scene where Grisha looks at himself in a mirror, but he sees Tsitronov's reflection [30], and another where the sun's rays reflected from a mirror are used to bedazzle, to destroy, temporarily and playfully, Stepanov's ability to see [40].

But Grisha's gaze is not only upon his own visage. In what might be called the "gymnasium" or the "stadium sequence" [21-22], he is among a number of young athletes:

A young man with a discus comes up [the staircase] to the resting group. It is Diskobol.

From below [sic: snizu] Fokin sees Diskobol coming.<sup>21</sup>

Fokin looks.

Diskobol slowly ascends the staircase.

Diskobol. He is stripped. He is wearing only a pair of

brief shorts. [On obnazhennyi. Tol'ko korotkie trusy na nem.]

This brief sequence of Fokin's 'seeing' [vidit] and 'looking' [smotrit] can, arguably, be interpreted as a subtly homo-erotic gaze, but technically (cinematographically), it guides the readers'/viewers' attention to the more important male object-of-the-look in STROGII IUNOSHA. This is Diskobol—this muscular, smooth-skinned, sun-tanned, blond, literally (but not actually) 'naked' [obnazhennyi] athlete who is situated in the immediately following shot-series [in 22] in a classical pose, as the central figure within a group of admiring males and females (the athletic komsomol'tsy). This important scene in the script gives hardly a clue to the filmed version, though the youths' conversation seems to have been rendered word-for-word in the film.

This stylized scene of philosophizing in the gymnasium merits a detailed description. The background is one-dimensional, a flat wall, extending out-of-frame left, right and top; the camera is fairly consistently angled at 90° perpendicular to the wall; it is decorated with economical classical patterns, including a row of cameo-like portraits of familiar faces (Stalin's among them), placed on the wall at a level above the actors' heads. (These cameos veer precariously toward the purest form of kitsch.) The script's "at the stadium" [na stadione] for this setting is slightly misleading: the next section [23, discussed later] is outside, on the sportsground, while the film clearly indicates that this 'Spartan' rest area is inside a gymnasium building, and near the shower room, because a betowelled young man is seen going in and coming out of it (an unscripted<sup>22</sup> detail that demonstrates Room's awareness of Olesha's obsession with the physical). Some classical columns break the space between the wall and the cluster of people foregrounded at center-shot. The centerpiece of this group is Diskobol, posed in late-Classical or Hellenic Greek fashion as a 'reclining athlete', on a marble platform or pedestal. The model for this particular positioning could have been anything from a Graeco-Roman athlete or a fallen-warrior statue to a composite image taken from numerous sources, but the overall composition is akin to a temple frieze, i.e. it is a filmed tableau vivant. This frontality does not characterize other sequences in the film (in fact, rather the opposite, a depth-of-field photography, obtains elsewhere). Only seeming to be the subject of part of the conversation, this young athlete is further described as follows:

Suntanned. A heavy stone discus in his hands.

Diskobol is sitting.

As if he isn't listening [Kak bydto ne slushayet].

....

Diskobol transfers the discus [which he has been carrying] to the other hand. As if he is not listening. He sits, leaning slightly on his elbows. His tanned body gleams in the sun.

Someone ("he") is praised by the 'first young man' in the group for assembling the 'third set' or 'complex' of qualities of the GTO. It becomes quite clear

(by comparing the text of section 38 with that of 22 here) that Grisha Fokin, who remains silent and de-centered in this scene, and not Diskobol, is being praised for this GTO activity. It is thus Grisha's achievement to have established a set of 'moral rules' and 'spiritual qualities', to complement the physical and patriotic values of the GTO, which the komsomol'sty are to strive to follow (the GTO moral system is purely of Olesha's invention).<sup>23</sup> The conversation here [22] is economical and just long enough to accomplish three things: it introduces the 'philosophical' theme of a future moral code, it foregrounds another significant character, the Girl (Liza), and it serves as the first really detectable juncture of the complicated criss-crossing net of symbols that unites Grisha with Diskobol. This symbolism transects the script and film at the levels of Roland Barthes' 'obvious' and 'obtuse' meanings,<sup>24</sup> but perhaps it is better described as an active, fecund, an often maverick process of symbolization along binary axes of signification; these axes are frequently concurrent (overlapping).

Grisha Fokin's 'third complex' is given its explication by means of a teacher-student discourse. The Socratic precedent is the clear reference here, in the stylized Classical setting. The participating students are the unnamed 'first', 'second' and 'third' young men, while the Girl is the explicatrix. Questions and answers reveal the third complex of GTO to be a "complex of moral qualities" including "modesty", "sincerity", "generosity", then "sentimentality", "a harsh attitude toward egoism", and "chastity". Each of these qualities receives a brief verbal elaboration (modesty: "So that there's no rudeness or undue familiarity"; sentimentality: "So as to like not only marches, but waltzes, too"). When the second young man declares these final three to be "bourgeois qualities", he is corrected by the first young man and the Girl: these are "human qualities", which the "bourgeoisie had perverted", because "there was the power of money", and "since now there is no power of money, all these feelings are purified". These moral qualities are all well and good, and they receive further explication in later sections. But Olesha's text here, as elsewhere, has inserted two of many details that constitute the film's second discourse, its system of symbolization: the illustration to the quality of 'chastity' [tselomudrie] is not verbal, but rather a demonstrative double-shot of Grisha and Diskobol, in this series:

GIRL: [eliciting responses] "Well, go on, go on."

[1st MAN]: "A harsh attitude toward egoism."

GIRL: "That's right."

[1st MAN]: "Well, and chastity."

DISKOBOL: "What do you mean by 'chastity'?"

GIRL: "Don't you understand?"

Grisha Fokin in the circle [of youths]. Sun. Grass. Camomile.

Diskobol is sitting.

2nd MAN: "But surely these are bourgeois qualities." [& etc.]

(The actual film shows an interior setting here, as noted already.) The two inserted shots of Grisha and Diskobol establish them visually, together, as exemplars of chastity (moral and presumably physical purity), and possibly as 'bourgeois', too. These shots are idolizing/idealizing and simultaneously represent the authorial gaze and the Girl's gaze (her actual point of view by way of the subjective camera). But the film's sound-track rivets attention here on the Girl as well: it links her to a characterizing remark, "Don't you understand?" ["Neuzheli ty ne ponimaesh?"]. The actress who played the Girl was a pretty, teen-aged Valentina Serova, née Polovikova.<sup>25</sup> Her character is young, light, attractive. But her sprightliness in this role is double-edged (intentionally) because, while she does charm the viewer, she also irritates. With a high-pitched, adolescent voice, the Girl repeats her "Don't you understand?" six times in this section [22] alone, and twelve times altogether as her lines are scripted [& in 23, 28, 30, 36, 41], while most of her other spoken lines are articulations of her childishly impetuous and continually demonstrated 'theory of desire fulfillment' ["Chelovek ne dolzhen podavliat' zhelanii", "Nado ispolniat' zhelaniia": 28, 29, 30 & 38]. The pretty Liza is thus portrayed also as puerilely condescending and intellectually superficial, and even if Olga is posited in the text as its ideologically authoritative female figure, Liza talks more, to put it simply. As discussed below, the depictions of women (Liza, Olga, and especially Masha) in STROGII IUNOSHA had political ramifications. Suffice it to say here that the Girl, Liza, is at Diskobol's side in the film, when he is is not being paired with Grisha, and that her chirpiness is in ironic contrast to the solemnity of her two male friends and of the two other main female characters.

It is apparent that Diskobol had originally been envisaged as the film's central male character and that his persona evolved into two characters. In this gymnasium sequence, Grisha's silence and Diskobol's statue-like solipsism tend to lend them a mutual trait by setting them apart from the group; furthermore, the alternating shots indicated here, with the dialogue, serve to blur the distinctions between the two young men.<sup>26</sup> The GTO motif also functions to link up Diskobol, exemplar of the GTO and of the Classical ideal, with the Komsomol morality attributed more to Grisha Fokin, and with the associative description given in the script of him [11, q.v.]. The effect is one of 'twinning' Grisha with Diskobol at the level of signifying motifs, while the young men are more demonstrably paired by their comparable attractiveness, by their behavior, bearing and friendship, and by their complementary 'philosophical' functions. Diskobol's role as the Classical ideal is balanced by his other role as Grisha Fokin's raisonneur and his conscience. Diskobol is posited as Fokin's student, as well, and is stricter in applying the GTO code than is his moral tutor. Thus Grisha and Diskobol are complementary figures and doubles, or twinned partners. This pairing functions on two levels, that of realia (Barthes: 'the obvious') and that of abstract/arcane symbolism ('the obtuse'). Grisha and Diskobol are Olesha heroes, and neither is released from the gaze and control of their creator. There is an unmistakable transference of the Olesha psyche onto these two male characters—Olesha spoke many times of the 'confessional' nature of his writing, and he was critically upbraided for inserting himself into his fictions.<sup>27</sup> It is not far-fetched, in this context, to claim that the unfolding aspects of Grisha disclose another double, this one signifying a potential negative aspect, a devilish imp, in the person of Fedor Tsitronov.

Tsitronov is not a minor character. Indeed, he is the first of the film's characters to be presented, and his initial appearance is accompanied by a long physical and character description in Olesha's script (it is not coincidental that this paragraph [in 1] is almost exactly the same in length and number of words as the associative description of Grisha [11]):

In the garden, near the veranda, sits a man in a wicker chair. This is Fedor Iakovlevich Tsitronov, a friend of the master of the house.

He has an unpleasant appearance.

Imagine a face on which is constantly preserved an expression of a person about to doze off. His lower lip is about to droop.

His cheeks have become all puffy.

Add to that the fact that the man sitting in the chair is not young. And that he has eaten and drunk a great deal and has sated his gluttony as much as he could during the course of his life. He had always been inclined to corpulence. There was a time when this corpulence could make itself especially manifest. But a catastrophe occurred, possibly physical in nature, perhaps a kidney disease, and as a result of this catastrophe there occurred a sudden loss of weight, which led to a certain presently observable sagging in this man's figure. Nonetheless, anyone who took a look at him would say that the man was stout, rather than thin.

This passage is followed by a brief series of shots [2] that introduce the 'downstairs' side of the Stepanov household (a cook and a kitchen maid performing their chores). The house is characterized as clean and shining, with high, white doors and with windows overlooking the back side of the garden and giving a view onto the graveled garden paths, which provides an 'opening' into the very next shot, on the river shore, introducing Masha after her swim [3]. This is a typical transition shot in a film. (The intellectualized 'textural' match-on-the-cut from one shot to the next shot—gravel/sand—would be lost on all but the most cinematically sophisticated viewers.) However, the final line of this section of the script [2] is an early instance of the binary signification and contradictory narrative strategies of STROGII IUMOSHA: the final line (a repeated one) is, "The flowers are completely still" [Nepodvizhno stoiat tsvety], and the film shows precisely that. It is safe to interpret this as a comment, even if a minor one, on the life-style contained within the Stepanov household, i.e., that

it is static in the time of dynamic changes. But it is also a pretty and becalmed sign of a comfortable life ('of the past', according to the then established dominant ideology; 'of the idealized future', according to Olesha's desires), it is a kind of shot common in silent films of an anticipatory quiet, and it precedes the introduction of Masha.

The screen time (diegetic time) from the first sight of Tsitronov to the first sight of Masha is very short. Olesha's scripted, prejudicial description of Tsitronov becomes a brief series of images in the film. But his character is well delineated in subsequent sequences. Abram Room's biographer gives this efficient summary of him:

Tsitronov is a cynic, a parasite, a moral sadist ...  
He de-aestheticizes and vulgarizes everything touched by his hands, eyes and words. He perceives everything as consumer items: This can be gobbled up [sozhrat'], that can be lapped up [vylakat'], a third thing can be used in another way. Here he makes spots with his dirty fingers all over a wine bottle's streamlined surfaces, shining [in the sun-light]. Here he drops the ashes of a cigar stolen from Stepanov. Here he spends a long time standing in a sort of pathetic dog's pose, looking through the key-hole, watching Masha at her morning [sic] toilet.

In his monologue, even woman becomes a gastronomic item, to rank with cigars, pastries and drinks. And his evaluatory judgments often are of a digestive character.<sup>28</sup>

The metaphoric description of Tsitronov as a voracious animal is appropriate. This bête humaine dresses in black, even in the hot, sun-drenched outdoors, and his costume signifies an outmoded life-style and his function within the Stepanov household both as a lackey or servant and hanger-on: his activities often involve the fondling of food trays and bottles, his arms are often folded, waiter-like. 'Black' also describes his soul, as he is greedy, a malicious ingrate, and envious of his betters. He commits an 'ultimate crime' in Olesha's aesthetic world by using his ability to see for a petty and illicit purpose—he peeps through a key-hole at Masha [42],



but gets found out [44]. On the symbolic level, he is a double also of Dr Stepanov. In a scene in the important "hospital sequence" [37], Tsitronov hands Stepanov a peach:

... [Stepanov] devours the peach like a monkey.

He eats the peach with his entire palm. Juice flows. He takes the pit out of his mouth with his hands.

Tsitronov hands him a second peach.

He devours it in the same way.

Distracted, Stepanov then blames Tsitronov for eating the second peach; he is given a glass of cognac, which he spills over himself. The 'obvious' trait shared, then, by Tsitronov and Stepanov is their sloppy ingestion of food. But in Olesha's symbolic system, fruit is associated with bliss and consummated love, its juiciness, roundness and colour imply physical attraction and sexual satisfaction; flowing juice (cognac is juice-derived) is a sign of sexual availability.<sup>29</sup> But the sexual arrangement implied here is spiritually dissatisfying, as it is associated with 'stealth': Tsitronov sneaks his cigars--organic, isomorphically phallic, orally consumed--from his 'host' (though Stepanov offers him cigars as well [25]), and leaves offensive traces [8 & 44]. Tsitronov is indeed the revered doctor's dark shadow. He is also Grisha Fokin's bête noire.

As soon as Grisha arrives at the Stepanov dacha, it is clear that Tsitronov will be antagonistic to his young potential rival. His talk at a tea-time repast and afterwards is aimed at provoking Grisha, while he also provokes Stepanov by casting aspersions on Masha's character and by being sleazily obsequious [6-8, 12-15]. **Tsitronov is a disassembler who provokes rivalry and incites envy.** Significantly, he and Stepanov are posited as a pair when Masha drives Grisha back to the train station [16-19]; long-shot filming is utilized in these sequences to accentuate the emotional and physical distancing effects of Masha's relationship with Grisha, as here [16 & 19]:

Stepanov and Tsitronov are standing on a patch of grass [outside the dacha].

From here they can see the road. It's a good distance.

The air is transparent. They see details of the distant landscape, which have become very miniature.

Little trees. Little bushes. Little houses. A little car appears, moving rapidly.

But the car stops (something apparently goes wrong with the motor, which Grisha repairs). Stepanov notices this. The two men have been watching the disappearing car through binoculars:

[Stepanov] raises the binoculars.

He sees the young people, the car.

The young people are conversing.

He sees: moving lips. Masha is laughing. Loudly, one has to assume.

But Stepanov hears nothing. For him it is silent cinema.

The narrative is light but ideationally complex, and it provides the production crew and director with details precise enough to eliminate the need for technical directions: it is cinematic technique in narrative prose. In the above, latter sequence [19], as it was filmed, the intended emotional impact on Stepanov is extremely effective (the viewer perceives it). Both men are isolated here, but both re-appear in later sequences.

Tsitronov continues to taunt Grisha. He visits Grisha's home to pass along the news that the Stepanov's have withdrawn their invitation to Dr Stepanov's 'farewell party' (he is to travel to London to give a speech) [25 & 30-31]. Grisha is already dressed for the occasion, and he goes to the neighbor girl's room to use her mirror again:

Fokin looks into the mirror.

He finds it too dark [inside].

He goes out onto the landing.

The neighbor girl is behind him.

Fokin gives the mirror to the neighbor girl.

The neighbor girl holds the mirror in front of him.

It is light here.

Before he has time to be reflected in it, he sees Tsitronov in the mirror.

In the room.  
 Tsitronov in the doorway.  
 He takes in everyone with a glance.  
 He sees the mother,  
     Diskobol,  
     the Girl,  
     Fokin.

It is important to note that in this series of shots, the clarity of vision is emphasized by the light, enabling Grisha to see not his own, but Tsitronov's reflection in the mirror, and that in Olesha's aesthetic vision, glass is a medium through which the imagination is freed and truth is perceived (the play of light reflected or refracted by glass can also serve as a device to distort vision aesthetically, or merely to enrich the seeing). The angle of reflection/vision here--assumed to be an almost 180° reverse angle, returning the look to the looker--is a signifying device of unmistakable purpose: it suggests Tsitronov as Grisha Fokin's **potential alter ego**, with whom he can even identify.<sup>30</sup> In this same section [30], Grisha passively accepts Tsitronov's authority to withdraw the invitation to the Stepanovs' party or even to visit them again. Here, again, Diskobol's muscular physicality is stressed ("Beneath the light cloth of his shirt one can sense [ugadyvaetsia] the bulging interlacing of muscles"), and his anger at Tsitronov's insolent rudeness is so great that he nearly attacks him (this impulse is stopped only by Grisha's "strong grip").

Tsitronov's role as societal lackey and modern devil-figure becomes clearer here. His formally tailored black clothing is a sign of démodé elegance that contrasts with the light-toned and -textured simplicity of the youths' clothing, and his face bears a contemptuous smirk. This character 'cries out' for a precursor in Russian literature (he is related to the also envious Kavalero only in this aspect). Tsitronov might be seen as a remote, thoroughly vulgarized descendant of Turgenev's slightly foppish Pavel Petrovich Kirsanov (in Otsy i deti [1862]), one of whose functions in that novel is to underscore the socio-political differences between the generations (Tsitronov lacks Pavel's sensitivity and his once useful social élan).

Dostoevskii's peevish 'underground man' (in Zapiski iz podpolia [1864]) might be another distant relation in literature, whose lineage in Tsitronov is debased (though it was never noble, and he lacks the 'man's' intellectuality), while hints of Goliadkin's 'double' (in Dvoinik [1846]) might be recognizable traits of this later, 'enfleshed' double. Tsitronov might be a less heinous heir to the devilry found elsewhere in Russian literature. He also follows in a line of previous, more grotesque movie villains, and he is a caricature of the petite bourgeoisie, a 'class enemy', so often pilloried in Soviet art. Tsitronov scorns the received ideology of the young Communists. Earlier, he has spurned Grisha as "one of many" (in contrast to his host, whom he has fawningly praised as "one of the few"), and he summarizes his views over tea by turning to the doctor and saying [12]:

"It turns out, Iulian, that under socialism, too,  
there is a lot and a little."

(Masha protests this taunting of her guest by Tsitronov, but Stepanov, even if irritated, excuses him as "my friend".) Then, at Grisha's, Tsitronov manages to offend everyone assembled, not just by rescinding Grisha's invitation, but by engaging Grisha in a brief 'philosophical' discussion about 'inequality' [neravenstvo] and 'equalisation' or 'leveling down' [uravnilovka], a 'misconception' of socialism denounced by Stalin and a pejorative term in Soviet usage: Grisha's response is that "of course, there shouldn't be a 'leveling down'".<sup>31</sup> Tsitronov's motives are apparent in the remarks he delivers to the dis-invited and disheartened Grisha, to whom he attributes his own obviously greedy desires:

"... Masha will shine in a ballgown.... She eats pastry,  
you gaze at her and it seems to you that her every  
gulp is like a kiss. But you haven't even got a  
dress-coat...."

The Girl remarks upon Tsitronov's political statements:

"That's a fascist interpretation of communism. Don't  
you understand?"

The Girl's actions in this section give out more of the 'mixed signals' that abound in this script: she moves away from Diskobol, behind whom she is hiding in fear of Tsitronov, goes up to Grisha and kisses him, to satisfy an impulse,

then embraces Diskobol and again hides behind him. And Diskobol, pushing the Girl away, challenges Tsitronov:

"Just who do you think you are? How dare you talk that way!"

TSITRONOV: "I? I am the one who emphasizes inequality."

["Ia? Ia podcherkivatel' neravenstva."]

This self-identifying announcement (delivered in a rather understated manner by Shtraukh in the film) mocks the Leninist-Stalinist tenet that "socialism does not mean egalitarian levelling", which underpins the concept of 'socialist competition' [sotsialisticheskoe sorevnovanie] and which resulted in the Stakhanovite movement in 1935. In the conclusion to this sequence [31],<sup>32</sup> Diskobol, in an attempt to prod Grisha out of his lethargic acceptance of Masha's rejection, decides to attend the Stepanovs' party in Grisha's stead; Diskobol will wear the coat he has borrowed for Grisha from a theatre wardrobe (it is delivered by a boy, after Tsitronov departs). The Girl enthuses, asking Diskobol to bring back from the party some pastries [or 'cakes': pirozhnye], which Tsitronov had "made sound so appetizing" (she fails to perceive Tsitronov's 'alimentary appreciation' of Masha). Credit goes, therefore, to the Girl for drawing more attention to the cake motif in the narrative strategies of this script, and for inserting the motif of fascism, which is important in the discussion here later.

As Diskobol himself explains [31], his motivation for obtaining a dress-coat for Grisha is to shame him into acting upon his love for Masha: Diskobol would fight for his own, he would win Masha away from her husband, Dr Stepanov — "A komsomolets has to be bold". He borrows the dress-coat from his elderly uncle, who works in a theatrical wardrobe department. This "theatre sequence" [26-27] is one of three in the film where **artistic conventions** are given special emphasis (the gymnasium and party sequences are the other two, while the artifices of an ultimately non-Realist aesthetic inform the film as a whole). This is an opera theatre, and a tenor and an orchestra are heard practicing. Here, there is a series of shots that surely constitute an homage to Tolstoi's Natasha Rostova at the opera (Book VIII/9, Voina i mir [1863-69]) and a conscious application of the Formalist Viktor Shklovskii's 'perceiving things anew' [or 'defamiliarization': ostranenie]: the rehearsing sounds

of the singer and orchestra are 'made strange' to Diskobol's ears by being echoed through the building in audibly strained tones. That these shots represent Diskobol's subjective perception is rendered by subjective camera shots, which trace his progress, from his eyes' angle of vision, along a staircase banister. Diskobol is met by a ballerina:

She is wearing a ballet dress [tuttu].

The ballerina sees a beautiful youth in front of her.

Diskobol sees a beautiful girl in front of him.

They both pause.

Then she plays the role [ispolniaet rol'] of his guide.

Where are they going?

This will become clear right now.

The ballerina leads him down into the basement quarters of his uncle, the theatre's costumier/tailor, who greets Diskobol by his real name, Kolia (diminutive of Konstantin/Constantine). Everywhere else in the script, Kolia is identified by his nick-name, "Diskobol". In a seeming contradiction, this detail serves to stress the reality presented here, in the world of art.

"The nephew" tells "the uncle" that he needs the loan of a formal coat [or 'tails': frak], and the uncle selects one:

"But you'll return it, Kolia. I will be responsible,  
you know. I'm committing a crime, Kolia."

Diskobol examines the coats. Pays nil attention to the uncle.

OLD MAN: "I am committing a crime, Kolia."

The old man with the coat. The coat is on the table. All the accessories to the dress-coat.

The old man gets hold of a large box.

Diskobol takes an occasional puff on a cigarette [pokurivaet].

As he packs the coat, the old man says:

"This is from 'Traviata'. Kolia, I am committing a crime."

He pays nil attention to the uncle.

Picks up the package.

Goes to the door.

The old man after him:

"Do you hear, Kolia? It is a dress-coat from 'Traviata'."

Diskobol is thus portrayed as 'unspoiled' in his perceptions, but he exhibits no esteem for the past, while his smoking (!) is a sign of physical impurity (and an incidental link with Tsitronov's cigar-smoking). The nephew is not swayed by the emotional music, he does not respond to the uncle's concern even for the trappings of art (though he seems offended when Grisha angrily throws this same coat at him [31]), nor does he utter even a word of gratitude for the loan. Diskobol comes off as an **unsentimental utilitarian** here (and elsewhere). And there is no mistaking the function of the uncle in Olesha's creative Weltanschauung. The old man is of the older intelligentsiia, imbued with respect for the bourgeois culture of the ancien régime, here exemplified by the very popular opera, "La Traviata".<sup>33</sup> The construction of the theatre sequence, with moving shots within the building from coulisses to basement workshop, constitutes a minor application of another artistic strategy observed by Formalist theory: 'laying bare the device' [obnazhenie priema], utilized to reveal 'how the thing is made', to subvert or destroy illusionism. Even if the sights of the theatre interior are often Diskobol's, an enlodged notion is that the view is shared, but with conscious insight, by his uncle. A psychological implication here is that the old costumer—one who literally 'makes the illusion' (though he does not design it), and whose creative domain is commonly that of a theatre's 'wardrobe lady'—possesses the sensibility and clarity of vision (knowledge) to embrace workaday banality as well as the 'invisible land' of the imagination. It is not fortuitous that the uncle, cast as a 'secondary' character, is a solitary artist, whose moral conscience extends from the past and beyond the immediacy of the 'self', and who is virtually the only character in the film whose civic ethics undergo a practical testing. As the nephew leaves the theatre, the ballerina is shown framed in a window; the script's literary narration states, without commitment, "It is assumed that she is watching the youth", whereas the film shows that he only looks back. Notably lacking in the film is an eye-line match to indicate mutual curiosity, i.e. the youth's eyes are not directed up to her: the shot shows Diskobol looking back into, or toward, the theatre. For a brief moment, even Diskobol looks to the past, as do Olesha's more recognizable 'spokesmen'.<sup>34</sup>

So: "A komsomolets must be decisive", and, following Grisha's mother's advice to her son (she quotes Grisha [28]), Diskobol 'goes to the party' for Dr Stepanov. This "party sequence" [32] is one of the four most remarkable sequences in the film, and it is a locus of unexpected signs. The script introduces the event in a very matter-of-fact manner:

The party at Dr Stepanov's dacha.

Cars at the entrance. The latest models, powerful, comfortable, expensive cars. Dolls in the windows, toy animals, roses.

In the garden.

Lanterns. Little tables.

Bottles in buckets sweating from the cold. Snow-white napkins. Pyramids of fruit. Crystal.

Flowers, fallen on the gravel.

Flowers slightly trampled into the gravel.

Moths circle the lanterns.

Fall on the tablecloth.

Guests.

A group of foreigners.

Among them is a family: husband, wife and adolescent son....

Masha appears.

Masha walks through the garden. Alone.

Everyone looks at Masha.

Masha's appearance, her gait, the movement of the folds of her dress—it is so strange, so beautiful, so unusual, that the adolescent cannot restrain himself and, running forward, claps his hands.<sup>35</sup>

These party arrangements are quite ordinary, while the detail shots of the boy (looking) strengthen the focus of attention on Masha, who is seen alone, moving through the assembled guests. The nagging oddity about these sentimentalized cars and foreigners [inostrantsy] will linger (as will the oddly neutered impression Olesha gives of Masha in his script). Piano music is heard in the background. Diskobol climbs over the fence (in the film:



a wall) into the garden and enters the ballroom. It is particularly at this point that the party sequence begins to be *irreal*. Diskobol's appearance agitates Masha, and their movements toward each other disturb the pianist:

He stops playing.

Masha, upon hearing the silence:

"What?"

STEPANOV: "You are disturbing us, Masha. (To the pianist.) Sorry."

The pianist continues playing.

Masha looks at Diskobol.

Diskobol looks at Masha.

Masha smiles.

Diskobol smiles.

The pianist stops playing.

MASHA: "What?"

STEPANOV: "You are disturbing us, Masha. (To the pianist.) Sorry."

The pianist continues playing.

A moth settles on Masha's shoulder.

A moth settles on Diskobol's shoulder.

The pianist stops playing.

MASHA: "What?"

STEPANOV: "You are disturbing us, Masha."

MASHA: "What?"

Fokin appears....

This series should be discussed here before Grisha Fokin's sudden appearance is analyzed. In the first place, the reader/viewer would expect that Diskobol's appearance would upset Masha, and their smiling at each other should seem odd, as Masha is emotionally involved with Grisha. But the film's viewer would see that the realization on film of these lines includes more unscripted shots, which disrupt the smooth surface meanings. The 'ballroom' [zal, as it is identified] is actually a black-lacquered, circular-formed set of low stairs, upon which a chorus line of men, dressed in black tails, are dancing to the music. At center stage, the similarly dressed pianist seems much too pretty: "He" is actually a young woman, en travestie as a man, rationally inserted, quite possibly, as a symbol of potentially

corrupting influences.<sup>36</sup> This gleaming set could have originated in an urbane American musical of the 1930s, and there is no positively-presented equivalent scene in Soviet films, before or since; it could be both an homage to, and a parody of, 'classical' Hollywood. The piano music is interrupted three times. The silence is extremely effective, punctuated by Masha's perplexed, "What?", and by her husband's tactless and dismissive (yet softly delivered) comment, "You are disturbing us, Masha". The formal repetition of these shots (abrupt silence followed by the spoken words), three times, becomes an abstraction that lifts the images out of a natural, realistic course of events. And fluttering through this sequence is a formal linking device, the moths which settle on the shoulders of Masha and Diskobol, too artificially to be considered merely a 'nature motif' (the moths are miniature animated drawings). The moth (or butterfly: motylek) is a Classical allusion, to Psyche, who loved Eros, who personified the soul, whose symbolic representation was the moth,<sup>37</sup> and who, as 'the psyche', stands euphemistically as the conscious or subconscious functioning of the human mind (here: Grisha's). So, the moth is a psychological/symbolic device that describes the link, Masha-Diskobol/Grisha. The text continues with Grisha's appearance at the party after Masha repeats her "What?", for the fourth time,<sup>38a</sup> as if in anticipation; her look is not directed at Stepanov, but at something unidentified, off-screen.

Elsewhere in the script, Diskobol takes actions that one would expect of Grisha, the "strict youth" of the title. Here, Diskobol is the instigator of Grisha's apparent desires: He had said, "I will put on the dress coat and be the one who kisses Masha" [31]. Seeing this about to happen (he is 'watching' the party), Grisha rushes into the scene to stand by his beloved, not to repulse Diskobol, but to respond to Stepanov:

He shouts:

"What do you mean, 'she's disturbing'? She is music itself."

and Grisha's praise of Masha continues in these tones, likening her to music:

"She is music itself. Masha ..." [addressing her]

She goes up to greet him.

Fokin says:

"Here is the way she moves [ee dvizhenie]. Listen."

He raises her hand.

The hand sings [poet].

He strokes her head.

He says:

"Here is the way she carries herself [ee osanka]. Listen."

Her hair sings.

He places his head on her bosom.<sup>38b</sup> He says:

"This is her heart. Listen."

Her heart sings.

"This is her kiss. Listen."

He kisses her.

The kiss sings.

The pianist's head falls on the piano.

The adolescent raises his top hat into the air

and stands up.

All this singing calls for a movie sound track, and it is provided in a score by Gavriil Popov (discussed below); Masha's "theme" is soon to swell up (harps had accompanied her 'ascent from the sea' [3]). This scene obviously could have been cloyingly sentimental, but that effect is gracefully avoided. This is mostly due to its abstracted stylization (even some terms Grisha uses to describe Masha tend to be those of art criticism) and the unembarrassing, easy appropriateness of Dmitrii Dorliak's rendition; it is partially because of the comic/ironic dropping of the pianist's head and the raising of the lad's top hat. But it is also because the scene immediately 'cuts to' a scene of comic relief in the garden. This section of the script [32] is divided into eight unnumbered but clearly demarcated scenes. Grisha's appearance is in the fifth. The comic relief comes in the sixth scene, where Diskobol makes his exit over the garden fence, then the scene reverts back to Grisha and Masha, and the sequence ends in the eighth (the concluding three scenes are given Roman numerals here, and the superscripted letters [<sup>a-e</sup>] are explained below):

[vi]           Meanwhile, Diskobol is in the garden.  
 He is carrying a tray of pastries.  
 Tsitronov appears.  
 He is chasing the thief.  
 The pastry thief crawls over the fence.  
 The public comes running out.  
 They all stand around in a semi-circle.  
 They have fallen back, recoiling [otprianuli].<sup>[a]</sup>  
 They are afraid.  
 The thief sits on the fence.  
 Tsitronov rushes after him.  
 The thief, à la Chaplin, tosses pastries at him.  
 Cream-cakes.

Tsitronov's face is bespattered with cream.<sup>[b]</sup>

[vii]           In the ballroom.  
 Fokin at Masha's feet.  
 He kisses her, embraces her.  
 Her whole being sings. Masha's theme [melodiia].  
 Tears run down her cheeks.  
 Tears fall on Fokin's face.<sup>[c]</sup>  
 Music.

[viii]          Fokin wakes up.  
 He has been sleeping under the birch trees.  
 Rain.  
 His face is wet from the rain.<sup>[d]</sup>  
 The dacha is in the distance.<sup>[e]</sup>  
 A car drives away.  
 The gates close.  
 The watchman, [who is] the gardener.  
 The watchman says:

"The ball has been cancelled. Since this morning. The  
 master was summoned to an operation... Someone  
 important has fallen sick."       [end of section 32]

The party sequence in STROGII IUNOSHA is one of extraordinary stylization. Its extreme subversion of the tenets of Realism is, of course, logically explained: the entire sequence is Grisha Fokin's dream, stimulated by his inability to act upon his love for Masha, i.e. 'the dream as wish-fulfillment'. The music emphasizes Grisha's yearning and Masha's appeal. The absence of naturalistic grotesquerie points up the pleasantness of the dream to the dreamer. But the apparent normality of its introductory shots delays the perception of the sequence as a dream, especially as the shots directly follow the seeming reality of the previous sequences [30-31]. The entire film is marked by the continuously blurred distinction between surface reality and trance-like abstraction, so Grisha's dream here may even be a 'dream within a dream'.

There are other important things to detect in the signifying details of the party/dream sequence. There is a combination of the static and dynamic. The relative immobility of the party guests (who are unidentified in Grisha's dream and are stylistically abstract) is notable, such as at [a]. In contrast, the main characters (the 'primary seen' in this dream) are constantly moving through the ballroom and garden: Masha circulates among her guests; the movements of Masha and Diskobol disturb the pianist and provoke Dr Stepanov; Diskobol, Grisha and Tsitronov, and Masha, too, are continually moving toward or away from each other. The moving camera rhythmically complements this 'in-shot' movement, as in the shots of the male dancers. The fluidity of the camera-work is especially evident in some shots, where the 'photo-eye' moves 'somnamulistically', as Grisha's subjective 'eyes'. At [b], Tsitronov gets his ridiculing 'just deserts', when Diskobol takes obvious pleasure in tossing the cream-cakes at him. Masha's tears on Fokin's face, at [c], provide a logical motivation for the transition from dream to reality, at [d-e], when Fokin awakens with a face wet from the rain (the dream/reality transition is a straight 'cut-to', not a 'fade-out/fade-in'). The sensuality of the youth's desire of the woman is thus symbolized via water-imagery, an oblique, but not an original device in films (one has only to look at the overt, 'powerful' opening credits-sequence for the television serial, "Dynasty", to realize how the device has evolved). But there is still more,

and the interpretation of dreams in art, especially of completed dreams, may involve radical deconstruction and forays into 'vulgar' Freudianism.

There is a possible jolt to heterosexually-focused sensibilities lodged in this dream. In the filmed rendition, at the place indicated here by [c], the lachrymose Masha furnishes a veritable 'flood of tears', which leaves the two lovers nearly awash, standing isolated on their 'island of love', a small bit of terra rather infirma. This brief unscripted shot-series (the second such series in this section) is surely a conscious parody of the clichés, and a hyperbolic mockery of the obvious, surface meaning. In the context here, these realized metaphors may help to bring into question some simple notions of heterosexual hegemony and exclusivity. The dream posits Diskobol as the initiator of Grisha's desires; he is also an idealized object of Grisha's subliminal longings and one of his symbolic aspects. Tsitronov is linked in elsewhere as Grisha's dark reflection or alter ego. The evidence of the symbolic link, Grisha/Diskobol/Tsitronov, might not be convincing 'proof' to a prudish skeptic. It follows the scheme Aa/Ba/Ca, where uppercase letters represent the primary traits of the individualized characters, while lowercase letters would represent the symbolic signs--the axes of binary signification; this symbolic 'a-linkage' represents mutually-signifying signs and attributes of 'A', Grisha. And the evidence accumulates. Here, Diskobol is the source of a ~~semen~~ sign (the cream-cakes), the recipient of which is the 'bad' libidinal aspect of Grisha, who then 'really' awakens with a liquid-bespattered face. The trajectory of the transference of viscous/liquid signs inscribes a subliminal homosexual 'ejaculatory shower' fantasy (the primary motive of the fantasizing recipient is to be sprayed, not to be impregnated, nor to ingest the seminal fluid).<sup>39</sup> The inclusion precisely at this point of Diskobol's 'escape' scene [vi], interrupting the otherwise continuing single scene of Grisha with Masha [sc. v & vii], assures the inscription of this transference of signs: Diskobol's cream-cakes are links to Tsitronov's psychological make-up, but are otherwise quite superfluous to the 'actual' plot; the jocular homage to Chaplinesque comedy is germane to nothing else here, but it is the specific surface meaning. Furthermore, there is a third unscripted shot in this sequence, at [d-e]: awakening,

semi-somnambulistically--il est toujours en extase dans la jouissance du rêve--Grisha Fokin arises and embraces a tree. And, to be sure, this is a birch tree, an archetypal Russian symbol of the feminine and of traditional cultural values. On the primary signifying level, therefore, Grisha embraces his 'memory' of Masha. But he simultaneously embraces an ithyphallic symbol.<sup>40a</sup> The birch tree thus functions as a phallogenic symbol, of the male and female principles in conjunction and completion.<sup>40b</sup> And Grisha exhibits broadly embracing 'empathic thoughts', the psychologically characterizing thought patterns revealed by the interpretations of dreams. These are not symbols here, in principle, of manifested or practiced sexual orientation, either 'bi-sexual' or 'homosexual'. Neither the script nor the film inserts a scene even of anticipated copulation--there is no 'love-making' here, and only a single lovers' kiss. Just as emphatically, they denote/connote neither 'misogynistic' nor 'hermaphroditic' concepts. They are symbols of the empathic 'psychological embrace'. This symbolization is in accord with the generally inclusive, non-restrictive, overall non-judgmental ideology of Olesha's script and of Room's film: the birch tree is white, a primary Oleshan attribute of clarity and of purity. There is not a detectable hint at the more standard phallic 'stand-ins', such as the faecal allusions, gut images and sausages found in Olesha's earlier novel, Zavist' (though the metaphorical lizard slithers about).<sup>41</sup> Hence, the idealized world of STROGII IUNOSHIA is generally cleansed of naturalistic 'vulgarisms'. Human deviations from the societal norm would not be expelled from it, unless they choose consciously to do harm. Indeed, they continue to function within it.

In any case, after Grisha Fokin has embraced the phallogenic birch tree, this section [32] ends with the hero wide-awake and returned to more normative perceptions, and with a hermeneutic device calculated to elicit audience curiosity: **Who has fallen sick?**

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A digression on the birch tree (it has snagged the discourse):  
This symbol of purity and synthesis here will possibly stir up memories of its place in Slavic folk customs. The follower of

Soviet cinema will remember that in *KALINA KRASNAIA* [SNOWBALL BERRY RED (1974)], the emotional Vasilii Shukshin embraces birches, which he addresses as "nevestushka" and "matushka ty moia", quite in accord with the tree's feminine symbolism in Russian culture. But folklorists have recorded the birch tree's more complicated function in rituals dating from early pagan times up to the present. In celebrations of the summer solstice among the Baltic Slavs, for instance, a sacred birch was prepared by women only--it was cut down, its lower branches removed, its crown decorated with garlands and flowers, and a straw idol of İvan Kupalo (the representation of the festival, i.e. of St John's Eve, on 23/24 June, Midsummer Night) dressed as a woman was placed under the de-rooted, propped-up birch. There still exists in the western Ukraine (and elsewhere, similarly, no doubt) the festival of Rusal'e, during which time young girls dance around a birch tree, which must be one that has been cut down. These and other ritualistic customs originated in primordial beliefs in the productive powers of zemlia, 'mother earth'/'earth mother', in its numerous representational manifestations. Even these sparse details demonstrate well enough that the phallogenic concept is 'known' by the people (even if the term could not be, and even if they retain it in a relatively primitive fashion).<sup>42</sup> These cuts of the birch tree, which is as much 'male' as 'female', have to do with soil tillers' hopes for bountiful early summer harvests [rezy]. But, agrarian superstitions aside, the modern eye, conditioned willy-nilly by psychoanalysis, may see the cut birch as a symbolically cut phallus, as female 'penis envy' and as the female urge to 'castrate', to render the penis 'lacking', hence to equate 'her' with 'him' (he = she). One does not have to ascribe to the psychoanalytic theories, in some disrepute but not quite thoroughly debunked, which underlie these statements; not a few intellectually assertive feminist film theorists are aggravated by the pat simplicity of such theories of male fear/female blame. It may be quite implausible that Olesha



and Room consciously included these reverberating symbolic associations among the intentionally inserted net of symbols in STROGII IUNOSHA. After all, the birch tree does not reappear in the film even as a metonymic detail or as a decorative motif (and Freud was ideologically inimicable in the Soviet 1930s). However, the feminine principle is paramount in STROGII JUNOSHA, the notion of 'the lack', the excision, is reprised at the film's conclusion, and the culturally polysemic birch-tree symbol might furnish one plausible extra-textual explication for that.

A digression on Room's creative group: The creative ensemble was well-directed in this film. The actors are the visible members of this ensemble, of course, and they are given individual space elsewhere. But one general observation should be made here about the acting styles. It is true to say that the 'older generation' represents what Olesha knew, while he had to speculate about the 'younger', as yet untested generation. This difference comes out in the film in a way the script only implies. The actors playing the older roles (Stepanov, Masha, the Mother, even Tsitronov and the Uncle) observe a restrained, 'psychological method' of acting, attempting to approach as close as possible the prosaic reality of the personalities they portray. In some contrast, the komsomol'tsy are representative of narrower and more abstract concepts--these roles are often played in a quietly declamatory fashion, their lines verge on the rhetorical, and their concern with the proper morality leaves them no diegetic time for the concerns of daily living (except sports). Still, Grisha Fokin, in particular, is a multifaceted character. Thus there is a contrast between the 'prosaic' and the 'poetic' in this generally idealized projection of the future (and of the past and present, to be sure). And the complete adherence to an extant world (physical and psychological verisimilitude) was not the aim in this film. There is a sort of 'inner dispute', which finds complicated equivalents even in the very marked

prominence and distinctiveness of successive sequences and scenes, and particular shots, that sometimes affirm, sometimes annul, one another; the major syntagmas 'break off' as semi-autonomous units, with minimal transition into the succeeding ones. Hence even the film's basic structures are anti-illusionist, e.g. non-Realist. But these structural units are also interlaced, they assert their 'communality', facilitating a structural and thematic integration of the ostensibly inimical and antithetical old and new worlds.

The complex of impressions left by STROGII IUNOSHA is also the responsibility of creators in addition to the writer, director and actors. The set-designer for the film was the competent Vladimir Pavlovich Kaplunovskii (1906-1969), whose work included the sets for Erwin Piscator's formally remarkable, but ideologically clichéd, Russian film VOSSTANIE RYBAKOV [REVOLT OF THE FISHERMEN (1934)], and a great deal of later, more normative stuff. His neo-classically stylized gymnasium finds an echo in the classicism that informs the heavily-columned design of the Stepanov dacha, which is first seen (by Grisha and the film viewers) as filmed in white-lighted soft focus, from below, as if it were situated on a hillock; a different, Spartan cleanliness is the dominant trait of Grisha's personal living quarters and of the hospital premises. The 1936 film therefore acquiesces, perhaps, in the recent politically-determined failure of 'formalist'/Constructivist architectural tendencies, and it may advocate the neo-classical model of Stalinist architecture. This detectable passéisme is not regrettable here, and it is only partial: the clean lines (and costumes) of the ball-room in the dream sequence come straight-forwardly out of Art Deco or style 'moderne' (ostensibly 'absent' in 1930s Soviet culture, except as manifested Malevich's sarcophagus and in the hagiologic --and phallogenic-- enclosure of Lenin's relics, designed in two versions in 1924-29 by A. V. Shchusev). The cinematography, more remarkable than is immediately apparent, was by Iurii

Izrailevich Ekel'chik [Yekelchik] (1907-1956), who had worked on Dovzhenko's *IVAN* (1932) and who would later photograph Dovzhenko's *SHCHORS* (1939) and Vladimir Petrov's splendid *REVIZOR* (1952, an adaptation of Gogol's play, "The Inspector-General" [1842]). The cinematography and editing of *STROGII IUNOSHA* do more to record and to integrate, rather than to assert their dominance over the film's stylization (except in the several instances of moving-camera and soft-focus techniques), but its cinematography is luminously 'poeticized', and it 'takes off' from the perceived surface realism of photography. Finally, the musical score was composed by Gavriil Nikolaevich Popov (1904-1972), who wrote the scores for some twenty films, including *CHAPAEV* (1934), the much-touted 'zero point' of cinematographic style (overwhelmingly 'denotative', with 'connotative vagaries' at nil--not touted as such). Popov was also a talented pianist. His career as a composer started with an interest in atonality and distinctively polyphonic, non-illustrative music, and it then followed the well-trodden path to larger, more amorphous symphonic works with folk motifs (of 'national pathos'). Popov was among the composers hounded (along with Shostakovich, Khachaturian and Prokofiev) during Andrei Zhdanov's extreme, misanthropic, 'anti-formalist'/'anti-cosmopolitan' campaigns of 1948-49 (which began in the music world with the Party's "Decree on Music", published on 10 February 1948). The musical configurations employed by Popov in the score for *STROGII IUNOSHA* were later elaborated as his "Symphonic divertissement in 10 miniatures".<sup>43</sup>

**A third digression:** The idealization of the future Socialist State in this film poses many questions, not the least of which are because the vision is incomplete and the ideal Oleshan through-and-through, and therefore impracticable. In a single respect, its world is contiguous to that ideal of Socialist Realism (officially sanctioned for Soviet films by the First All-Union Congress of

Soviet Cinematographers in January 1935<sup>44</sup>), which was supposed to present life not as it is, but **as it should be**. But no other Russian film of the '30s and '40s so evades the strictures of Socialist Realism. It is a vision of the future, but its dominant temporal dimension is the present, or perhaps the very near future with a recognizable present as its point of departure, punctuated with flights of fancy. The film includes only a few incidental traces of a future changed by technology or even of a fundamentally changed social system; it lacks the material accoutrements of a futuristic vision, such as industrial and technical equipment or unfamiliar modes of dress; and there is no trace of Futurism's social abrasiveness. This is a world of visible, intelligible, surface clarity, whose persistent subversions of surface intelligibility are frequently quite arcane. The film's failure to guide its viewers toward a speculative future only means that, psychologically, the uninitiated viewer **remains in a contemporary but stylized world** of the mid-1930s, though its geographic location is unspecified. One wonders if this reflects Olesha's awareness that his vision had not been and would not be accepted in the real world, despite his yearnings for acceptability. But the recognizable 'present' was calculated to render the vision of the future in **readily accessible images** (coincidentally, it would seem, and only superficially heeding the demands made by Socialist Realism for dostupnost' massam). The film has a 'static' time-frame: there is only a vague day/night-day/night pattern (two of each), wherein 'things happen' in daylight, and dreams (Grisha's) take place at night. There is no real indication of 'time passing by': shadows do not get cast nor do seasonal changes occur (though there are references to specific times—Masha consults her watch [3], a clock is used as a 'tension device' in the hospital sequence [36], Grisha's mother is still asleep when he returns home after his dream [33]). This is a classical stasis of a positive sort, a particular dream of human relations as they might be, even with imperfections, after, one assumes,

the immediate socio-political controversies (the real ones, of the 1930s) have been resolved and forgotten. This film does not proselytize or analyze, and it is far removed from the politically engaged, and frequently bathetic, 'critical realism' (Sk) of most Soviet films of the same years (as in CHAPAEV, or Mark Donskoi's still charming GOR'KII TRILOGY [1938-39-40]). The clarity of realia partially undermines the picture of the future ideal in STROGII IUNOSHA, but this film succeeds in presenting an aestheticized spatio-temporal dimension and it is a formalist film. Its intellectual charm lies in the intriguing ways it dispels the impression of the naïveté of its projected morality, while its engaging aesthetic achievements are ultimately discomfiting because of the known political context of its time.

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The system of symbolic linking in this film does not nullify the importance of the main characters as individuals. But the overall strategies of STROGII IUNOSHA posit them as aspects of a future social organization in process of peaceful integration, i.e. the two worlds of the Stepanovs and of the younger, ideologically committed generation are shown 'merging', and gaining in the process. This is most specifically in evidence in sections 33-40, centering on the "hospital sequences", the obviously intended 'philosophical center' of STROGII IUNOSHA. This series of scenes and sequences begins with Grisha Fokin's return home [33] immediately after his dream of Masha at the party (he exhibits no discernible effects of this dream). Grisha's mother is still sleeping, as it is early in the morning, but Diskobol is waiting for him. Diskobol is very disturbed, as he had been to see Olga, wanting her to answer a question that had been bothering him, only to find that Olga had fallen sick; he then comes to Grisha's, only to find him not at home. The question bothering Diskobol is simply whether Dr Stepanov was abusing the powers of his position to disrupt Masha's relationship with Grisha, whom, Diskobol perceives, Masha loves. Diskobol thinks that Stepanov is breaking the fundamental law of a classless society, that "there should be no power of man over man" (he objects especially to "the dog" sent by

Stepanov to ridicule Grisha), while Grisha is retreating from his beloved only out of deference to Stepanov. Grisha tries to counter the argument:

FOKIN: "This is a pure power. He's not a banker... He's a great scientist, he's a genius... do you hear?"

DISKOBOL: "But will the power of genius remain?"

FOKIN: "The power of genius? Respect for genius? That is, for science? Yes. That will remain. For me—yes. For a komsololets. Yes. I'm agreeable to everything. I'll step aside. Do you hear? Yes... I'm telling you... Yes... The influence of a great mind... That's a beautiful power [prekrasnaia vlast']."

Diskobol remains unconvinced:

"Oh, what a pity that Olga is sick...She would explain everything to me."

Thus Olga, a political leader of Komsomol, is identified as a figure of authority, even in such personal matters, which do have ideological importance. Grisha's mother—awakened, but hidden behind the screens—enters the conversation to assure her son of his uniqueness and worth to society at large. Then there is an alarmed knock at the door and the Girl comes in, shouting:

"Comrades! Olga is dying... Some fellows came... They've taken her to the hospital."

DISKOBOL: "What are you saying?"

THE MOTHER: "Who is this Olga, Grisha?"

DISKOBOL: "Well, Olga. A member of the Central Committee of Komsomol. Very pretty."

This section thus ends with two minor illustrations to points previously mentioned: Diskobol responds to the question of the Mother to the Son, thus supporting the argument that the two young men are symbolic aspects of a male type, while his response indicates a certain actual indifference to women (the written text does not demonstrate this, but the actor delivers these lines in the film as an 'aside', almost 'internalized', to the point of indifference, or perhaps it is a sign of muted irritation at the mother's ignorance of Olga's 'obvious' identity; maybe it reveals an instinctive

resentment of the mother's curiosity about a female friend of her unattached, beloved son). The main function of this section is, however, to serve as a buffer-like transition, to distance the following images from the unreal dream sequence and to compel the action toward the series of incidents and conversations that take place in the hospital. There, all of the principal characters, with the notable exception of Grisha Fokin, have gathered.

The centrality of Olga to the overt political ideology of the script is evident in the description given of "the patient" [34], in brief, prompting phrases indicating a series of close-up shots to be in the filmed rendition:

In the ward.

The patient.

Her face.

She is, possibly, a Korean [koreianka].

Or a Tatar [tatarka]

Or a Kazakh [kazachka].

Or a mestiza [metiska]*—*a descendant of mixed Asian and Russian blood.

Eyes slanted up toward the temples. Prominent cheek-bones. This is a face beautiful with that remarkable, delicate, doll-like, ancient beauty peculiar to people of the yellow race.

This face is presently distorted with suffering. Death is gazing into it. Death that has bent low [over it].

Thus Olga's 'pedigree' is both literary and anthropological*—*the description alludes to such myths as the Symbolists' 'Scythianism' and to the very real intermixture of Russians with the various racial and ethnic groups surrounding them, particularly on the East; her 'asiaticness' fits neatly into the ideologically lauded 'multinational' character of Soviet society. Olga's name is archetypically Russian but she is not given a surname; she is therefore non-specific and symbolically generalized. (Olga is more speculatively 'eurasian' in the film, because the actress playing the role shows no Asian features, though she does have dark hair). Olga's father is an elderly worker and her husband is a young sailor [36]; her origins and relationships thus give her soundly proletarian credentials. But, while there

is no indication of a precise affliction, her life is in danger, and it rests with Dr Stepanov to make her well.

The "absolutely calm" surgeon gets prepared. The operating room is "furnished with the latest word in technology", but neither the script nor the film furnish any distinctive details—the hospital rooms are most notable for their roomy **airiness and whiteness** (as are the interiors of the Stepanovs' dacha and of Grisha's apartment). Olga's friends include Diskobol and the Girl, constantly paired, but Diskobol continues to rebuff the Girl's physical gestures toward him [36], while Grisha's absence is enigmatically unexplained; he remains at home, working on his complex of GTO moral qualities [38], manifesting no concern for Olga: this is the symbolic 'divided self', logic/emotion, functioning separately. And it is very odd that Tsitronov accompanies Stepanov to the hospital, where he offers him the 'signifying peach' [37, q.v.]. At this exact point in the script and film, Olesha utilizes a brief and efficient (and artificial) commentative device, one of the multitude of minor details that belie the deceptive simplicity of this film:

... Stepanov drinks [the cognac], spilling it over himself. [Cut to ...]

A flower bed.

Flowers.

The flowers sway back and forth [in the breeze?]. [Cut to ...]

The weeping face of the sailor.

(These flowers had been introduced before this as nature details [36].)

The most probable interpretation of these three shots is that the anthropomorphized flowers are 'naying' the sexual link symbolized by the peach, while they simultaneously 'sway in empathy' with Olga's grieving husband. This sailor then goes over to a "woman in white" [zhenshchina v belom], who otherwise remains unidentified, but who appears in several shots here as a becalmed—angel-like/goddess-like—but sympathetic nurse [36 & 37]. In the film, behind this symbolic attire, one detects Masha Stepanova.

Stepanov operates on Olga; there are several scenes in the waiting room of Olga's friends and family nervously awaiting the outcome; the several



shots of a wall clock underscore their emotional tenseness. Finally, the "woman in white" tells the sailor-husband: "She is alive." She repeats this soothing assurance three times, a number that continues to accrue importance in the script/film. Diskobol rushes to Grisha's home [38] to tell him:

"Grisha! He has resurrected her [On voskresil ee].

She's alive, Grisha. I saw her dying... Grisha...

She's alive."

(Earlier, Tsitronov had mocked Grisha for asking about the topic of the speech Stepanov was preparing [14]: "Kakaaia tema?... Tema: voskresenie liudei".) But nowhere is there an indication, either written or filmed, of what Stepanov has done to 'resurrect' Olga. The 'medical miracle' is ascribed to technology only by inference: Olga's resurrection is humanistic and visionary (there is even a slight element of religiosity in it). Diskobol's doubts about Stepanov are resolved, and he reaffirms the 'first rule' in Grisha's 'third complex of GTO', which Grisha re-reads to him [38]:

"A komsomolets must strive to be up to the best [ravniat'sia na luchshikh]. The best are those who create science, technology, music, thought... These are lofty minds... Those who struggle with nature, the conquerors of death...."

This group of sections/sequences [33-38] abruptly ends here; it is followed by an important section [39] in which Dr Stepanov learns something from Olga. But something else has been learned during the surgery about the surgeon.

Olesha's 'artist' in STROGII IUNOSHA, the elderly tailor, is characterized by selflessness; his 'scientist' in this film, Dr Stepanov, manifests a discomfiting amount of self interest. It has already been apparent that the capable doctor is able to 'use the system' to his material and social advantage. Even his ostensible antithesis, Grisha Fokin, asserts the doctor's laudability, and Diskobol accuses Grisha of deferring to Stepanov instead of acting on his love for Masha. Stepanov might be worried that a young suitor is after his wife--this is a quite natural concern, not at all odd. But the doctor speaks for himself, as well, and his conversation at surgery does little to improve the impression he leaves on the attentive

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audience. His first words in the hospital sequences are spoken in the operating room, as he is preparing for surgery [36]:

"What am I do bring you from London, Ivan Germanovich?

A hat?"

ASSISTANT: "A hat. A hat would be possible. Good. A hat." [Cut to..]

The ward.

The patient.

This 'hat' is mentioned again, shortly afterwards (after the surgery is over, apparently), as Stepanov runs into the room where Tsitronov is waiting [37]:

STEPANOV: [shouting] "But what size a hat? Ask what size of a hat... Ask quickly."

TSITRONOV: "Calm down, Julian."

He gives him a peach....

And in a later scene in the waiting room [in 37],

Stepanov says to the assistant:

"I'll be bringing you a hat, really. I'll run around to all the shops, really. I am a member of the British Academy."

ASSISTANT: "But I don't even need a hat. I'm bald."

Together with his comments to Tsitronov about the peach, these words constitute virtually all of Stepanov's conversation at the surgery. There is no professional 'shop talk', no words are uttered in concern for the patient or for the outcome of the operation. And the hat is irrelevant: the assistant's response ["Da mne i ne nado shliapy. Ia lysyi"] indicates that he does not even believe Stepanov's promise of 'a hat from London'; the nonsequitur reason for not needing a hat because he is "bald" is both a rejection of the offer and a comoeidic detail that indirectly ridicules the doctor, whose membership in the British Academy could have little effect on his ability to 'run around the shops'! (The 'hat motif' is a minor commentative 'dissociative' device: another hat, and a cane, had been an earlier sign of servility--Tsitronov carries them for the doctor after he arrives home [4], and he has his own [30]). Stepanov is thus trivialized by his own words and, as the evidence of his professional abilities is undocumented, he is characterized here by his banal vanity. The possibly

feigned, 'charmed' response to Olga's lesson in Marxism probably will not weaken this impression. Another, but much less credible interpretation of the doctor's surgical manner might be that he represents 'an artist', whose real labors he conceals under an elegant appearance of the 'effortlessness' or 'ease of creation'.

The following section [39] might be called "the lesson in Karl Marx sequence"; its two main participants are the portly surgeon and Olga, invariably described here in the shot descriptions as "the patient" [or "the sick woman": bol'naia] (Iurii Iur'ev and Irina Volodko are congenially paired here<sup>45</sup>). The doctor had himself carried the young woman into the hospital ward after surgery (their relative sizes are underscored [37]: Ona malen'kaia. On gromadnyi.). Now, her ward is full of well-wishers; these include Stepanov, who describes himself as "a humanist, by profession", and Olga's sailor-husband, who is described with one of the very few literary metaphors found in Olesha's script—"the gleaming sailor" [sverkaiushchii moriak], which has as much to say about the golden braids and buttons on his white uniform as about his happy, beaming, close-cropped face. Stepanov addresses him, and he quickly stands up:

"They told me that you wept. There you see...You, a sailor  
... what is your rank according to the old system?"

SAILOR: (standing) "Admiral."

STEPANOV: "There you see. An admiral, but you wept like a chamois.  
And so... what am I saying here... I mean that the  
elimination of capital does not mean the elimination  
of misfortunes. That's how it is. A person's life  
consists of alternations of joy and sadness.  
Isn't that true?"

PATIENT: "True."

STEPANOV: (to sailor) "True?"

SAILOR: (stands up) "True."

STEPANOV: "And a person [chelovek] is a person only when he  
both rejoices and suffers. Do you find attractive  
a person who never becomes lost in thought?"

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PATIENT: "No."

STEPANOV: "But if a person has become thoughtful, it means that he either doubts something or hopes for something... In the classless society will there be people who become lost in thought?"

PATIENT: "There will be."

By posing questions and eliciting positive responses from Olga and her husband, the doctor becomes a 'voice of the thinking man' and one of Olesha's 'spokesmen'. Stepanov/Olesha cleverly elicits support for the person in the ideal future who may have his own thoughts [zadumyvaiushchiisia chelovek], who may dare to doubt as well as to hope. Stepanov continues in this vein. He asserts that "when there is no longer a division between the rich and the poor, then suffering becomes a lawful part of human life"; sure that he is not in error, he thinks also that "to be able to bear unhappiness is the highest humanity". (The single hint of an already-achieved 'classlessness'—distinctions of military rank are presumably not being made—is quite silly here, as the stratification of this society is otherwise quite in evidence.) Stepanov also admonishes the sailor:

"And you don't get up. Why are you always standing up?  
... Where did you get such politeness? Such good manners? Eh? What are you by descent/origins?"

SAILOR: "A peasant."

STEPANOV: "A fantastic thing."

As he gets up to leave, everyone in the room stands up (it is clear here that this is meant as a good-natured sign of esteem for the doctor). He tells the patient that she is well enough to read "something light, pleasant, elevated [vozvyshennoe]"; he asks whether she would like something by Knut Hamsun (this Norwegian writer [1859-1952] was extremely popular in Russia before the revolution and at least into the 1920s). But Olga prefers other writers. She reaches under the pillow for her chosen "light, pleasant, elevated" reading:

"If you love without awakening a response, that is, if your love does not give rise to a corresponding love, and by being a loving person you do not become a person

loved, then your love is powerless, and it is a misfortune." Stepanov likes this quotation "about the most magical combination of happiness and unhappiness", i.e. unrequited love. Assuming it to be from Hamsun, he is surprised to find out that Olga is quoting Karl Marx,<sup>46</sup> a citation that Grisha Fokin had used as the epigraph to his 'third complex of GTO' (here the script calls for the citation to appear on the screen with the signature, "K. Karx"). Olga reads Grisha's text, and for the first time in the script, its 'first rule' is given in full:

"There is not and cannot be any [egalitarian] equality [ravenstvo]. The very concept of competition eliminates the notion of equality. Equality is immobility, competition is mobility... Be up to the best. That's the first rule...."

Olga tells Stepanov that this first rule concerns him; she continues reading:

"Be up to the best. But who are the best? The best are those who invent machines, struggle with nature, create music and thought. Give the tribute of admiration [dan' voskhischeniia] to lofty minds, to science."

Olga ends her reading by identifying the author—a friend, future engineer, a student, Grisha Fokin, and this section [39] concludes, without a final reaction from Stepanov to the philosophy of Marx and Fokin.

There are several remarks to be made about the characters' behavior and statements here. Stepanov is further revealed as a kindly sort of man, if one can believe his sincerity (is he bemused by the ideological fervor of the komsomol'tsy?). But even if he is quite unaware of current political policies, he thinks independently and indicates a real concern for the health and fairness of the future society. The dedicated komsomolka Olga suffers in silence, stoically; as soon as she is able, she returns to political philosophy. Olga had been set up as an ideological authority (by her membership in the Komsomol Central Committee and by Diskobol's lament that her illness had made her unavailable to clarify his doubts). Nonetheless, she makes no original contribution—most of 'her words' are direct quotations from Grisha Fokin and, via Grisha, from Karl Marx, selected to 'humanize'

him, and Stalin. Her adherence to a sanctioned political line accords with Party discipline, but not with Olesha's system of values (Grisha's peers sanction his philosophy here, but the Party has not). If there is nothing ideologically troublesome in Stepanov's homilies about the future human condition, his rhetorical manner posits Olga and her husband as his neophytes: Stepanov, i.e. the 'old order', is ultimately the 'authoritative teacher' here. Grisha Fokin, once again, is characterized by attribution rather than by his direct intervention. And Grisha's written statement (read aloud by Olga) seems even to 'agree with' Fedor Tsitronov's evaluation of the future society, though it is in terminology and not in sentiment. At their first confrontation [30, q.v.], Tsitronov's statement that "socialism is inequality" ["sotsializm - èto neravenstvo"] had caught Grisha ill-prepared to respond (though he does: "Uravnilovki, konechno, ne dolzhno byt'"); here, Grisha's statement ["ravenstva net i ne dolzhno byt'"] carries a partially equivalent meaning on the surface of its language. As indicated earlier, his chosen terminology also echoes the policy of 'socialist competition' as articulated under Stalin (though the Stalinist program was directed specifically at a more efficient mobilization of economic and political forces). The 'lesson in Marxism' in STROGII IUNOSHA is a wistful one, and not very inspiring, probably because it lacks authorial conviction. Not much of value would be gleaned from a more detailed scrutiny of Marxism (and Soviet political theory) in conjunction with Grisha's 'philosophy', as these texts—the script and the film—effectively obscure the clarity of the received ideology, even as it is being explicated. The hospital sequences are structurally balanced and integrated well into the overall structure, but their complexity is not 'up to' that of some of the film's other narrative units. This complexity is resumed in the following sequence [sections 40 & 41], as are the romantic tribulations that are the real thematic core of this film, and its auteurs' ideational guise.

Dr Stepanov leaves the clinic building and goes to the car, where he expects Masha to be waiting for him (as she had been in the first shots of the previous sections [39]). As he wonders where Masha can be, he sees that an accident—a tramway cable has broken—has attracted a group of on-lookers:

A crowd.

The trams stand [still].

A flock [stado] of trams.

Traffic has stopped.

In its way, this is theatre.

Enormous scale.

Houses, street entrances, side streets.

Spectators. They look from the rooftops. From windows. From balconies.

The streets are thronged.

In this laconic literary manner, Olesha introduces the sequence 'as theatre', and two incidental details, Masha's unexpected absence and the minor mishap, introduce a pointedly undramatic outdoor spectacle with large-scale 'sets' (no matter that the sequence was shot on location) and crowds of on-lookers, who are witnesses to a 'private moment'. Interwoven into these expansive scenes are Oleshan devices seen elsewhere--reflected light, shimmering surfaces, and Classical motifs. The initial motivation for this section [40] is to set Stepanov on a search for Masha, but it ultimately functions to re-establish the link between Masha and Grisha/Diskobol, and to distance Dr Stepanov from the ranks of 'those who see'.

The inconsequential tram mishap is a pretext to enable the film-makers to set up a series of extreme long-shots and theatrical/cinematic points of view. One of the on-lookers is a young boy, who

...is sitting high up on a building ledge. He is holding a broken piece of mirror. He is catching the sun.

Rays fly out of the boy's hands. He turns around. A star bursts forth from the boy's hands.

As Stepanov approaches the scene, the boy's attention is "naturally" caught by the "substantial, solidly-built citizen":

He directs a sun-light arrow [solnechnuiu strelu] at him.

Dr Stepanov is blinded.

Meanwhile, Masha is in the crowd, looking up at a high crane or turret, atop which a group of men is working to repair the cable. A series of eye-line

matches establishes 'what she sees':

One [of the men] on the crane turns his head.

He is hot [emu zharko].

He removes his cap. A blond plait of hair falls onto his sweaty forehead. Gray eyes gleam on a face dark with heat.

This is Grisha Fokin.

Masha looks.

Grisha looks.

They have caught sight of each other.

The boy on the ledge.

Stepanov catches sight of Masha. Why is her face shining?

She is looking at the crane.

Stepanov wants to find out what is making Masha's face shine.

He looks in the direction she is looking.

The boy directs a sun ray at Stepanov's face.

And blinds him.

Fokin is on the crane.

Diskobol is on the crane.

The boy proceeds to 'blind' or 'dazzle' Stepanov a third time with the sun ray reflected by the broken mirror, smiling in glee at his ability to destroy the doctor's ability to see the cause of Masha's shining face. Perhaps this is also a metaphor for Stepanov's inability to see **what** Masha **needs** to love; again, the pairing of Grisha with Diskobol has both realistic and **symbolic** motivation ('working together'/the object of Masha's vision and his 'aspect'). Olesha clearly intended an association of the boy with Cupid and his arrows (Cupid/Amour is, of course, the insipid, cherubic byform of Eros, **but** he is not baby-like here). But this Cupid's 'arrows' (the reflected sun rays) prevent the 'legitimate' lover from knowing **and** from being harmed **emotionally**. As soon as Stepanov and Masha see each other, she turns her eyes **away** from Grisha, and he, still on the crane, turns from her. Then the boy casts his sun rays on Grisha, blinding **his** vision of Masha kissing her husband (but only on the eyes: "Ivan-... da-Mar'ia"), thereby allaying Grisha's possible envy. This minor character, the boy/Cupid, is, then, an antithesis of Tsitronov, the envy-inciter. In an attempt to catch a pigeon flying nearby,



the boy drops his piece of broken mirror. As he and Diskobol leave the scene, Grisha picks up a fragment and, for the third time in the script, he looks at himself in a mirror: "[Yes, I am] happy, but all the same with a shade of sadness."

Grisha himself helps to establish Stepanov as "one of the few", an expression he had used with Tsitronov, who then had denigrated Grisha as "one of the many" [12]; he does not act on his love for Masha out of respect for the esteemed doctor; in his 'third complex of GTO', he formalizes the "tribute of admiration" to be given to "lofty minds, to science". In less formal and more personal fashion, Stepanov will deliver his own tribute to Grisha. Apparently convinced by Olga's reading of Grisha's moral codex, the doctor visits Grisha at home [41]; he is met and conducted into Grisha's apartment by Diskobol, who has intervened on his friend's behalf (this intervention is unexplained: Diskobol acts again as the facilitator of Grisha's desires):

THE GIRL (in a frightened whisper): "Here he comes."

GRISHA: "I'll hide. Do you hear? I'm not here... It'll be hard for me to resist... I don't want to make peace with him."

Grisha then proceeds to hide in a wardrobe, and when Diskobol brings the doctor into the room, he initiates a friendly exchange:

STEPANOV: "Hello!"

Silence. Doctor Stepanov takes the room in with a glance  
He sees: a table,  
a shelf of books, sketches,  
a couch....

The Girl tells Stepanov that Grisha is not at home, to which news he responds that he had come to ask Grisha's forgiveness:

"He had said that he was one of the many, but he has proven that he is one of the few. Tell him that... and that I am ashamed....  
Tell him... We are leaving for London. And we are having a party. And we are asking him to come..."

THE GIRL: "He won't come."

STEPANOV: "Why?"

THE GIRL: "Don't you understand?" [the 12th repeat, JTH]

Silence.

STEPANOV: "But I am begging his pardon."

DISKOBOL: "He'll come. What nonsense you're talking [gluposti, to the Girl]. He dreams [mechtaet] about it... After all, he so loves..." (Stumbling, realizing he is saying too much.)

STEPANOV: "Well, never mind... He loves Masha. I know. After all, you told me this yourself. Remember? You were naked [Vy byli golyi]."

THE GIRL: "All the same, he won't come. You insulted him..."

STEPANOV: "Tell him that Masha also very much wants him to come."

THE GIRL: "Masha, too?"

STEPANOV: "Masha, too."

At this point, in the final diegetic demonstration of her 'theory of desire fulfillment', the Girl opens the wardrobe where Grisha has been hiding:

FOKIN: "I won't come. A komsomolets must be proud."

STEPANOV: "A man stands in a wardrobe closet and talks about pride. A komsomolets must have a sense of humour."

FOKIN: "Tell Masha that I won't come."

Symbolically, this sequence shows the 'old order' paying homage or making overtures to the 'new', and it continues the 'folding back' processes in the script/film, of references to itself: Stepanov's entry is structurally akin to Tsitronov's earlier entry into the same room [30] (in contrast, but also a reminder of their shared traits); his inviting Grisha to the going-away party recalls his previous invitation [14] to the party that had been postponed (and had become Grisha's dream); and both the Girl's and Diskobol's main functions are reprised. These are the final diegetic appearances of both the Girl and of Diskobol. The section/sequence ends with Stepanov descending the staircase and Diskobol pushing Grisha back into the wardrobe. It ends as a good-natured meeting, and is an interlude that precedes the final augmentation of Masha.

STROGII IUNOSHA requires a viewer's ability to 'suspend disbelief', but not just because he knows this diegetic presentation to be a fiction. Even if he is not challenged to accept the extreme flights of fancy (Grisha's dream of the party) as potentially attainable reality, he must empathize with its abstracted pseudo-world as 'possibly real' at least in part (the social integration of the future, for example, which is the film's central thesis). The credibility of this 'possibly real ideal' becomes strained at several points, one of which is in the portrayal of Masha Stepanova. Olesha may have written this part especially for Olga Zhizneva, an actress who had been in films since 1925. A biographical entry describes her roles in films: "[Zhizneva] lightly and elegantly played several variants of one and the same image—a beautiful, pining woman from a bourgeois, Nepman milieu".<sup>47</sup> She seems to have been typecast in several films, including STROGII IUNOSHA (which is not a NEP-period film)), where, in this writer's opinion, she is miscast. As Masha, there is nothing unpleasant about her appearance or inappropriate in her performance, but she both plays the role and looks the part of a comparatively older woman (Zhizneva was 37 years old in mid-1936). It may be unfair to criticize the casting of a feminine type whose appeal may not have endured to the 1980s (any number of 'bourgeois', particularly European, films of the 1930s portrayed the sveltly plump, stylish heroine of Masha's type). But Masha's liaison with the younger man seems implausible in these particular circumstances, especially as it is given no articulated motivation (Dorliak was 24 years old and had an enraptured public following, which Zhizneva lacked). Their love remains ineffable. Nowhere does Olesha give Masha a physical description<sup>48</sup>—only her desired effect on on-lookers is given some lines:

At the dacha.

The party.

Visitors. Masha comes out to greet the guests. Her gait, the movements of the folds of her skirt, her entire appearance, are so amazing, strange and beautiful that the visitors exchange glances, and one of them—a young foreigner—cannot restrain himself and softly, as if to himself, begins to clap.

These are the very final lines in the script [end of 47], and they almost exactly duplicate a passage in the introduction to Grisha's dream [32, lines 21-23, q.v.]. A possibly ironic subterfuge of the final presentation of Masha as a venerable ideal is avoided in these final lines, because the grammatical norm eliminates the adverbial 'it';<sup>49</sup> the film does not capture this literary subtlety, but the earlier shots are 'reprised' in the concluding scene.

In general, Masha is presented as an 'unattainable goddess'. Her initial appearance [3] had also placed her as an object of others' attention:

A river. On the bank is a young woman.  
 This is Masha, the wife of Dr Stepanov.  
 She has just been swimming.  
 She is returning home.  
 She puts her watch on.  
 Her hand is still wet.  
 She looks to see what time it is.  
 She walks past the dachas.  
 [Some] swimmers walk toward her.  
 They look back.  
 She walks on.  
 A warm day.  
 The road.

Besides identifying Masha as a natural object of the gaze, this passage sets her apart as special, distanced. This and her other appearances in the film are so bound in contemporaneity and in Zhizneva's specific physique that the ideal image she is supposed to represent is weakened. She hardly fits, for example, the image of a "Slavonic Venus" [slavianskaia Venera] rising from the waves--though she does enter the water, swim about, then come out on the shore, nude, in some unscripted shots (a brief, discontinuous, distant view partially deleted, partially blocked by branches); nor does she present an image of a "mysterious, evasive profile that one sees on an Antique vase"; only to some eyes will she be "a young goddess", the "embodiment of Woman, the poetic sign of eternal femininity".<sup>50</sup> But it was clearly the aim of the film's creators to present Masha as both a metaphor, or as a matrix of

Classical allusions, and as a real person. Here, the introduction of Masha as a latter-day Aphrodite/Venus is an efficient device, whereby the increasingly intricate Classical and sexual symbolization of the film has been initiated; it is a connotative insertion of resounding thematic and psychoanalytic potential implications.<sup>51</sup> Masha is the 'beloved feminine' in the film, and its only female character actually to be shown love. On the other hand, if STROGII IUNOSHA is received as a moral tract (one of its intended aspects), then one must address the issue of a married woman's unseemly romantic liaison with a young representative of the new morality,<sup>52</sup> as well as the issue of upper-class or bourgeois notions of quality in the Stepanovs' life-style that the film depicts so approvingly.

Masha Stepanova belongs to the classes of material privilege, her access to which is through Dr Stepanov. The published versions of the script do not include a written intertitle, which does appear in the film just as Grisha first sees the Stepanov dacha [11], and which attributes Dr Stepanov's social status and material comfort to his "service to the Soviet state". It is a surprise to see that this title has not been snipped out of the film, made at the phase in Soviet history when society was indeed becoming stratified according to a hierarchical order of access to privilege. There is one instance where Diskobol refers to the Stepanovs as "Soviet aristocrats" [29] (perhaps as a slur, but also to indicate to Grisha the proper dress codes he should expect at the Stepanovs' evening fête); he also suggests that the "Party cares about" Stepanov ["partiiia zabolitsia o nem": 33]. A history of Soviet cinema claims, somewhat deceptively, that the film's "authors raised the question of the right of a prominent person to live by laws other than those by which the people around this person live".<sup>53</sup> In fact, however, an open critique of Masha as a social being is absent from the film's discourse. Her qualities rest on an uncritical presentation of her as a 'feminine ideal'. She is presumed to be good, in an extraordinary reversal (perhaps uniquely in this film) of the obligatory portrayal in Soviet films of the contemporary privileged classes as 'bad'. There is an aura about Masha, and her physical presence puts ordinary folk and komsomol'tsy in the odd position of being beholden to her, of being in awe of her. A "sensation" is caused when the

"very elegant" Masha drives with her husband to the stadium to see Grisha [23]. Someone calls it to the attention of the girl:

"Liza! Some foreigners have arrived."

and the girl tells the other athletes/komsomol'tsy, whose eyes have turned,

"Some foreigners have arrived."

In a later scene [in 43], Masha's visit to Grisha's home causes another "sensation" (in both cases, the script uses sensatsiia). She socializes with foreigners [32, 47] and is perceived as a foreigner [23]; her expensive and polished automobile is an almost perpetual attribute [4, 11, 12, 14-19, 23, 32, 39, 40]; her house contains all the accessories of a haute bourgeoisie [1, 42], and the building itself is designed and decorated in classically upper-class style [1, 11]; she does not work—indeed, she is seen as unable to work satisfactorily [24]; but she has household servants who do work (in the kitchen [2, 42], polishing the car [11], preparing for guests [9, 42], in her boudoir, where the shots of a housemaid with Masha's 'expensive linen' are used to illustrate 'luxury' [12]). Tsitronov, the 'self-serving servant' and domestic provocateur, even suggests that she had been 'bought' and that she had become too accustomed to luxury ever to leave Stepanov (the angered husband throws a bottle at him) [12]. In real terms, Masha is a demi-mondaine. It is extremely odd, in Stalin's increasingly xenophobic 1930s, to see a central heroine portrayed in the socio-politically atavistic manner that this film dares to do. But virtually none of her personal attributes or evident values is overtly depicted as negative (even if true, Tsitronov's 'slanderous' evaluation does not come from an impeccable source, but Masha does promise to return home to Stepanov even as she departs for her diegetically 'last' rendezvous with Grisha [42]). And her being is irradiated with light, even if the light is not focused uniquely on her. One has to conclude that Masha represents an uncriticized feminine ideal for both Olesha and Room, whose efforts seem to have been, naively, to depict her as a character who would not be categorically rejected in the political ideology of the 1930s.

Masha is almost always seen in full light, whether out-of-doors or inside buildings (even in Grisha's dream, the night is kept away from her by the interior ball-room lighting). Her 'ascent from the sea' was by daylight;

the several scenes of her rendezvous with Grisha at the dacha [5-13] are mostly outside in the daylight. Her visit, in her husband's company, to visit Grisha at the stadium begins the lengthy "sportsground sequence" [23]. (While the script treats this as a continuation of the "gymnasium sequence" [21-22, na stadione, q.v.], the film definitely establishes that the gymnasium discussion is inside, whereas this next section [23] is outside on the expansive sportsground or playing field.) The entire sportsground sequence was shot in very over-exposed film, a technical accommodation to the notion of light/bright/pure that is not quite successful: it is brilliantly white (oddly, it gives no impression of 'heat'), but it looks 'over-exposed'. Olesha's vision of the 'sun-drenched sportsground' was also given in his story, "Stadion v Odesse" ["The Stadium in Odessa" (1936)]. It may not be significant that this story appeared (2 June 1936) so close to the banning of STROGII IUNOSHA (10 June). But its sure applicability vis-à-vis this film is in the fact that Olesha's vision of the stadium is a literary purple passage wherein the sight of the stadium stimulates an evocation of an already-realized future (it is the culmination of the narrator's 'walking tour' of the city):

Let's go up the staircase. Stop. Turn around. There's the stadium...

The stadium [rises] above the sea.

It didn't use to be. This is the new stadium in Odessa. With the sea in the background.

It's impossible to imagine a more wonderful spectacle.

The knack [snorovka] of making comparisons turns out to be powerless. What does it look like? I don't know. I have never seen this. It is a picture of the future.

No, that's not so. To be precise, it is a border, a transition, a realized moment of the transition of the present to the the future.

The green soccer field. We look from a distance, from above. There is such density and purity to this green colour. One wants to determine what produces this optical effect. Whence such transparency and clarity? There is no telescope [truba] in

our hands, there are no lenses [stekla] in front of our eyes.

Only the air, the sky, the sea.

It is suddenly revealed--its oval, staircases, stone vases on pedestals--and the first thought we have after we have comprehended this spectacle is the thought that dreams [mechty] have become reality.

This stadium is so like a dream--and at the same time so real. Thirty-five thousand seats. The laborers of Odessa built it on a site where there used to be hollow spots overgrown with tall weeds and buttercup.

One could admire this view for hours. The sense of an epos is born in the consciousness. You say to yourself: this already is, it exists, it lasts. There exists the state [gosudartsvo], the country of socialism, our motherland, its style, its beauty, its daily routine, its magnificent realities.<sup>54</sup>

This final part of the story contains hints of a denial of the 'dream vision' [mechty], of a rejection of 'device' [truba, stekla] and even a doubt about the capacity of personal talent [snorovka], while it concludes with a political gesture, all of which may result from Olesha's apparent desire, under pressure at this time, to do better at 'approaching reality' in his writing. But the climactic vision of the stadium is also an effective evocation of the intended mood of his vision of the stadium and sportsground in the film-script Olesha had written two years earlier: "Etot stadion tak pokhozh na mechtu--i vmeste s tem tak realen".

The sportsground sequence [23] is logistically very simple; ideationally, or 'semantically', it is no less complex than the others are. The several opening shots demonstrate this complexity and the subtle tightness of the film's linkage of motifs: Masha arrives with Stepanov in their car; she is dressed in a light-weight, white summer dress and a brimmed hat (cf. the 'woman in white' in the later hospital sequence [36-37]); a young man watches from a high place with binoculars (the clarity of the distant 'vision from above' and the use of glass prisms: reprised later by the boy/Cupid with the mirror [40], seen earlier with Stepanov and Tsitronov [16-19]). The Girl



announces that "some foreigners have arrived". But the sequence is actually introduced by an unscripted shot-series that continues the Classical symbolization of previous scenes: there are brief glimpses of Grisha and Diskobol, standing together, riding hard on a **chariot** pulled by a team of four horses. This picture of a hot and dusty chariot race at a Hippodrome does not remain on screen long enough to be perceived as 'real' (the shots are 'non-diegetic inserts', formalistic flights of fancy), but it is startling enough to the viewer. The primary pairing of the two similar-looking blonds here and in the main scenes of the sportsground sequence is obvious (under scrutiny, its symbolic, 'aspectual' meaning becomes apparent in later scenes, as already discussed):

Diskobol and Fokin.

Fokin is wearing in a robe.

DISKOBOL: "What's going on? Is it she?"

Fokin remembers the dream [vspominaet son]. His heart is beating hard. He cannot answer.

THE GIRL: (from above) "Why are you just standing, Grisha? You have to go up [to her]. Don't you understand?"

Diskobol and Grisha are standing.

DISKOBOL: "Which of the moral qualities according to your theory are you working out now? Bashfulness? I think it is cowardice."

The Girl is paired with Grisha, not with Diskobol, as she is in later scenes:  
The Girl is [standing] beside Fokin.

...

Fokin pushes the Girl away.

He rushes forward.

This 'pushing' is logically motivated, as Grisha has been distracted by Masha's appearance and prodded into action by his friends, but it introduces the gesture that will characterize the relationship that Diskobol, Grisha's other aspect or double, will have with the Girl in later sequences. Grisha dashes over to the group surrounding Masha, Stepanov and their car, because he had seen Diskobol telling Masha something:

DISKOBOL: "He knows that you have come. He saw you. But he is

hiding."

MASHA: "Hiding?"

DISKOBOL: "Yes. It's terrible for him to look at you because  
he loves you."

... [Grisha pushes the Girl away and comes over to them]

FOKIN: "What did he say? What did you say? Masha..."

DISKOBOL: "I said that you love... this... citizeness [grazhdanku]."

DR STEPANOV: "Masha, I think this is a silly conversation."

MASHA: "And the whole stadium knows about this?"

FOKIN: "No, no, Masha... Nobody knows. Only he does. My friend."

Masha gets behind the wheel [of the car].

A scandal. Doctor Stepanov is embarrassed.

He says:

"It's strange. Very strange. Like in a dream [Kak vo sne].

A naked man [golyi chelovek] comes up and says that  
someone loves my wife."

The automobile drives away.

Stepanov's observation that Diskobol is "naked" here (and later, when he remembers it [41, q.v.]) does not reflect the Russian cultural norm, i.e. golyi, by itself, does not describe a man in athletic shorts. This 'nakedness' is therefore Stepanov's perception or perhaps a subconscious 'desire to see' the young man undressed: it is very cautiously inserted into the dialogue and 'concealed' by Stepanov's visible (in the film) consternation at the 'scandal' (his glance at Diskobol is neither leering nor idealizing). But another, more important motif surfaces here, that of the dream and reverie [son, mechta]. It is totally implausible that Olesha used his frequent references to the dream-state to indicate his lack of faith in an ultimate realization: this would debunk not only his utopian fantasizing but also the dominant ideology's 'dream of the future' (and it would make a cynic of him, for which there is virtually no evidence). These references provide evidence that the film is a reverie, a day-dream, from beginning to end, with the most outlandish and/or psychologically revealing flights of fancy (the scenes of the party sequence, the numerous unscripted inserted shots and scenes) being 'dreams within the dream', which are thoroughly accessible

in all respects to standard interpretations of dreams (and to the methods of film and literary analysis). The images of the filmed rendition provide any amount of evidence; the words of the written script provide a focus:

- Grisha recalls a dream [18]; as he tells Masha, "I dreamt" [mne snilos'] that a car such as Masha's had arrived at the stadium, but the woman behind the wheel was "an unattractive foreigner", not Masha (this scene comes before the stadium/sportsground sequences);
- When Masha does arrive at the stadium [23], Diskobol asks Grisha, "Is it she?", and Grisha again remembers the dream [23]--another dream?--but cannot react (this 'remembering' is a narrative prompt that is not articulated in the spoken dialogue, nor is the 'scandal' that Stepanov senses);
- Stepanov reacts to the goings-on at the stadium by remarking that it is "like in a dream" [23];
- Diskobol tells Stepanov that Grisha will not come to his party, though "he dreams about it" [41].

It goes without saying that STROGII IUNOSHA has parameters within a pseudo-world--it has a diegetic beginning, middle and end. But this film ultimately represents an un-delimited dream-state, with parameters that are 'only' diegetic (in film-time/text-time). Its 'realism' is extremely elusive, and one might even say that it is 'absent', despite the assertion of the photographic record that 'it is'. A minor peculiarity of this sportsground sequence is that it brings together several motifs that do not, strictly speaking, belong to the story-line ('things that happen', fabula), but rather to a category of 'matrix motifs', the tell-tale hints of future developments. In the classical film narrative of the 1930s-40s, such motifs tend to be concentrated at the beginning of a film (often in the credits sequence and a few calculated opening shots, though they might be scattered throughout as well). But this sequence is placed almost precisely at the middle of the film (section 23 of the script's 47 sections).

After the Stepanovs have driven off, Diskobol justifies the fact that he had announced Grisha's love of Masha: "I am right, after all. According to his theory, a konsonolets must tell the truth. And I told the truth".

The disheartened Grisha stands alone in the field, the Girl leaves his side and goes over to Diskobol's (where she will remain, figuratively and actually), and the sequence ends with a thrice-repeated structure with an added fourth reprise (this pattern is found in the dream/party sequence and at the film's conclusion, as well):

Diskobol calls out:

"Grisha!"

He is motionless [Tot nedvizhim].

Diskobol again:

"Grisha!"

He is motionless.

Diskobol once again:

"Grisha!"

He is motionless.

THE GIRL: "He doesn't hear anything. Don't you understand?"

Diskobol then turns around and tosses his discus.

The discus falls at Fokin's feet.

He is motionless. [end of 23]

Diskobol finally makes use of his almost ubiquitous discus (though it fails to jolt Grisha back to his senses). An abrupt change of scene follows, to the library [24], where the good doctor is pretentiously practicing aloud the speech he will give in London and Masha is shown as unable to function as his error-free stenographer, and then to the garden [25] and the brief scene of 'the norm'—Stepanov offers the cigar to Tsitronov, and of the 'elimination of the disruption of the norm'—Stepanov decides to retract the invitation given Grisha to the party (which he later reconsiders).

The preparations for the real party [42] are indicated in the script by a long list of things and activities, including a scene of Masha getting ready in her boudoir; here we return to the theme of the associative characterization of Masha by means of light/brightness/whiteness. This is a literary concentration of details impeccably transferred into the film's images; it is the most sustained example in the script of Olesha's 'thingism' [veshchizm] and a prolonged instance of cinematic ~~metonymy~~, and it initiates

the final augmentation of Masha:

At the dacha.

Preparations are in progress for the reception of guests.

Waiters are covering tables in the garden.

Snow-white napkins.

Pyramids of fruit.

Facets of crystal.

Lively activity in the kitchen.

Mountains of pastries.

The reception room.

Musicians in the drawing room.

They take their places.

A tall, white door with glass.

A straw mat [dorozhka] leads up to it.

Footsteps.

Tsitronov steps along the mat.

Tsitronov. Cigar in mouth.

The tall white door.

The glass door-knob.

This is the door into Masha's boudoir.

The boudoir.

Masha is getting dressed.

Steps.

Masha listens.

In the corridor. The door.

Tsitronov. The cigar in his hands.

Detail of the boudoir. [Tsitronov's p.o.v.]

The dressing table.

The window shutters.

Bottles.

Crystal vessels.

A powder container.

But Masha is not to be seen.

Some of these metonymic interior shots are not quite 'new' (cf. the early

shots of the garden and house [2], where the graphic 'line' of a path leading to the high white doors first occurs, the maid in the boudoir [12], and the preparations for the dream party [32]): Masha's habitat is already familiar. The 'detail of the boudoir' indicates Tsitronov's view through the keyhole into the room. He is thus 'caught' by the camera in flagrante delicto in his voyeurism, stooped over, peeping (the viewers also 'catch' him, but some of them might know that they are accomplice voyeurs). Then there are several shots of him in the dining room picking up Masha's gloves and raising them to his nose—he is 'caught' again, indulging his fetishism, and the voyeuristic camera eye/Tsitronov's eye returns to the keyhole: he still cannot see Masha. Then, with one of the associative details that abound in this film (this one is a distinct film simile), Tsitronov looks out into the garden at a statue, a 'stone girl' [kamennaia devushka] (in the film: a partially draped goddess-figure, a projection of the voyeur's imagined and hoped-for view), and then he peers once again through the keyhole:

The boudoir.

A new detail.

Scattered articles of clothing.

But Masha is not to be seen.

Tsitronov at the door.

With malice he flings the cigar.

The cigar on the floor at the door.

Masha comes through the doors.

Dressed.

We find here more examples of Olesha's extremely 'lean' cinematographic technique in prose. And while the leering voyeurism of Tsitronov is not so described, it is nonetheless obvious. It is also offensive, and the narrative strategy is successful in its purpose here: Masha is elevated as a 'victim', her integrity has been transgressed upon and almost made polluted, she has been portrayed as vulnerable, and the viewers' sympathies go out to her; the quietness of these scenes gives them an eerie tension and emphasizes the voyeur's sneakiness and stealth. The whiteness of Masha's most private habitat, her boudoir, and the 'glass prisms' (bottles, flasks, windows) that abound in it, are intended as signs of its ethical purity (within the

strategy of the idealization of Masha). The narrative makes Tsitronov's frustration almost palpable: No Mashi ne vidno (repeated three times). And his deplorable mis-use of his ability to see will lead to his rout [44]: after Stepanov sees the tell-tale remains of the cigar outside Masha's door, he reacts angrily—"Scum! You dare to think of her!", and he throws a bottle at Tsitronov [cf. 12], who shrinks in fear and flees into the garden, overturning "the tables, pyramids of fruit, mountains of pastries", and then beyond the dacha grounds. Symbolically, he is the Lucifer exiled from Paradise, the personification of hate and envy banished ignominiously from the world that has generated and tolerated it (he does not reappear in the film's diegesis). But he had managed to put in a few words before this: "But do you know why she was getting dressed? She's gone off to him [Ona k nemu poshla]." <sup>55</sup> Tsitronov, also, has 'told the truth'.

After once rejecting Grisha, and after Grisha's rejecting the possibility of a liaison with her, Masha instigates the revival of their romance by going to visit Grisha at his apartment [43, 45] (the flight of Tsitronov [44] is significantly placed as an alternating sequence, as a simultaneous event, to interrupt this otherwise continuous sequence):

Masha ascends the stairs.

Masha in the corridor.

Sensation among the neighbors.

They peer out of their rooms.

Girl in the corridor.

....

The girl calls from the landing:

"Lialka! Lialka! Come here! Quickly!"

A girl asks from the courtyard:

"Why?"

"There's a smell of perfume in the corridor!"

Grisha is still sleeping. The mother explains to the guest that he has been working all night, and she cannot awaken him:

MOTHER: "No. He's not going to wake up. Grisha!"

She shakes the son by the shoulders.

The son [is still] asleep.

MOTHER: "You could fire a cannon."

MASHA: (quietly) "Grisha!"

The son wakes up.

This blurring of the women's roles constitutes a barely perceptible hint at an Oedipal mother/lover factor, one likely psychoanalytic explanation for Grisha's attraction to the older woman (and Dr Stepanov easily fits a variant of the role of idolized but 'absent'/'unattainable' father-figure). But it also links up with Masha's function as an instigator of dreams. Here, she awakens him from sleep (not from a dream), only to lead him into a 'real dream'. Grisha had decided to avoid further contact with Masha; the two converse [45]:

Masha and Grisha.

"Why have you come?"

"Shouldn't I have?"

"No."

"How strict you are."

Masha descends the stairs [she leaves].

Masha's evaluation of Grisha here ["Kakoi vy strogii."] is expressed in very gentle tones. It is the only instance in the script and in the film where Grisha is described as 'strict' or 'stern' [strogii] (though he is dedicated to his moral codex, and he can lose his temper with Diskobol, his vtoroj 'ia'). The film's title is appropriated from this quite overlookable detail, and the title is therefore thoroughly ironic. And Grisha's rejection of Masha is hardly convincing, because he soon follows her out of the building—indeed, 'the son' rushes out 'like a storm' [burei]) and thence through the music-laden air of the picturesque town sidestreets [45]. A pianist, a Beethoven-Meierkhol'd 'lookalike', is playing; the lovers stand below his balcony; their presence disturbs him, and, in a pique, he rushes out onto his balcony to shout down at them:

"What's the matter? Why are you standing [there]?"

As soon as one sits down to play, people start to listen."<sup>56</sup>

Then, in an increasingly 'romantic', subtly unreal and even magical



scene/sequence [46], Masha repeats a question to Grisha three times<sup>57</sup> (in the film, the third repeat is voiceless):

"I want to suggest something to you. May I?"

[la vam khochu predlozhit' odnu ideiu. Mozhno?"]

This is the thrice-told spell of an enchantress. Masha even leads him to a 'wonderful bench' [chudnaia skameika], then to a bridge, where they have their first diegetic kiss, in this, the film's penultimate scene (its final scene [47, q.v.] consists of the portrayal of Masha's effect on her party guests, which confirms Masha as 'spellbinding'<sup>58</sup>). Her enigmatic suggestion remains Grisha's private information, for his only response is to say, three times, "Go ahead" ["Davaite"]. (Note also the curious formality of their intimacy, indicated by the use of second-person plural forms [vy/vam/-ite].)

Will the young Communist moralist remove himself from the temptations proffered him by this woman, who has to be seen, from the strictly ideological Party-line perspective of the Soviet 1930s, as a representative of a class which has 'outlived its time'? He probably will not overcome his thralldom of her, and the kiss is an indication of sexual initiation and of possible future trysts. A less speculative answer might be gleaned from the symbolism employed in this street scene. In the film (but not indicated in the script), the camera's shooting angle is down the street, into its darkened depths; the dusk or early evening lighting is diffused and soft—it 'glows'. This is an image of a comforting tunnel-like passageway to a pleasant future. It is an obvious symbol of the vaginal passage and an unmistakable gynocentric image, where Grisha's physical presence in the film ends.<sup>59</sup> This romantic tryst may be a dream or fantasy sequence—any clearly detectable demarcations between a dream-state and waking reality are lacking here, though the pianist's interrupted playing does recall the pianist's disturbed playing in the party/dream sequence. In any case, the dreamer belongs to the dominant psycho-sexual/ideological majority at the film's conclusion. But his presence is expunged, he is excised from the diegesis, even if his dream continues. The final scene belongs to the exemplar of an elevated and venerated femininity, who is, 'socialistically' speaking, an anachronism.

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How could this film have been made? None of the published script reviews indicates that critics foresaw any opposition serious enough to lead to the film's eventual banning (Meierkhol'd may have been an exception). There was an enormous fund of good will directed toward both Olesha and Room: this is not to say that the script was not harshly criticized, but it helps to explain the great interest in the press and among production and administrative groups. As the film was produced in Odessa and Kiev, the politically sensitive administrative oversight was less stringent than it would have been in Moscow or Leningrad, where many people were swiftly learning to heed the political 'weather vane'. It is important to remember, too, that the production history of STROGII IUNOSHA covered a two-year period (mid-1934 to mid-36), when the ideologues of the Stalinist era had not yet thoroughly subjected the arts to Party-line politics. One single fact indicates how much hope was invested in this film: STROGII IUNOSHA was one of the most costly film productions ever mounted in the Soviet Union by that time--expenditures in time and effort are not calculable, but the film cost almost two million rubles.<sup>60</sup> The delay of nearly a year in its completion should have been cause for concern (other films had been delayed and criticized). But the film was completed and, once banned, was not physically destroyed or even re-edited, despite the abuse hurled at it in the edict of prohibition. The production crew and cast (including Dmitrii Dorliak) were spared any public reprimands, though studio officials were dismissed, and Abram Room was severely criticized and demoted to assistant director.<sup>61</sup> Iurii Olesha was detained, at least, perhaps formally arrested and imprisoned by the NKVD (if not sent to the GULag), after an evaluation of his entire literary output.<sup>62</sup> Two or three years later (in 1938-39), the punishment meted out might have been a bullet. But as it turned out, Room was reinstated as a film director: his talents were needed for the war propaganda effort--he made three films in 1939-44, and others after the war. And Olesha continued to write and publish, his "winged" talent quite securely pinioned: his film-scripts "VAL'TER" and "OSHIBKA INZHENERA KOCHINA" were filmed during the gloomy period 1937-39; both of these films are, understandably, politically conformist and aimed against the fascist threat. Creatively, however, things were not the same for either Room or Olesha after the débâcle

of STROGII IUNOSHA. Room's later films need further scrutiny and evaluation within his oeuvre. But nothing Olesha wrote from this time until his death (including the "notes" that appeared posthumously as Ni dnia bez strochki [1965], which remains an interesting memoir) can measure up to the works produced in the fruitful years 1927-34, from Zavist' to "STROGII IUNOSHA". This first major film-script was Olesha's last considerable written work. But he did not stop writing for the cinema (scripts, reviews), and it would hardly be credible to claim that, as a 'pure' literator, he despised this film-work.

In his speech at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers (on 22 August 1934), Olesha vaguely outlined his goals, at the end of a hypothetical address to one of the first generation of Soviet youth:

"... Who are you ... what are you like, young man [chelovek] of the socialist society?" I cannot write until I find common ground with him.

I want to create an example [tip] of the young man, investing him with the best of what there was in my own youth.

....

I have personally set myself the task of writing about the young. I shall write plays and stories in which the characters will solve problems of a moral nature. Somewhere within me lives the conviction that Communism is not only an economic system, but a moral system as well, and that the first incarnations of this aspect of Communism will be [its] young men and women.

All that I sense of beauty, grace, nobility, my whole vision of the world ... I will try to embody in these [written] things, in the sense of demonstrating that the new, socialist attitude toward the world is in the purest sense a humane attitude....<sup>63</sup>

It is very odd that Olesha made no mention there of "STROGII IUNOSHA", from which an excerpt had been published a month before (on 28 July 1934, under the title "Diskobol") and which appeared complete in the August issue of Novyi mir. (Was he only being reticent, or did he assume the audience would all be aware of the script?). His discussion of "STROGII IUNOSHA" is a little more specific in a few other press items, as in the exchange in Molodaia

gvardiia (nos.1 & 4, 1935) with the "former komsomolka" Vera Chernova, where he made this statement in his response to her perceptively critical letter:

"I wrote [this scenario] precisely with the aim of giving young people cause for moralizing [povod moralizirovat']." <sup>64</sup>

But, in his creative works, the theme of the 'moral new Soviet generation' is manifested in a personal manner only in this film-script (while in the 1950s he did fulfill his vow to write for young people with three scripts for children's animated films <sup>65</sup>). The general mood, however, was of impatience and frustration with Olesha's reticence or inability to explain the specifics of his vision of the youth of the future; the script did not make it clear to its readers. In one public appearance (in February 1935), as it was reported, the student audience expressed concern with the portrayals of komsomol'tsy in the script and were dismayed that Olesha stood to read the script aloud from beginning to end without elucidating it to them: why didn't Olesha's "norms of behavior" correspond to the actual situation; how could it be that his central heroine was not a typical Soviet woman who works, but a woman who could "figure in any bourgeois novel"; they doubted that the image of Masha was a progressive one, when "the very existence of a woman such as Masha [was] dubious". <sup>66</sup> This brings up the point that Olesha had been quite seriously chastised for not creating positive roles for women: neither the widow Anechka Prokopovich (nor probably even Valia) in Zavist' (1927) and in "Zagovor chuvstv" (1929) nor Elena Goncharova in "Spisok blagodeianiiia" (1931) could have been very assuring to critics who demanded a 'positive heroine' from Olesha. A somewhat overlooked detail in his biography is the "trial" (really a sort of a literary 'kangaroo court') that took place in Moscow in early 1931: Olesha was among a number of playwrights who were put "on trial" for undervaluing women in their plays; the 'judge and jury' was a group of Moscow actresses, with Vsevolod Meierkhol'd somehow joining the accusers. The 'sentence' was a year of 'service to society', during which the accused were to create plays with roles for women (such a public tribunal was no joking matter in the 1930s). Olesha responded with the role of Goncharova, played by Zinaida Raikh in Meierkhol'd's production in May 1931. <sup>67</sup> It is no risky venture to assume that Masha Stepanova was a later attempt to create a veritable ideal woman. But Olesha deprived Masha

of an intellectual existence and created her in his culturally generalized, outmoded image of an ideal. (On the other hand, if Grisha has his 'aspects', then Masha might well have hers, in Olga and the Girl, though their physical separateness is maintained: the women are never symbolically paired.)

Viktor Shklovskii, Dmitrii Mirskii, Room and Meierkhol'd attended a significant public evaluation of the script (on 3 July 1934 at "Dom sovetskogo pisatel'ia", just before the script was published): the discussants were generally pleased that Olesha had ended his "long silence" with a major literary work, while Shklovskii agreed that the basic theme of youth was "a bit abstract" and that Grisha Fokin's 'third complex of GTO' was "not quite clear"; most of the discussants argued that the form of the script did not manifest the "typical traits of a film-script", and Meierkhol'd was especially adamant in his opinion that Olesha's "error" was that he had not written this work as a 'long story' [povest'] because a film-script was "generally too narrow for artists of Olesha's scale"—he beseeched Olesha not to submit the script for filming and to leave film-script writing to others; Mirskii defended the script as unlike anything Olesha had written before, as distinguished by its "unity of form and content", but he feared that its originality would be lost in the film; the film people, including Room, to whom the filming had already been assigned, disagreed with both Meierkhol'd and Mirskii, who had undervalued the capacities of Soviet cinema and who did not recognize that it needed writers of Olesha's stature and scripts of such artistic scope.<sup>68</sup> It is unlikely that a povest' format would have enabled Olesha to elaborate and clarify his philosophical outlook to the satisfaction of any ideological watchdogs, but Meierkhol'd seems to have sensed the ideological flaws. The film people were more correct in one respect, because STROGII IUNOSHA is almost faultless in its fidelity to its written conceptualization: the film's unscripted scenes and shots do not distort its original concept—they support and expand on it.

Several of the longer contemporary reviews of "STROGII IUNOSHA" are interesting enough to be remarked upon, but they are too lengthy to be detailed here. Their comments range from the plainly stupid to the superficial

to the quite astute. Questions and doubts in many of them concern the abstraction of the characters and of the moral system expounded in the script; several critics praised the very fine literary quality of the script. Rebukes repeated what Olesha had been told before—that he had accepted the revolution with a melancholy toward the past, that reality was lacking, and so on. Nikolai Zhdanov said that Olesha's chosen conflict ("Grisha Fokin loves Dr Stepanov's wife") was "pseudo-problematic and socially insignificant".<sup>69</sup> Vladimir Petrov was among the more perceptive critics. He noted the thematic juxtaposition of 'envy' with 'competition', and identified the script's fundamental philosophical blunder: "biological inequality" [biologicheskoe neravenstvo] and the "inequality of talents" in Grisha Fokin's 'moral complex' would replace social classes with a "hierarchy of biologically unequal people", with an "elite of geniuses" at the top. This "the many" and "the few" had been, Petrov said, "overturned by the revolution". He complained that the characters were, rather, "masks", but he noted the elegance of the dialogue.<sup>70</sup> The most inventive of the reviews was by Dmitrii Maznin, who created a full newspaper-page length conversation among the main characters of "STROGII IUNOSHA", who had met to evaluate their roles: added to this cast is "the Critic", who immediately retreats to the library to make notes, thereby missing the entire discussion (and not finding any answers); at the end, "the Critic" misses the car that will take the cast to the airport for the flight to Odessa ("the Girl" cries out, "Snimat'sia! Snimat'sia! Bravo!"). Maznin mocks Olesha's own characters' expressions and mannerisms in his dialogues, which are realistic and which constitute a point-by-point retort to Olesha's script: rebukes and blame for its weaknesses are laid by 'his own' characters squarely on Olesha's shoulders. "Grisha Fokin" himself has many points of disagreement with the writer ("la otmezhevaius' ot Oleshi"): he protests that he has been "sterilized", made "inert and passive" as a lover, that everyone except himself was active in his love; he is shamed ("Styd i sram") to be made to fall asleep under a birch tree after the "remarkable" dream; he complains that his scenes are to be shot literally "through binoculars" in long shot; he is most indignant that Olesha had "castrated" or "emasculated" [vykholostil] his 'third complex of GTO'.<sup>71</sup> One wonders how perceptive Maznin could have been of the filmed version.

The most devastating critique, of course, was the edict of prohibition (issued 10 June 1936, published in Kino, 28 July 1936). The indictment followed mostly predictable lines. But one of the reprimands was peculiar: STROGII IUNOSHA was indicted for being "imbued with Fascist ideology". Iurii Elagin wrote that the "cruel fate of this motion picture and of the author probably was due as much to the remarkable physical appearance of the hero [Dmitrii Dorliak], which emphasized the basic thought to the audiences, as it was to the film's questionable ideological content".<sup>72</sup> This "basic thought" was certainly the homo-erotic physicality of the Diskobol/Grisha Fokin pair, which was the result of Olesha's attempt to imbue his heroes with the symbolized and purified ethos of Classical Greece. The image of the fizkul'turshchik was extremely wide-spread in the 1930s in the Soviet Union: images of male and female athletes clad in gymnasium gear were basic to a whole range of publicized programs, from the avant-garde's photography (such as Rodchenko's) to posters of government health programs and recruitment campaigns for Komsomol. By the year 1936, however, it was realized that the athletic, usually blond(e) 'Aryan' type had become an essential image of the Hitlerjungen in fascist Germany. We have only to look at some Nazi posters of the mid-1930s, and at the glamorous images in films such as HITLERJUNGE QUELX (1933) or even Leni Riefenstahl's TRIUMPH DES WILLENS [TRIUMPH OF THE WILL (released in March 1935)]. The parallel was more than embarrassing to the Soviet propaganda state (but never publicly acknowledged, even until now), and the imagery of Soviet youth marching into the glorious future began to be changed: youth 'marched' in less abstract celebratory fashion with less emphasis on the physical body of a Slavic type who might be indistinguishable in a picture or photo from an 'Aryan' Nazi sympathizer. But just as much to the point was the tragically ironic misconception that Nazis were homosexuals (some were, but more were thugs, and the Nazi ethos did not for long tolerate homosexually-inclined combatants). It is very doubtful that the CPSU censors, or Boris Shumiatskii, could have detected all the sexual symbolism of STROGII IUNOSHA, but they would have seen enough to detect 'something', and to make their decision. (Speculating: "Why does Diskobol go around almost naked?" "He keeps pushing the attractive Girl away:

doesn't he like girls?" "Just how 'close' is this friendship between Diskobol and Grisha?" "A sexually healthy man would do more than dream about his woman.") Even a 'possibly homosexual' komsomolets would plainly not do.<sup>73</sup>

It is also plain that STROGII IUNOSHA was not about to be politically coddled because of its possible future significance for film theory and praxis: the "dream-work" is a term that might indicate one aspect of this film's potential significance and describe some preoccupations of film theory in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>74</sup> Nor was it going to be permitted its corrupting influence on any ideologically un-stalwart film-makers or viewers: the film was banned as "ideologically and artistically defective".

... the discussion of equality and leveling in the film was dismissed as pretentious, abstract and empty. The prediction imputed to the film that in the future classless society the advanced intelligentsia would hold the reins of power was castigated as an idea drawn from bourgeois technocracy. The "musings" of the producers of the film to the effect that suffering and fear of death are a permanent aspect of of man's nature, under communism as well as under capitalism, and only the alternation of happiness and suffering makes human existence beautiful and significant, were denounced as "philosophical pessimism directed against the Communist ideals of the revolutionary proletariat". Komsomol characters in the film were found to be without will or revolutionary passion, incapable of opposing class enemies. Doctor Stepanov, depicted as a great authority who commands the respect of Soviet youth, was condemned as an arrogant, narrow-minded tyrant and not a true representative of Soviet life. Finally, the producers of the film were charged with deviations from the style of socialist realism in their use of formalistic devices and insipid stylization.<sup>75</sup>

There was not a word about the film's central conceit (Masha Stepanova), nor about adaptability, tolerance of difference, dreams of the future ... nor about pragmatic applications of lessons learnt from past experience.



## STROGII IUNOSHA: NOTES

(see Bibliography for other details of works cited)

<sup>1</sup> The lament of the author/narrator in his 'inner monologue' in "Tsep'" ["The Chain" (1929)]. But he ends his story with a plea not to be left behind: "Now I've fallen behind, look how far I've fallen behind—I mince along, a fat man on short little legs... Look how hard it is for me to run, but I am running, though barely able to catch my breath, though my legs get stuck [in the mud]--I am running after the thundering storm of the century.": Izbrannoe (1974), p. 207 [my transl., JTH]; cited slightly differently in Elizabeth Beaujour, The Invisible Land. A Study of the Artistic Imagination of Iurii Olesha (1970), p. 101; translated in full in Olesha, Complete Short Stories & Three Fat Men (1979), pp. 32-38.

<sup>2</sup> For example Vladimir Maiakovskii, Isaak Babel' and Iurii Tynianov. See the three articles by J. Heil in Russian Literature [Amsterdam], XIX-II (1986) and XXI-IV (1987).

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this article, film titles are cited in ALL-CAPITAL letters, whereas film-script titles are in "ALL-CAPS" enclosed within quotation marks. Transliteration is in the Library of Congress system (without ligatures [iu, not iu̇], but Э = E, э = è, and ē = e not ë), with the exceptions of some 'englished' names (in the main text: Olga, not Ol'ga) and of some variant transliterations cited as previously published. I prefer to use the Russian titles rather than their English translations; the stresses on the film's title are on the initial vowels [O, И]: STROGII IUNOSHA.

The terminology of film construction as used here is simple and exact: a **sequence** is a series of shots or scenes of varying durations and of varying locations but of related 'subject', whereas a **scene** takes place in a single location and a **shot-series** denotes a specific string of shots, usually of

the same subject but not usually comprising an entire scene (a close-up is a single-shot 'insert'); **sections** are only the script's numbered parts; **diegetic/n. diegesis** refer to a film's 'pseudo-world', all filmed and recorded representations that are integral to this pseudo-world (the non-diegetic elements are, therefore, any voice-over narration and any commentative music in the sound track).

Following the Novyi mir publication, "STROGII IUNOSHA" appeared in Izbrannoe (1935), with the sections numbered 1-47, in which format it reappeared in the reference text here, Izbrannoe (1974), but inexplicably without the original dedication to Zinaida Raikh [Reich], the actress wife of Vsevolod Meierkhol'd. The illustrations of Grisha Fokin and of the Stepanovs there (p. 298) are very remote from the film's images of these same characters. The script is translated as "A STERN YOUNG MAN" in Yury Olesha, The Complete Plays (1983). My preference is for the originally-intended English title, A STRICT YOUTH, as it was advertised in a pre-banning publicity poster (in English), reproduced in Arossev, et al., Soviet Cinema (1935), p. 318 [unnumbered].

<sup>4</sup> The public discussion was limited, in contrast to the unusual publicity given to the script before the production was completed: see the chronological listing here in Bibliography A. There was an edict released to the press, "Postanovlenie Tresta Ukrainfil'ma o zapreshchenii fil'ma STROGII IUNOSHA, 10 iunia 1936 g.", in the newspaper Kino, no.37, 28 July 1936, p. 2. Two denunciatory articles also appeared in that issue of Kino. The Main Motion Picture Administration [GUK] (headed by Boris Shumiatskii [see note 17]) diverted attention from itself by assuring that the banning was attributed to its administrative unit in Kiev.

<sup>5</sup> See the list in Bibliography A, and the incomplete entry for Olesha in Stsenaristy sovetskogo khudozhestvennogo kino (1972) [henceforth: SSKhK (1972)].

<sup>6</sup> In actual fact, the term denotes the release of a host of previously banned films--as many as 120, some of which had been 'on the shelf' for up to twenty

years. But so far, there are few films made since Gorbachev became General-Secretary that give evidence on celluloid that the recent political loosening-up has combined with pent-up creativity to make possible a body of critically engaged films on contemporary topics. The '120' figure is according to the director, Aleksandr Askoldov, at a public seminar (25 March 1988) during the 1988 San Francisco International Film Festival. Most of these films are probably not of great merit, but a number of them certainly are. Askoldov's own KOMISSAR [COMMISSAR (1967)] and Andrei Konchalovskii's first film, ASINO SCHAST'E [ASYA'S HAPPINESS (1966)], had been banned since they were made. (The history of STROGII IUNOSHA is too distant to be directly involved in recent glasnost.) Besides the numerous newspaper articles on the subject, see William Fisher, "Gorbachev's Cinema", Sight and Sound, Autumn 1987, pp. 238-242. For a broader cultural overview of events affecting both literature and the cinema, see Nancy Condee and Vladimir Padunov, "The Outposts of Official Art: Recharting Soviet Cultural History", Framework no.34 1987, pp. 59-106, and their "'New' Soviet Cinema: Once Again the Most Important Art", in the 1988 San Francisco festival magazine, S F Film, pp. 32-37.

<sup>7</sup> See the monograph on this director by Irina Grashchenkova, Abram Room (1977), especially chapter 4 (on STROGII IUNOSHA), "O 'spetsialistakh uma i chuvstva'", pp. 134-196. Abram Matveevich Room was counted among the more 'traditionalist' of directors, i.e. he was not among the aesthetically radical 'montage' directors of the 1920s (Eisenstein, Vertov, Dovzhenko). He had directed BUKHTA SMERTI [DEATH BAY (1926)], PREDATEL' [THE TRAITOR (1926)], TRET'IA MESHCHANSKAIIA [THIRD MESHCHANSKAIIA STREET, usually known in English as BED AND SOFA (1927)], UKHABY [RUTS (1928)], and PRIVIDENIE KOTOROE NE VOZVRASHCHAETSIA [THE GHOST THAT NEVER RETURNS (1930)]. Room's films (including STROGII IUNOSHA) were shown in a retrospective in Moscow in 1974: see "Sviaz' vremen", Pravda, 14 August 1974.

<sup>8</sup> The first publication of the script did not number the sections, but in the subsequent publications they are numbered 1-47. The translation in The Complete Plays is of the unnumbered version, which indicates some inadequately

textological research. Scholarly use of this translation is further hampered by the lack of explanatory notes for the reader who might require them, and by many errors (ex. Abram Room's name is given incorrectly as "Rohm", in the "Introduction", pp. 10-11. Translated citations from the Russian here are my own, but of course I have used the English text as a reference.

<sup>9</sup> In the 1930s, the proponent of the émotional'nyi stsenarii was Aleksandr Rzheshhevskii (1903-1967), who had written scripts for Pudovkin, Eisenstein and others. See his entry in SSKhK (1972). Five of Rzheshhevskii's scripts were produced as films; a sixth was revised by Isaak Babel' for Eisenstein's banned BEZHIN LUG [BEZHIN MEADOW (1935-37)]: see the discussion in J. Heil, DISS. (1984), pp. 120-135 & 166-171 notes 89-111 [a revised version of which will appear as "The Film-Work of Isaak Babel'" in a special issue of Russian Literature in early 1990]. In the untitled preface to his script "KARDINAL'NYE VOPROSY" (1935), Olesha mentions Rzheshhevskii and Natan Zarkhi (who wrote Pudovkin's MAT' [MOTHER (1926)] for example) as exceptions to the rule that most scenarists working at the time were "hacks" ["remeslenniki"].

<sup>10</sup> The so-called politique des auteurs was articulated especially in Cahiers du Cinéma in the late 1950s and 1960s. It was then made a recurrent reference in American film criticism as 'the auteur theory' by Andrew Sarris in Film Culture and elsewhere. But it is extremely common in Soviet film practice to use the term avtor to designate the director, who is also commonly one of a film's writers, and who traditionally (since long before the 1950s) has been understood as the person most responsible for a film's particular aesthetic rendering.

<sup>11</sup> A parallel circumstance pertained to the Babel'/Eisenstein collaboration on BEZHIN LUG in the same years (see note 9).

<sup>12</sup> Discussed in Russian Literature XXI-IV (1987), pp. 349-350, and in more detail in J. Heil, DISS. (1984), pp. 177-184 & 302-307 notes 20-48.

<sup>13</sup> See the entry for STROGII IUNOSHA in Bibliography A, item 10.

Information on the other Soviet films cited here can be found in Sovetskie khudozhestvennye fil'my. Annotirovannyi katalog. Volume 1 (1961 [silent films, 1918-1935]) and Volume 2 (1961 [sound films, 1930-1957]). The unreleased STROGII IUNOSHA does not have an entry in SKhF, nor do films too recent or too delayed in their release (such as Andrei Tarkovskii's ANDREI RUBLEV [1965, released 1971]) to have been included in the last-published volume 5 of the catalogue (1969 [films of 1964-65]).

<sup>14</sup> Maksim Shtraukh is famous for his portrayals of Lenin, but his career began in 1921 in the Proletkul't, where he was known as an 'eccentric' actor (i.e., he portrayed 'grotesque types'), and his work with Eisenstein included a small role in the entr'acte film, DNEVNIK GLUMOVA [GLUMOV'S DIARY (1923)]; he was Eisenstein's assistant on BRONENOSETS "POTEMKIN" [THE BATTLESHIP "POTEMKIN" (1925)], OKTIABR' (1927) and STAROE I NOVOE [THE OLD AND THE NEW (1929)]. For details on Shtraukh and other participants in the Soviet cinema, see Kino. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' (1986) [henceforth: KES (1986)].

<sup>15</sup> Ol'ga Andreevna Zhizneva was Abram Room's wife. She might be familiar from her role as Noris in a film known in the West, PROTSSESS O TREKH MILLIONAKH [THE CASE OF THE 3 MILLION (1926, dir. Iakov Protazanov)]. Both Shtraukh and Zhizneva had acted in Room's PRIVIDENIE KOTOROE NE VOZVRASHCHAETSIA.

<sup>16</sup> ZORI PARIZHA is also known as THE PARIS COMMUNE and as PEOPLE OF THE ELEVENTH LEGION. It was directed by Grigorii Roshal' and was a predictable film version of the destruction of the Paris Commune (anti-bourgeoisie/pro-communards). Dorliak played a communard named Eugène Gorrot, a shoemaker from Lyons who had come to Paris "to become the commune's artist" but who takes up the fight instead: see G. Roshal', "ZORI PARIZHA" [article], in Kino, no.22 (734), 1 May 1936, p. 3. Roshal' included Dorliak in his cast, and said that his film was then "in the heat of production" (Elagin [see note 18] is thus incorrect in saying that Dorliak got the part in STROGII IUNOSHA "after his success" in ZORI PARIZHA). There is a still of Maksimova in her rôle as 'Katrin', in Iskusstvo kino, 1936 no. 7, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Boris Zakharovich Shumiatskii (1886-1938) has been 'rehabilitated', but only partially--there is no entry for him in the Soviet cinema dictionary, KES (1986), though a monograph has been published there: B. Bagaev, Boris Shumiatskii (1974). See Richard Taylor, "Boris Shumyatsky and the Soviet Cinema in the 1930s: Ideology as Mass Entertainment", Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, 6, no.1 (1986), pp. 43-64, and the many pages on Shumiatskii, including translations of his published statements, in Richard Taylor and Ian Christie, The Film Factory (1988).

Shumiatskii was a CPSU administrator with no film experience who was appointed chairman of Soiuzkino in 1930 (for the 'purge' [chistka] of its apparatus), and who became head of the Main Motion Picture Administration [GUK] in 1933. He had a grand plan to establish a large studio complex at Odessa--"kinogorod", a "Hollywood on the Black Sea"--obviously envisaging himself as a 'movie mogul' (he had led a Soviet film delegation that had spent two months in Hollywood in summer 1935), but he knew the acute administrative and financial needs of the Soviet industry: see Viktor Shklovskii, "Posle kinosoveshchaniia", Literaturnyi kritik, 1936 no.2, pp. 202-209, and Taylor, op. cit., pp. 58-60. There was wide publicity for the "kinogorod" project in the contemporary press, but it came to naught.

For seven years, Shumiatskii was a powerful figure in administrative agencies and he was certainly the person most responsible for forbidding the release of STROGII IUNOSHA in June 1936; he used his powers to halt the filming of BEZHIN LUG on 17 March 1937 (Pravda, 19 March 1937, p. 3; transl. in The Film Factory, pp. 373-381). By January 1938, his own position was undermined: he was severely criticized in Literaturnaia gazeta (5 Jan. 1938), arrested on 8 January, denounced the next day in Pravda (9 Jan. 1938), called the "ex-manager" of GUK, a "Trotskyite" and a "wrecker" of the film industry in Sovetskoe iskusstvo (16 Jan. 1938, cited in The New York Times, 17 Jan.); in an editorial in the journal he had in effect headed, "Zadachi zhurnala", Iskusstvo kino ['organ GUKa'], 1938 no. 1 (Jan.), p. 12, the purge of his "gang" [prisnye] was made clear, and he was denounced for "openly and impudently" propagandizing "bourgeois theories"; the editorial in the next month's issue, 1938 no. 2, "Fashistskaia gadina unichtozhena", pp. 5-6 (in Film Factory, pp. 387-389) brought the purge rhetoric to its nadir. A detailed attack came in Izvestiia (26 March 1938, "Dela chesti rabotnikov kino", where he was not named). He was shot on 29 July 1938 (re. Taylor, p. 60).

Shumiatskii faced very real difficulties as an administrator, but he was a political enforcer and, despite the seeming reasonableness of some of his pronouncements, a megalomaniacal and dangerous ideological critic who had

the same reward for his services as Ezhov and Iagoda had. It is hard to see this man as a victim in the same category as Isaak Babel', Boris Pil'niak, Osip Mandel'shtam, Vladimir Nil'sen (a talented cinematographer, author of Izobrazitel'noe postroenie fil'ma [1936]), Vsevolod Meierkol'd, and many others. By a decree dated 23 March 1938, the entire Soviet film administration was re-organized. See also Babitsky and Rimberg, The Soviet Film Industry (1955), pp. 40-44 & passim, and Appendices I/L and II/A.

<sup>18</sup> Elagin is the source of all of the biographical information on Dmitrii Dorliak here. See his chapter IX [untitled], in Ukroshchenie iskusstv (1952), in English as Juri Jelagin, Taming of the Arts (1951), pp. 132-148. Citations here are from the English edition. I have been unable to confirm most of Elagin's information. Nor do I have access to issues of Kino after mid-July 1936, thus I have not located the article Elagin cites (p. 143) as the official moral condemnation of Dorliak (though its title was "Poshliak iz Teatra im. Vakhtangova" and it must have appeared in mid- to late-1937, i.e. after the release of ZORI PARIZHA in March 1937). There is no entry for Dorliak in KES (1986). Details on Kseniia and Nina Dorliak are from Muzikal'naia èntsiklopediia (1974); Dmitrii is not mentioned there as a son and brother (nor is the husband and father, Lev Dorliak), nor does he have an entry in Teatral'naia èntsiklopediia (1961-67). Dmitrii L'vovich Dorliak seems to have been purged from the Soviet record until Grashchenkova (op. cit. [in note 7], p. 147) gave her own, sympathetic, description of him in 1977: "...On byl krasiv nemnogo kholodnoi, skul'pturnoi krasatoi, sogrevaemoi obaianiem iunosti". An oddly similar remark is entered in the memoirs of the pianist Mariia Iudina (1977), p. 212: The widowed Kseniia had raised Nina and Dmitrii, "krasoty neopisannoi, kumira vsei sem'i (... takzhe bezvremennogo pogibshego)".

<sup>19</sup> In the following citations from the script, I have eliminated page references and will refer only to the numbered sections, enclosed in brackets.

<sup>20</sup> GTO = gotov k trudu i oborone ['Prepared for Labor and for Defense'], the slogan of the physical fitness program initiated in 1931 by Komsomol, the Communist Youth League. A Soviet film audience in the 1930s would have realized that the GTO was ideologically motivated to prepare the citizenry for the exigencies of war, as well as to promote increased industrial output.

For an account of the Komsomol training in the 1930s, see Bargnoorn and Remington, Chapter IV, "Political Socialization", Politics in the USSR (3rd edition 1986), pp. 130-164 & passim. Several points are raised in highly informed and critical fashion in Mikhail Heller, Cogs in the Wheel. The Formation of Soviet Man ([1985] 1988). Heller's book elucidates many of the socio-political issues in the background of STROGII IUNOSHA; it also might lend support to the view that this film is much more overtly in ideological opposition than I choose to argue here. See also notes 23 & 31.

<sup>21</sup> The adverb would more logically be vnizu, indicating Diskobol's position below, ascending the staircase, rather than Grisha's seeing him from a position below him (this would accord with Olesha's strategies of placing the seeing person above the seen). This and two following lines are missing from the English translation (p. 198 at lines 18-20 as they are).

<sup>22</sup> "Unscripted" means, of course, that the shots/scenes are not included in the published scripts, but they would be included in the completed film's montazhnye listy. Nearly all of the several unscripted shots/shot-series in this film are aesthetically/thematically/ideologically radical 'attention grabbers', as the discussion will demonstrate.

<sup>23</sup> "On sostavil tretii kompleks 'GTO'": in the ensuing conversation, this 'third complex' (or 'set', 'category'), is defined as "moral'nyi" and as "kompleks dushevnykh kachestv". It is not at all the "third physical training group" of the English translation, which is an egregiously misleading mis-reading of the Russian text.

<sup>24</sup> I acknowledge the methodological appeal to me of the article by Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning. Research Notes on some Eisenstein stills" ([1970] 1977). See also Réda Besmaïa, The Barthes Effect (1987), pp. 41-46 & passim. But I make no attempt here to adhere rigidly to any single analytic methodology or to any particular theory.

<sup>25</sup> Valentina Serova (1917-1975) used her real names, following the custom



in Soviet cinema. Her entry in KES omits a mention of her role (and first film part, using her unmarried name) in STROGII IUNOSHA, which is also left unmentioned in KES (Serova's "début" in films is asserted to have been as Katia Ivanova in DEVUSHKA S KHARAKTEROM [1939. dir. Konstantin Iudin]).

<sup>26</sup> The centrality of Diskobol in the original plans is indicated by the title of an excerpt: "Diskobol. Epizod iz p'esy dlia kinematografa", Literaturnaia gazeta, 28 June 1934. This first publication of sections 21, 22 & 23 of "STROGII IUNOSHA" is illustrated with a caricature that depicts not Grisha, but Diskobol (clad in brief shorts, discus in hand) exchanging looks with Masha: included as Fig. 1 here. Grashchenkova, who must have had access to the archival materials, says (p. 145) that the 'working titles' [v zamyslakh i nabroskakh] for the script had been "DISKOBOL" and "VOLSHEBNIY KONSOMOLET" ["THE ENCHANTING KONSOMOLET"].

In 'remembering' the film, one can thus be forgiven for confusing Grisha and Diskobol, as they might become imprinted on the memory as a single entity. Iurii Elagin did this in mentioning "the 'stern youth', the handsome, socialistic discus thrower": op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>27</sup> Olesha was identified by contemporary critics with Nikolai Kavalero in Zavist' [Envy (1927)], and the autobiographical and 'confessional' nature of his stories of the 1920s seems obvious: see Beaujour, op. cit., pp. 7-8, 114, 116 & 118 (where she speaks of Olesha's "solipsism"). Beaujour discusses "STROGII IUNOSHA" (on pp. 122 & 127-130), but surely she had not seen the film. Grashchenkova (pp. 142-143) briefly mentions Olesha's ispovedal'nost' and avtobiografichnost' in the context of this script and film.

<sup>28</sup> Grashchenkova, p. 158. Her first line there was taken from a contemporary review of the script: "...tsinik, sadist i parazit...", in V[ladimir] Pertsov, "Zagovor vysokikh umov", Literaturnaia gazeta, 28 September 1934.

<sup>29</sup> As determined by Elizabeth Beaujour, op. cit., pp. 18 & n 4, 75. In Olesha's story "Liubov'" ["Love" (1928)], Shuvalov's mistress, Lelia, dribbles apricot juice, a sign that she is sexually "available as a woman": Izbrannoe (1974),

p. 198; Beaujour, p. 75 [my emphasis, JTH]. The similarities of apricots and peaches are obvious, as is the implication in the script. But I should stress that if 'sexual availability' is indeed the point here, then it is specifically oral and phallic. There is not even a hint of a trace of a clitoral/vaginal function nor of the anal surrogate. This being so, the critic turns from the sexual preoccupations of psychoanalysis to look at the more easily accepted but 'male preferenced' philosophies--of Plato and Kant, perhaps: see Robin May Schott, Cognition and Eros (1988). The 'oozing peach', at least, cannot be merely a naturalistic detail here. Oleshan fruit pits or stones are symbols of fecundity and provoke the imagination, as in "Vishnevaia kostochka" ["The Cherry Stone" (1929)]. Olesha must have sensed that such 'fleshy', 'cleaved' and 'pitted' fruits are phallogenic symbols, wherein representatively-shaped or -signifying male and female 'genitalia' are in conjunction: the stone is the 'labially enclosed phallus'. There are analogues in objects used in religious phallicism, and in some Graeco-Roman idols and domestic objects (note also the sexual symbolism of fruit and wine in pre-Christian Europe). See notes 40a-b, 41, 42, 51, 52 & 73 below.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. The first 'sight' the reader has of Kavalеров with Ivan Babichev, his double, as they are reflected in a street mirror, in Zavist', 1/XV & 2/IV: Izbrannoe (1974), pp. 47-49 & 63. And see the relevant discussion in Nils Åke Nilsson, "Through the Wrong End of the Binoculars. An Introduction to Jurij Oleša" ([1965] 1973). But, as used specifically in STROGII IUNOSHA, the mirrors do not distort, nor do the binoculars [16 & 19], which are a device by which vision is clarified at a distance and from a position above the subject; it is a quasi-semantic ocular device whereby the object that is 'miniaturized' to the natural eye is foregrounded and brought into focus--the vision is not distorted nor is it an illusion. In this film, direct or refracted light, reflected images and views through glass prisms are consistently used with an emphatic light source (even if diffused) and they suggest 'purity' and 'clarity', as white as an attribute is a sign of moral and ethical purity. Equivalents to the optical illusions of Olesha's prose are found more in the photographs of Aleksandr Rodchenko and the films of Dziga Vertov (radical angles, collage imagery, rapid montage), but that kind of fractured photographic

imagery of the 1920s does **not** construct STROGII IUNOSHA: by then, such radical imagery had been soundly routed out of the Soviet cinema in the anti-formalist campaigns. The radicalism of STROGII IUNOSHA is in another play with perception, of "a realism unafraid of symbolic planes and fantastic implications" (Nilsson).

<sup>31</sup> uravnilovka was originally a term used in the theory of labour relations —'wage-levelling' or 'wage-equalisation'—but it was denounced by Stalin in 1931 (Grisha/Olesha is aware of this) on the grounds that it would stifle incentive, cause disruption, etc. In 1934, Stalin spoke out against uravnilovka as "egalitarianism" and as an "incorrect understanding of 'equality'", in a published speech, cited in Mikhail Heller, op. cit., p. xv [Heller's citation comes from Stalin's Collected Works, vol. 13, p. 354].

The script skirts the political issues here, opting for the sociological, by implying that it is a concept of cultural and social equality/inequality, or superiority/inferiority, as insinuated by the elitist Tsitronov, whose ideology is revealed as retrograde and political education deficient.

<sup>32</sup> Section 31 is left unnumbered in the text in Izbrannoe (1974). The '31' should come after the line, Tsitronov ukhodit v dver', on p. 319. (Sections 30 and 32 are clearly marked.)

<sup>33</sup> Olesha's possible motives for entering "La Traviata" (first performed in 1853) as the artistic text representative of the 'old culture' might make a long discussion. Verdi himself called it a "subject for our own age", and the story of Alfredo and Violetta was a contemporary one: a beautiful courtesan falls in love with a young man of limited means; she dies a tragic early death (if a speculative analogy does apply, this bodes ill for Nasha Stepanova). Verdi was forced to put back the time period to "circa 1700", instead of the 1850s, because critics found their contemporaneity to be unacceptable in aestheticized form: opera-goers were accustomed only to historical themes, while the 'distasteful' aspects had to be attributed to 'the past'. One critic writes that 'Traviata' "combines unorthodoxy with a strong vein of morality", which certainly applies to STROGII IUNOSHA: see Julian Budden, The Operas of Verdi, volume 2 (1979), pp. 113–166. The Marxist critique would treat "La

Traviata" as typical of bourgeois art, but this surface meaning is subverted by its true subtextual significance here: moral concepts 'shocking' to standard tastes, combined with innovative thematics and formalized stylistics. In the context of the harsh criticism of his previous works, it could be that Olesha was anticipating his critics and concealing a rebuke to them in an Aesopian subtext of this script/film.

<sup>34</sup> Such as Elena Goncharova in "Spisok blagodeianiia" ["A List of Assets/Blessings" (1931)], or the narrators in "Chelovecheskii material" ["Human Material" (1929)], "Ia smotriu v proshloe" ["I Look to the Past" (1929)] and "Tsep'" ["The Chain" (1929)].

<sup>35</sup> khlopaet v ladoshi: 'claps his hands' (as he does also in section 47), not 'clasps his hands', as in the translation (p. 211).

<sup>36</sup> Grashchenkova (p. 168) confirms my observation of the pianist's gender.

I think that the image of the pianist is a subjective perception of Grisha's (see the following discussion), rather than a 'warning', but in any case it is not the unique instance of trans-gender dress in Soviet cinema. The script by Isaak Babel' for BLUZHDAIUSHCHIE ZVEZDY [WANDERING STARS (1926, dir. Grigori Gricher-Cherikover)] has a sequence where Otsmakh (an actor in a travelling Yiddish theatre) helps the young hero Levushka (a violinist) to escape the shtetl. Levushka's romantic interest, Rachel [Rakhil'], stands alone at the river as Levushka gets into a wagon driven by Otsmakh, who is dressed baba-like in multiple skirts, which conceal his trousers. He then reaches under the skirts to his trousers, "unfastens them more than circumstances require", and deposits the money Levushka has given him. Implied here is that Levushka's musicianship is not his only talent to be exploited (he continues to fail to stave off evil influences until finally, he and Rachel leave the corrupt West to return to a now-revolutionary Russia).

<sup>37</sup> motylek is a common Russian word for 'moth' and for 'butterfly', whereas nochnaia babochka ['night butterfly'] is specifically the one attracted to

night-time lights. The observation, motylek = Psyche, comes from Grashchenkova (p. 147), but an earlier reviewer had first noted it: R. Miller-Budnitskaia, "Novyi gumanizm", Literaturnyi sovremennik, 1934 no.12, p. 108.

38a This fourth repetition of "Chto?" is missing from the English translation (p. 212 bottom), but it is also missing from the Novyi mir text (p. 79), which may mean that it was added to the text in Izbrannoe (1974) as an editorial correction or to accord with the filmed version.

38b On kladet ei golovu na grud': this clearly means that he puts **his** head onto **her** bosom/chest (thereby hearing her heartbeat, as in the film), not "He puts her head on his chest", illogically, as in the translation (p. 213).

39 This fantasy can be either homosexual or heterosexual (the female as the sex object). It is commonly realized in pornographic films, which need not be 'cited' here. The Olesha/Room concept (consciously inserted or not) is over-extended and vulgarized by its identification, by being described. Even Freud, apparently, failed to describe ejaculatory fantasies of this sort (as opposed to masturbatory fantasies): see The Standard Edition, Vol. XXIV, Indexes (1974). A human male's 'spraying' of semen is akin to the common male animal practice of establishing territory by spraying scent, but the analogy between a conscious human act and the instinctual animal habit is tenuous, the connection having been effectively lost in primordial times.

40a ithyphallic = of an exaggeratedly/disproportionately enlarged phallus.

40b phallogenic = morphologically analogous both to male and to female genitalia and/or dually symbolic of male and female principles (both phallus and vulva as 'procreators', etc.): see note 29. Cf. the Greek phallos and kteis, the Hindu lingam and yonis, the Chinese ying and yang, the Japanese yoseki and inseki, etc. [discussed by Edmund Buckley, Phallicism in Japan (Chicago, 1895), and cited in Michael Czaja, Gods of Myth and Stone. Phallicism in Japanese Folk Religion (New York, 1974), pp. 161 ff.]. Nevertheless, in Graeco-Roman Classicism, which is the main background construct for this film's symbolism, the minimal interest in female genitalia (their pictorial minimalization)

contrasts with the 'obsession' with the penis, as in vase and mural painting, in statues such as the hermae, and in the often grotesquely humorous household objects used to ward off 'evil spirits' and to assure prosperity. Particularly among the Greeks, there was little or no cultural taboo against depicting the male in nude poses, nor were there any strictures against the nude representation of gods; in contrast, females were generally draped, and, among the goddesses, only Aphrodite was permitted nude representations. Also note the subsequent general dominance of the phallos principle, and the subordination of kteis, in Western culture (such as discussed in R. Schott, Cognition and Eros, though the author does not use kteis as a term). One might also consider the Greek sexual/philosophical concepts of erastes ['suitor/mentor'] and paidika/eromenos ['the beloved'], etc., as discussed with no shirking of issues or feigned *délicatesse* by K. J. Dover, Greek Homosexuality (1978), and Gregory Woods, Articulate Flesh. Male homo-eroticism and modern poetry (1987). See also notes 42, 51, 52 & 73.

The 'problematic' raised here by my conclusions is addressed, in part, by Otto Rank in Art and Artist (1932), pp. 52-58, and by Jacques Lacan in The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis ([1973] 1978), passim, but especially in "Of the Gaze as Objet Petit a", pp. 67 ff., and in "The Transference and the Drive", pp. 123 ff.

One critic has advised, quite correctly, that Olesha's symbols "were carefully collected devices to convey extremely conscious thought referring to very specific situations". But he inserts an altogether too prudish admonition by his references to "some quarters in the West" who had "misunderstood and mishandled" Olesha, who had "pounced" on these symbols to explain Olesha "in terms of phallic symbols, castration fears, and death wishes": Andrew R. McAndrew, in his "Introduction" to Envy and Other Works ([1960, 1967] 1981), pp. xiv-xv. This translator of Olesha seems to wish to ignore the sexuality/sensuality and incredible richness of Olesha's imagery, thereby diminishing his art.

Still, there might be an alternative for the term 'phallogenic' as utilized here. A recently coined neologism is 'gylanic'/n. 'gylany' (derived from Gr. gyne + l[yein] + andros), in Riane Eisler, The Chalice and the Blade (1987), pp. 105-106 & passim. The term is offered in a discussion intended to rectify

the historical subordination of women (the term itself posits gyne first and lops off andros's ending and part of its stem).

<sup>41</sup> In Zavist', the characterization of the hermaphroditic Andrei Babichev is net-worked with images of sausages and suggestions of faeces, and the handsome Volodia Makarov, Olesha's earlier version of novyi chelovek, is Andrei's protégé, to whom he is erotically attached (through fruit imagery again, and an ankle fetish). The 'lizard theme' was Olesha's metaphor for the negative aspects that kept 'poking through' into his 'sunny' visions. In "Liubov'" (1928), Shuvalov, in a drowsy moment, is introduced to the 'second existence of things', one of which is a lizard. The lizard may be a chameleon, whose colour-changes give it differing aspects, enabling it to seem 'different'. It can also be a projected penile image, one of the second and third Is "who keep creeping out of the past" and whom the hero wants "to smother" (as in "Chelovecheskii material" [1929]), and so on. See William Harkins, "The Theme of Sterility in Olesha's Envy" (1966), passim, and Elizabeth Beaujour, op. cit., pp. 75, 102, 108 & passim. Beaujour asserts (pp. 84-85) the non-Surrealist essence of the Oleshan dream, that Olesha had little faith in dreams, and that he presents dreams not as integral to life, but as "alternative[s] to life" (or: "alternatives to normative existence", as I would say applies more in the case of STROGII IUNOSHA).

<sup>42</sup> 'The people' also made ritualistic pagan objects with obvious, isomorphically phallogenic attributes. The pre-Christian 'pillar-headed goddess' was a double-sided phallic shape with a female figure inscribed on one side and a male figure inscribed on the other (variants are multi-sided), and phallic-shaped idols are illustrated in any number of source-books: see Marija Gimbutas, The Slavs (1971), pp. 155 [the Zbruch idol] & 169 [the cut birch], and her The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe (new edition 1981), which is profusely illustrated with figures bearing male and female signs, including the ithyphallus and the schematized 'comb' [Gr. kteis, whence the euphemism for a woman's 'private parts']; see also the comprehensive works by Boris R. Rybakov, Iazychestvo drevnikh slavian (1981) and Iazychestvo drevnei Rusi (1987). In recent times, one has the example of the gigantic monument to the

Ukraine called Bat'kivshchina mati (phallogenic even in its name), which enshrines the bodies of the martyrs of the Battle of Stalingrad (now called Volgograd: the precise location is on Mamaev Hill).

More applicable (almost incredibly so) is an article by Alan Dundes, "Wet and Dry: The Evil Eye. An Essay in Indo-European and Semitic Worldview", in his Interpreting Folklore (1980), pp. 93-133 & 265-276 [the bibliography]. Dundes' information provides the bases for several possible interpretations: of Tsitronov as the possessor of the 'evil eye' (he is 'dry and desiccated', food and drink are offered him to ward off his 'envy', etc.); of the abundant light imagery in STROGII IUNOSHA as possibly linked to the sun as a phallic symbol and its rays as semen (the 'seminal light'); of the eye and its glance [cf. the cinema's central structure and complex of devices—the 'seeing' and the 'seen'] as symbolizing the male organ and its function (phallus oculatus, the 'third eye', which connects it with the magic number 3); of the multiple sexual aspects of liquid imagery, etc. Also germane to this interpretive discourse are some of the writings of Mircea Eliade, particularly The Two and the One ([1962] 1965), which also goes a long way in providing the whole of Olesha's system of imagery and symbolization with a background construct in Indo-European folklore, mythology and religious symbolism: as one example see his discussion of the 'Cosmic Tree', pp. 196 ff. In much sharper focus for the discussion here are the many pages on sexual imagery in Indian culture, much less embarrassed by such topics than are American and Soviet/Russian societies, in Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts (1980): the verb duh = 'to milk', (metaphorically) 'to discharge semen', 'to let rain fall' (p. 23).

Of course, neither Olesha nor Room were academics (though Olesha was an amateur Classicist), and their use of possibly profound cultural allusions will fall quirkily and inexactly into the schemata of scholarly observed phenomena. I mention all of the above (and some of the following) not to prove that STROGII IUNOSHA is so over-determined as a text, but rather to suggest that its creators had minds of impressive intuitive knowledge, repositories of the distillates of the broad cultural heritage. My thanks are due to Natalia Moyle (Slavic Department, University of Virginia) for suggesting this line of investigation to me and for pointing out that some of the symbols in STROGII



IUNOSHA are not enigmatic to folklorists.

<sup>43</sup> I have found mention of this symphonic work (undated) only in Grashchenkova, who chats about Popov and the film score on pp. 164-166. She also notes (on p. 151) the differing acting styles of the two generations, as I do in 'digression 2' above. Other factual details in these digressive remarks are from multiple sources (the evaluations are my own).

<sup>44</sup> There are several accounts, especially in English-language biographies of Sergei Eisenstein, of this congress, held 8-13 January 1935 and culminating in a public celebration at the Bolshoi Theatre of the fifteenth anniversary of Soviet film (since Lenin nationalized the film industry in August 1919). The First Moscow International Film Festival, held 28 February-1 March 1935, made widely-known the official, ideologically approved hierarchy of Soviet film-makers: Eisenstein, the most famous of directors, was given the fourth-ranking award of 'People's Artist', as were several other famous film-makers, while Shumiatskii received the highest award, the 'Order of Lenin', and Abram Room received no recognition. The public displays were obviously governed by non-public meetings and wide-ranging political decisions made beforehand. The final record was printed in the English-language book by Arossev, et al., Soviet Cinema (1935), which includes statements by Stalin and Shumiatskii, lists of awards given, surveys of the national cinemas, and so on. Also see Taylor and Christie, The Film Factory, pp. 345-347.

<sup>45</sup> Grashchenkova (p. 160) says that Iur'ev [Yuriev] was third choice to play Stepanov. Iurii Mikhailovich Iur'ev (1872-1948) was an old style classical tragedian who had made his reputation before the revolution at Petersburg's Aleksandrinskii Theatre (the Pushkin Theatre of Drama), where he remained for most of his career. He played the role of the dissolute nobleman Arbenin in three of Meierkhol'd's productions of Lermontov's verse-drama, "Masquerade", and other roles for Meierkhol'd. His memoirs are in two volumes (Zapiski [1948; 1963]). Iur'ev's theatricality is efficiently restrained in this performance on film.

Irina Volodko played the neighbor girl with the mirror, as well as Olga,

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and these were her final film parts. She had been seen before as Natal'ia Pushkina in POET I TSAR' [THE POET AND THE TSAR (1927, dir. Vladimir Gardin)].

<sup>46</sup> Neither Grashchenkova nor the contemporary critics identified the source of the quotation from Marx. But it is a citation from the "philosophical and economic drafts [rukopisi] of 1844", according to the notes to "Razgovor v parke" (1933), where it also appears, in Izbrannoe (1974), pp. 255 & 566.

<sup>47</sup> KES (1986), p. 141.

<sup>48</sup> The lack of a physical description for Nasha may be due to the fact that the role is supposed to have been written specifically for Zhizneva, while it is surely more likely that Room interceded on behalf of his wife for the part. The more classically beautiful face of Zinaida Raikh, who would seem to have been a better choice as Nasha, must have been the original inspiration and a lingering image in Olesha's mind, considering the evidence of their friendship, the role she had as Elena Goncharova in "Spisok blagodeianii" (which opened at the Meierkhol'd Theatre on 20 May 1931), and the original dedication of "STROGII IUNOSHA" to Raikh.

Zinaida Raikh (who had once been married to Sergei Esenin) was murdered "by thugs" soon after Meierkhol'd was arrested on 20 June 1939; he was shot on 2 February 1940: see the amazingly frank account in Konstantin Rudnitskii, "Krushenie teatra", Ogonek, no.22(3175), May 1988, pp. 10-16 (the article's main purpose is to detail the role played by Tat'iana Sergeevna Esenina, Raikh's daughter, and by Eisenstein in saving Meierkhol'd's archive).

<sup>49</sup> Vid Mashi, ee khod, dvizhenie skladok ee plat'ia--tak stranno, tak krasivo, tak neobychno ...[32] is replaced later by Ee khod, dvizhenie skladok ee plat'ia, ee ves' vid--tak udivitel'ny, strannyi i krasivy ...[47], i.e. the first variant is adverbial with an assumed verbal ellipsis, thus 'separate' (variantly read: the adverbs could be taken for short form neuter adjectives with the Vse èto elided), while the later variant is adjectival/attributive (plural short forms).

50 The quotations are from Grashchenkova, pp. 148-151. In my view, this critic tends to 'wax on' too much about the femininity of Zhizneva as Masha, while she avoids a truly candid discussion of many issues in her book (she also makes the hardly credible claim that Zhizneva wore no make-up [p. 149]). But hers is the only long discussion in Russian of the film since its banning.

Masha's distanced nudity might remind viewers of Hedy Lamarr's more erotic, nude dash to the water (in a ten-minute nude sequence) in the Czech film EXTASE [ECSTASY (1933, dir. Gustav Machaty)].

51 There are variants to some of the attributes compiled here: Venus, the Greeks' Aphrodite, had emerged from a cockle that had been impregnated by the severed genitals of Ouranos/Uranus, which had been tossed into the sea (severed by a son, Kronos)--engendered of an unattached phallus, 'not of woman born', emerged fully grown from the foam (or 'semen': aphros) surrounding her father's genitals (Homer has Zeus as her father). Aphrodite had arisen self-sufficiently, erect, phallically; we are reminded that Botticelli's painting is not really of her birth, but of her presentation to us--but the painter presented her as a symbolic 'stamen' midst the 'petals' of the grooves of the cockleshell [in STROGII IUNOSHA, Masha is never prone, is always upright]; she is 'penis-loving', philommeides (usually: 'smile-loving'), as well as 'spontaneously giving', automata. Aphrodite was the only Greek goddess whose nude likeness was condoned by society, as an aspect of her beauty, while she was skilled in ornament and dress; she was proud and defensive of her beauty; as the most potent of the gods and the most feminine of the 'queens of heaven', she incurred jealousy and was an enchantress with the power to lead one astray, off the 'chosen path'; she was associated with self-validating, indulgent sexual gratification, but not with lewdness, nor with enduring love and the integrity of marriage. Her offspring included Aeneas (the Trojan hero of the Aeneid), Hermaphroditos and Eros, as well as Deimos (Panic), Phobos (Fear) and Harmonia; Ares, god of war, who had cuckolded Hephaestos, was father of these last four; a great-grandson was Dionysos (though another version has her married to him, and Hesiod has Eros accompanying her from the sea); one of her younger consorts was the sexually ambivalent Hermes, and another was Adonis. As Aphrodite Ourania (her father did not die, but was dispatched to heaven as its personification,

as a figure of distance), she was portrayed as intercessor between earth, sea and sky (she intervenes as dea ex machina on behalf of Vasco da Gama in Luis de Camoens' Os Lusíadas [1572]); her most common epithet was 'golden', her allure was described as 'sun-like', and she had an affinity with the sun and daylight [sunlight connects her with a male principle: see note 42]. In one byform, she had the power to lull to sleep. She was recognized as patroness of courtesans, of heterosexual love, and of homosexual love (as was Eros, in Plato); Plato's Symposium mentions an Aphrodite Ourania, whose attributes are male, as sponsor of men's desire for the intellect, rather than of the body, of other men, e.g. of 'platonic', 'legitimate' homosexual love (in the speeches of Pausanias and Aristophanes), and the lover and seeker of wisdom and truth is identified only with 'manhood' and 'manliness' (Diotima). She was popularly associated with the fecund sea and with insularity (cf. her arrival on the Cyprus shore). A lesson of Aphrodite is that pleasure is transient and love is finite--the consequences of loving her could be harm, loss or death; her paradigm comprises death as well as love, and she can thus be seen as the 'teacher' of the pain of parting and of mourning (the enraged Artemis killed her beloved but mortal Adonis). Aphrodite also 'teaches' those she influences to awaken to feeling and to be beloved as well as loving. Aphrodite/Venus has multiple and contradictory functions and is thus interpreted as influencing both harmony/integration and disharmony/disruption, but she is primarily a **matrix, possibly a conciliator, of opposites**. Her reception has always been subject to taboos, and she has been popularly received since Renaissance times (Byzantine Greece eliminated her) merely as a sort of 'generic' goddess of beauty and love (Venus), but this is a diminution of her aspects, her "ideological suppression" [see below, Friedrich, pp. 70-71], and an inhibition of the imagination.

See Christine Downing, The Goddess (1984), pp. 133, 149, 186-216 passim, esp. 200-206, 232-233 & 236. I have directly cited, as well as paraphrased and supplemented, many of Downing's statements. For a more detailed, scholarly discussion, see Paul Friedrich, The Meaning of Aphrodite (1978), especially pp. 81-82, 132-149 ['liminality'] & 201-204 [aphros, philommeides]. Also note the Hermes paradigm vis-à-vis Diskobol: patron of thieves, nocturnal, liminal sex god associated with dream interpretation.

52 The sexual revolution that seemed to accompany the political revolution (Aleksandra Kollontai, et. al.) was neither intrinsic in, nor compatible with, the 'consolidated revolution' of the 1930s, when public morality was becoming increasingly puritanical. Since the early 1930s, public discussion of sexual matters had been proscribed, 'Freudianism' had become a dangerous political accusation, and nudity and sexual intimacy had ceased to be depicted in art (painting, films, fictional prose, theatre). In 1936 (the crucial year for STROGII IUNOSHA), the marital reforms revoked the freedom of abortion, made divorce more difficult, and initiated a press campaign lauding the wholesomeness of love and the integrity of the family unit while denouncing free love and sexual frivolity--agape, instead of eros, in the prescribed ideology. It is also true that the Party organizations were assuming a larger role in the ideological upbringing of Soviet youth, through the 'Pioneers' and Komsomol. But Soviet marriage law was not codified until the end of 1944, when only registered marriages could be considered legal and binding. A reverse liberalization trend began in 1953. See Vladimir Shlapentokh, Love, Marriage, and Friendship in the Soviet Union (1984, pp. 24-30, and the discussion in Heller, op. cit. [in note 20].

Masha is Dr Stepanov's wife in the film: both he and Tsitronov state that she is [23, 30], and she is so identified in the script's narrative [3].

53 Istoriia sovetskogo kino, vol.2 (1973), p. 381. Additional comments there are that this problem was treated "speculatively" ["umozritel'no"], that the film was "emphatically stylized" ["podcherknuto usloven"], that the film was not released, and that "accusations of formalism rained down upon its auteurs" ["v adres ego avtorov posypalis' obvineniia v formalizme"]. A still from the film is reproduced there (p. 381).

54 Izbrannoe (1974), pp. 256-258. For some applicable comments, see Beaujour, op. cit., pp. 51-52, and Ronald LeBlanc, "The Soccer Match in Envy", SEEJ vol. 32 no.1 (1988), pp. 55-71 passim & notes 5, 11 & 21.

55 This and the following line ("Stepanov tosses the bottle at Tsitronov.") are missing from the English translation. They should come on p. 230, after

line 5 from the bottom, cf. the Novyi mir text, p. 88, and Izbrannoe, p. 335.

<sup>56</sup> Room had apparently wanted Meierkhol'd to play the part of the pianist: Grashchenkova, p. 171. The chosen actor remains unidentified. In any case, there is an obvious homage to both Beethoven and Meierkhol'd in the man's mane-like hair and brisk movements. As such, the pianist's statements are probably intentionally ironic 'jabs' at the anti-formalists/anti-experimentalists, who were 'listening' to Meierkhol'd less and less: "Kak tol'ko siadesh' igrat', seichas nachinaiut slushat'" [45], and "Nikogo net? Mozhno igrat'!" [46].

Meierkhol'd had acted in a still-extant film, BELYI OREL [THE WHITE EAGLE (1928, dir. Iakov Protazanov)]. One film he directed, PORTRET DORIANA GREIA [THE PORTRAIT OF DORIAN GREY (1915)], is lost; the second one, SILNYI CHELOVEK [THE STRONG MAN (1916)], is extant. See A. Fevral'skii, Puti k sintezu. Meierkhol'd i kino (1978), and J. Heil, "Russian Writers and the Cinema in the Early 20th Century", in Russian Literature XIX-II (1986), pp. 147-149 & 163-165 notes 16-23.

<sup>57</sup> The 'three'/'thrice' motif is so obviously important in STROGII IUNOSHA that it may reflect something more than the 'magic number three' of folklore. Its structural, rhythmic significance here is surely unique in Soviet cinema (it cannot be reduced to a mere formulaic, unproductive, motif, which might turn up even in Russian films of fairy tales). But I am at a loss to find a source in Slavic criticism that is equivalent to the treatment of this motif in American folklore and customs by Alan Dundes, "The Number Three in American Culture", in his Interpreting Folklore (1980), pp. 134-159.

<sup>58</sup> The notion of 'spell-binder' was thus transferred from a komsomolets (see note 26) to Masha. This accords with what Grashchenkova (p. 168) calls one of the film's themes, "love as woman's power to enchant" ["tema liubvi kak koldovskoi vlasti zhenshchiny"]. Room had a reputation as one of the most attentive and effective directors of women in early Soviet cinema—only one example is the near-perfect portrayal by Liudmila Semenova of the vulnerable wife in the menage-à-trois in Room's TRET'IA MESHCHANSKAIA (1927).

59 The term 'gynocentric' has turned up recently in some feminist writing; it asserts the legitimate concern of the woman for her potential from her specific viewpoint (it is not synonymous with 'gynecological').

I am uneasy with the speculation that this scene constitutes an image of vagina dentata (brought in here because it is mentioned in a source cited in note 42: Alan Dundes, p. 124). As v. receptacula: both the male and female (Grisha and Masha) make the passage, but it would follow that the image implies v. domina (the 'dangerous place': castration, loss of male potency, the 'consumed' or 'depleted' male), because only Masha emerges.

The lighting is so controlled in this street scene that it seems like it must have been a studio set (the angularity of cobblestones and structural protuberances is softened, smoothed over), but Grashchenkova indicates (pp. 169-171) that it was filmed on location in Odessa. She also says (p. 164) that some interiors of the Stepanovs' luxurious dacha were filmed at the former Ashkenazi mansion in Odessa (on French Boulevard, according to Olesha in "Stadion v Odesse", Izbrannoe (1974), p. 257).

60 Babitsky and Rimberg, The Soviet Film Industry, p. 154.

61 "Postanovlenie Tresta Ukrainfil'ma..." [op. cit.]; Babitsky and Rimberg, op. cit., pp. 154-155 & 318; Elagin, op. cit., p. 142. See also the two articles in Kino, 28 July 1936, that accompanied the edict of prohibition: "Pouchitel'naia istoriia" and "STROGII IUNOSHA i nestrogiie rukovoditeli".

62 Babitsky and Rimberg, p. 155. There is no actual 'proof' available that Olesha was arrested, but several reputable scholars have told me that he was, and that STROGII IUNOSHA was the final evidence of his 'ideological corruption'. Elagin said that Olesha "was put in a concentration camp": op. cit., p. 142.

63 "Rech' na I-om Vsesoiuznom s"ezde sovetskih pisatelei", Pravda, 24 August 1934 [my transl., JTH]; translated in full, with some variance from exactness, as "Speech to the First Congress of Soviet Writers" in Envy and Other Works, pp. 213-219.

64 "Komsomolke Chernovoi", Molodaia gvardiia, 1935 no.4, p. 160; cited in Grashchenkova, pp. 141-142.

65 The three children's films were DEVOCHKA V TSIRKE (1950), SKAZKA O MERTVOI TSAREVNE (1951) and the unmade OGON' [see Filmography].

Some sources (not RSP, SKhF or SSKhF) credit Olesha as co-writer with Aleksandr Macheret of LETCHIKI [THE FLYERS/AVIATORS (1935, dir. Iulii Raizman; excerpted as "Otkrylennye liudi" in Kino, 28 October 1933)]. I have not included this film in Olesha's filmography here. LETCHIKI was also about young people, a very well-reviewed and popular aviation film, centering on a young girl (who learns), her male romantic interest (who does things wrong, but who learns in the end), and, for a threesome, the flyers' school superior (who teaches).

66 "Vzaimnaia samoproverka", Literaturnaia gazeta, 15 February 1935.

67 [Anon.], "Bill'-Belotserkovskii, Vishnevskii, Val. Kataev, Kirshon, Olesha, Ivanovskii pod sudom", Rabochii i teatr, 1931 no.2, pp. 14-15; also cited in Grashchenkova, pp. 153-154. Also see note 48 here.

68 ""STROGII IUNOSHA" - Pervaia kinop'esa Iu. Oleshi", Sovetskoe iskusstvo, 5 July 1934, and Ia. Man, ""STROGII IUNOSHA" - Novoe proizvedenie Iu. Oleshi", Literaturnaia gazeta, 6 July 1934. Both of these sources are cited by Aleksandr Fevral'skii, Puti k sintezu (1978), p. 160.

69 N. Zhdanov, "O geroiakh", Literaturnyi sovremennik, 1935 no.9, pp. 158-162.

70 V. Pertsov, "Zagovor vysokikh umov", Literaturnaia gazeta, 28 September 1934.

71 D. Naznin, "Grisha Fokin otmezhevyvaetsia. Konferentsiia geroev "STROGOGO IUNOSHI""", Literaturnaia gazeta, 24 October 1934.

72 Elagin, op. cit., pp. 141-142; cited, with "Aryan" added to Elagin's "physical appearance", in Beaujour, op. cit., p. 129.



<sup>73</sup> This false equation, 'Nazi = homosexual', is noted by David Robinson, in "Tales of Human Nature" [a long review of Richard Plant's The Nazi War Against Homosexuals (Edinburgh, 1987)], in European Gay Review, vol. 3 [1988], p.91.

Any notions that STROGII IUNOSHA could be considered a 'committed gay film' can be easily refuted, despite some particular details (there may be any number of Jungian and Kantian principles lodged in its discourse which cannot be dealt with here). But for those who are unaware of the seriousness of homophobia in the Soviet 1930s, I would first refer to an article by Maksim Gor'kii (the proletarian writer who was soon to become the 'icon' and credited 'founder' of Socialist Realism). In his "Proletarskii gumanizm" (Pravda, 23 May 1934, p. 3), Gor'kii seems to agree with a then-current adage by repeating it: "Annihilate homosexuals, and fascism will disappear" ["Unichtozh'te gomoseksualistov, fashizm ischeznet"]. This is extremely pathetic, considering that the writer's son, M. A. Peshkov, was gay, if the wide-spread rumour is true, and either committed suicide or was liquidated by Stalin. (Peshkov's death was blamed on the Trotskyites, as was Gor'kii's: see "Fashistskaia gadina unichtozhena", Iskusstvo kino, 1938 no.2, translated in Taylor and Christie, The Film Factory, pp. 387-389.) For other sobering details of Gork'kii's part in cultural affairs in the 1930s, see Heller and Nekrich, Utopia in Power ([1982] 1986), pp. 274-275. Boris Nicolaevsky [Nikolaevskii], who also spoke of Gor'kii, wrote of a purge of homosexuals in late 1933--an 'infiltration' by German propagandists under cover of homosexual organizations (still nominally legal) had been detected--and these people were apparently among the first Soviets to be punished as 'fascists' or 'Nazis': Boris Nicolaevsky, "The Letter of an Old Bolshevik", Power and the Soviet Elite (1965), p. 31. My thanks to Daniel Rancour-Laferriere (Slavic Department, University of California at Davis) for bringing the articles by Gor'kii and Nicolaevsky to my attention and for sending me a pre-publication copy of his Chapter 12, "The Homosexual Element", in The Mind of Stalin. A Psychoanalytic Study (1988): see his discussion there, and his Table 1, pp. 105-106, which lists the important events in the sorry history of gays in Hitler's Germany and Stalin's USSR. The Soviets' anti-homosexual statutes of December 1933 are still on the books (and homosexuality is still a "sickness"), while punitive measures have radically varied in harshness and extent, and in ideological rationale, since that time to the present glasnost'.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. the "dream-work", i.e. the "film-viewing state"/the "dream-state" and perception theories of film, as extrapolated from Freud and applied in the critical theory of, among others, Thierry Kuntzel in "The Film-Work, 2", Camera Obscura/5 ([1975] 1980), pp. 7-69 [and see the "Editorial", pp. 3-5], and Raymond Bellour in L'Analyse du Film (1979). While its cultural and political contexts are radically different, in some specifics STROGII IUNOSHA presents itself as a 'precursor' to recent theoretical concerns—women, sexual oppression, dreams, and so on (often centering on the films of Ingmar Bergman).

<sup>75</sup> This summary of the charges made in "Postanovlenie Tresta Ukrainfil'ma..." is cited from Babitsky and Rimberg, op. cit., pp. 154-155, which in its turn was cited by Beaujour (p. 129) and in The Complete Plays (p. 10 [with credit only to Beaujour]). Later, a specific rebuke of the cinematography was lodged in a critique of the Ukrainian film journal, Radians'ke kino—"Ukrainskii kinozhurnal", signed anonymously by "Kinematografist", in Iskusstvo kino, 1936 no. 8 (August), pp. 62-65: Ekel'chik was accused (p. 63) of "coarse formalistic distortions" [or, 'quirks': vyvikhi], which had started with POSLEDNII KATAL' [THE LAST PORTER (completed?)] and KHRUSTAL'NYI ZAMOK (sic: DVORETS) [THE CRYSTAL FORTRESS (dir. Gricher-Cherikover/rel. Nov. 1934), and which had been especially evolved in STROGII IUNOSHA.

The production of IA LIUBLIU [I LOVE (dir. Leonid Lukov/rel May 1936)] by Ukrainfil'm apparently helped the studio through the controversy over STROGII IUNOSHA (see Iskusstvo kino, 1936 no. 6, p. 7).

It should be noted that Socialist Realism has been defended by Soviet commentators as a 'method', not as a 'style' (thus they refute the general Western perception of SR). But reasoned judgment will reveal it to have been a broad front of centralized, Party-initiated political and bureaucratic interference in both the theory and praxis of Soviet cinema. Despite some manoeuverings (adaptations) and some exceptional films, Socialist Realism resulted in a general style of Soviet films of 1935-1965 and beyond: simplistic notions of cinematographic 'realism' and of unambiguous Party ideology levelled most fiction films (i.e. feature films, khudozhestvennye) to the 'readily accessible' (easily understood), restricting the individual expressiveness of film auteurs, providing opportunities for hacks and grounds for run-of-the-mill conformism; SR effectively curtailed film production in the late 1930s, and was the policy that resulted in the lowest levels—in quantity and quality—of Soviet cinema in the decade 1946-1956.

## STROGII IUNOSHA: BIBLIOGRAPHY.

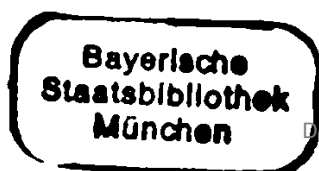
Iurii Karlovich Olesha

(b. 1899 in Elisavetgrad [Kirovograd]; d. 1960 in Moscow).

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(A) Olesha's Film-scripts/Filmography, Articles, Reviews and Interviews on the cinema (in chronological order by date of publishing or of a film's production; film-script titles are in all-caps enclosed within quotation marks, and film titles are in all-caps without quotation marks, no matter the original publishing format [though some reviews of films are cited with their titles also enclosed in quotation marks]; variant transliterations are as previously published; reviews by writers other than Olesha are as noted in brackets):

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- (1) "ZOLOTOE IABLOKO" [an unpublished short film-script written in 1921 for the Khar'kov 'provincial political educational committee' [gubpolitprosvet]; the film was not made].
- (2) "SVOEIU SOBSTVENNOI RUKOI" [a second unpublished script written in 1921 for the Khar'kov gubpolitprosvet; the film was not made].
- (3) "ZAVIST'" [an unpublished plan or treatment co-written in the late 1930s by Olesha and Evgenii Cherviakov, a literary adaptation of Olesha's Zavist' (1927); this unmade film was to have been directed by Cherviakov].
- (4) "Vnimatel'no otnosites' k pisatel'skomu trudu na kinofronte", Kino [newspaper], 16 June 1931.
- (5) "Nauchit'sia byt' stsenaaristom", Kino [newspaper], 4 July 1933.
- (6) "Diskobol. Epizod iz p'esy dlia kinematografa", Literaturnaia gazeta,



28 June 1934 [an excerpt from "STROGII IUNOSHA", sections 21, 22 & 23].

- (7) [interview (?)], Vechernaia Moskva, 3 July 1934.
- (8) [news report] ""STROGII IUNOSHA" - Pervaia kinop'esa Iu. Oleshi", Sovetskoe iskusstvo [Moscow], 5 July 1934 [this and item 9 below are press accounts of a discussion of the script at "Dom sovetskogo pisatel'ia" on 3 July 1934, with the comments of Room, Meierkhol'd, Shklovskii, Dm. Mirskii, et al.].
- (9) [news report by Ia. E. Man] ""STROGII IUNOSHA" - Novoe proizvedenie Iu. Oleshi", Literaturnaia gazeta [Moscow], 6 July 1934.
- (10) ""STROGII IUNOSHA" - p'esa dlia kinematografa", Novyi mir, 1934 no.8 [August], pp. 66-89. Reprinted in Izbrannoe (Moscow, 1935) with the episodes numbered [1-47], and again in Izbrannoe (Moscow, 1974), pp. 297-338, without the dedication, "posviashchaetsia Zinaide Raikh".

STROGII IUNOSHA [A STRICT YOUTH] was produced in 1936 by Ukrainfil'm (in Russian), directed by Abram Room, photographed by Iurii Ekel'chik, set design by Vladimir Kaplunovskii, music by Gavriil Popov.

Cast: Iurii Iur'ev (Dr Stepanov), Ol'ga Zhizneva (Masha, his wife), Maksim Shtraukh (Fedor Tsitronov), Dmitrii Dorliak (Grisha Fokin), G. Sochenko (Diskobol/"Discus Thrower"), Valentina Polovikova [later: Serova] ("The Girl", Liza, a komsomolka), Irina Volodko (Ol'ga, member of the Komsomol Central Committee [Tsk VLKSM]), A. Chistiakov (a worker, Ol'ga's father), N. Kononenko (a sailor, Ol'ga's husband), P. Repnin (Diskobol's uncle), plus the uncredited role of Grisha Fokin's mother.

STROGII IUNOSHA was banned in June 1936, thus unreleased and not included in the catalogue, SKhF. The film is extant and apparently complete at Gosfil'mofond in Moscow.

N.B. The following items 11-23 & 27-30 concern the above script and film (as do the previous items 6-9):

- (11) [by E. Tank], "Komsomol'skaia tema. Beseda s Iuriem Oleshei",  
Literaturnyi Leningrad, 12 August 1934.
- (12) [review of the script by Vladimir Pertsov], "Zagovor vysokikh umov",  
Literaturnaia gazeta, 28 September 1934.
- (13) [review of the script by Dmitrii Maznin], "Grisha Fokin otmezhevyvaetsia. Konferentsiia geroev "STROGOGO IUNOSHI"", Literaturnaia gazeta, 24 October 1934.
- (14) [review of the script by Mikhail Levidov], "Sluchai s Oleshei", section 6 of "Tema mastera. (O kino voobshche i v chastnosti)",  
Literaturnyi kritik, 1934 no.10, pp. 180-184.
- (15) [review of the script by M. Levidov], "V godu dve tysiachi tridtsat' chetvertom (2034),. Diskussionnyi fel'eton", Literaturnaia gazeta, 24 November 1934.
- (16) [review of the script by V. Goffenshefer], "Sorevnovanie s deistvitel'nost'iu", Literaturnyi kritik, 1934 no.11; reprinted in Goffenshefer's book, O sovetskoi literature (Moscow, 1936), pp. 25 & 34-39.
- (17) [review of the script by R. Miller-Budnitskaia], "Novyi gumanizm",  
Literaturnyi sovremennik, 1934 no.12, pp. 104-109.
- (18) "Vozvrashchenie molodosti" = Olesha's "Rech' na I-om s"ezde ..."  
[22 August 1934]: see in section B below.
- (19) [article signed "A."], "Vzaimnaia samoproverka", Literaturnaia gazeta, 15 February 1935 [on the discussion of "STROGII IUNOSHA" at "Klub Pervogo NGU", 11 February 1935].
- (20) [review of the script by A. Prozorov], "Diskussiia o sotsialisticheskoi

morali", Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1935 no.2, pp. 12-15.

- (21) "Byt' na urovne kinoiskusstva", Sovetskoe kino, 1935 no.3, p.16.
- (22) "Komsomolke Chernovoi", Molodaia gvardiia, 1935 no.4, p. 160 [Olesha's open letter to a critic of "STROGII IUNOSHA", a former komsomoika named Vera Chernova, whose letter had been published, as "Pis'mo 'staroi komsomolki' Iuriiu Karlovichu Oleshe", in Molodaia gvardiia, 1935 no.1].
- (23) [review of the script by N. Zhdanov], "O geroiakh", Literaturnyi sovremennik, 1935 no.9, pp. 158-162 [includes a review of Il'ia Erenburg's novel, Ne perevodia dykhaniiia (Moscow, 1935)].
- (24) [review of the script by I. Kulikov], "O chuvstvakh sotsialisticheskogo cheloveka", Volzhskaia nov', 1935 no.8-9, pp. 84-88 [compares Olesha's script with Erenburg's novel, Ne perevodia dykhaniiia].
- (25) "KARDINAL'NYE VOPROSY", Tridtsat' dnei, 1935 no.12, pp. 45-50 [with an untitled foreword by Olesha to his script].
- (26) "Zakaz na strashnoe" , Tridtsat' dnei, 1936 no.2, pp. 33-36 [negative views on American cinema as illustrated by THE INVISIBLE MAN, KING KONG & FRANKENSTEIN].
- (27) [announcement/press release on the banning of STROGII IUNOSHA], "Postanovlenie Tresta Ukrainfil'ma o zapreshchenii fil'ma STROGII IUNOSHA, 10 iiunia 1936 g.", Kino (Moscow) [newspaper], no. 37, 28 July 1936, p. 4.
- (28) [unattributed editorial/review of banned film], "Pouchitel'naia istoriia". Kino (Moscow) [newspaper], 28 July 1936.
- (29) [review of the banned film by M. Tkach], "STROGII IUNOSHA i nestrogiie rukovoditeli", Kino (Moscow) [newspaper], 28 July 1936.

- (30) "Mysly o Chapline", Vechernaia Moskva, 10 September 1936, reprinted in Izbrannye sochineniia (Moscow, 1956), pp. 436-439, and in Povesti i rasskazy (1965), pp. 437-440.
- (31) "Schastlivye deti", Trud, 30 December 1936.
- (32) "Noch'", Tridtsat' dnei, 1937 no.4, pp. 15-23 [excerpt from Olesha's script, "VAL'TER"].
- (33) "VAL'TER", Zvezda, 1937 no.4, pp. 14-45.

This script was co-written with Aleksandr Macheret and was eventually filmed by Mosfil'm Studios as BOLOTNYE SOLDATY [SWAMP SOLDIERS] in 1938, directed by Aleksandr Macheret, a feature-length (8 parts, 1958 meters) anti-Nazi propaganda film set in Germany in the 1930s. See SKhF 2, item #1456.

- (34) "Zamechatel'nyi fil'm", Literaturnaia gazeta, 26 December 1937 [Olesha's review of LENIN V OKTIABRE (1937, dir. Mikhail Romm)].
- (35) "OShibKA INZHENERA KOCHINA" [unpublished script co-written with Aleksandr Macheret].

OShibKA INZHENERA KOCHINA [ENGINEER KOCHIN'S MISTAKE] was made by Mosfil'm in 1939, a feature-length (12 parts, 3042 meters) counter-espionage film, directed by Macheret. Engineer Kochin's mistake is one of carelessness in allowing foreign agents to obtain some secret airplane designs (the action takes place in the mid-1930s). See SKhF 2, item #1555.

- (36) "KINO ZA 20 LET" [unpublished script co-written with A. Macheret, Vsevolod Pudovkin and Esther Shub].

KINO ZA 20 LET [TWENTY YEARS OF THE CINEMA] was produced by Mosfil'm, released in January 1940, as a feature-length (2451 meters) 'film essay'

[kinoocherk]; it is a compilation of excerpts of the acknowledged best films of the first 20 years of Soviet cinema. See SKhF 2, item #1606.

- (37) "MALEN'KII LEITENANT", a script co-written with V. Riskind, published in the miscellany, K pobede (Ashkhabad, 1942), pp. 56-71 [described as a kinonovella; film not made?; possibly the script or treatment for MAIAK, in BKS No.9].
- (38) BKS No.9, "MAIAK". Olesha wrote the dialogues for MAIAK [THE BEACON], directed by Mark Donskoi, the third of three short films, called novelly, in this issue of patriotic war films, made in 1942 by the Kiev Studios in evacuation at Ashkhabad (released 5 May 1942); in the series BOEVOI KINOSBORNIK, made by various studios, of which 12 were released; see SKhF 2, item #1723.
- (39) "SYN NARODA", Turkmenistanskaia iskra [newspaper], 29 January 1943 [Olesha's review of a film-script by B. Kerbabaev; no other information is available on the script or the probably unmade film, but Berdy Kerbabaev was, in the mid-1960s, First Secretary of the Union of Writers of the Turkmenian SSR].
- (40) "Slony i liudi", Sovetskoe iskusstvo, 21 September 1945 [Olesha's review of the British film MALEN'KII POGONSHCHIK SLONOV, i.e. ELEPHANT BOY (1937, co-dir. Robert Flaherty and Zoltan Korda)].
- (41) "ZDRAVSTVUI, MOSKVA!", Moskovskii komsomolets, 12 March 1946 [Olesha's review of the film, HELLO, MOSCOW! (1946, dir. Sergei Iutkevich)].
- (42) "DEVOCHKA V TSIRKE", Fil'my-skazki, issue V (Moscow, 1958), pp. 49-77.

DEVOCHKA V TSIRKE [THE GIRL IN THE CIRCUS] was an animated film made by Soiuzmul'tfil'm in 1950 in two parts (564 meters). It is a simple educational/edification film about a lazy schoolgirl who is purposefully embarrassed out of her illiteracy by a magician at a circus performance.



See SKhF 2, item #1971.

- (43) "SOPERNIKI", Literaturnaia gazeta, 10 June 1950 [Olesha's review of THE RIVALS, a popular-science educational film about horsebreeding, with a story centered on two race horses; dir. Ia. Zadorozhnyi; not in SKhF].
- (44) "SKAZKA O MERTVOI TSAREVNE I SEMI BOGATYRIAKH" [unpublished script], based on Pushkin's folk tale, co-written with I. Ivanov-Vano, for the animated film made in 1951. See SKhF 2, item #2000.
- (45) "NAKSIMKA", Literaturnaia gazeta, 19 February 1953 [Olesha's review of the film (1952, dir. Vladimir A. Braun)].
- (46) "PEKAR' IMPERATORA. Novyi cheshkii khudozhestvennyi fil'm", Literaturnaia gazeta, 16 May 1953 [Olesha's review of the two-part Czech film, THE EMPEROR'S BAKER and THE BAKER'S EMPEROR (1951, dir. Martin Fric)].
- (47) "POLET NA LUNU", Sovetskaia kul'tura, 2 February 1954 [Olesha's review of the Soviet animated film, A FLIGHT TO THE MOON (1953, dir. Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg)].
- (48) "Neosushchestvlennye zamysly. "OGON'" (stsenarii dlia mul'tfil'ma)", Iz istorii kino, VI (Moscow, 1965), pp. 65-87 [a script written by Olesha in the early 1950s; alternate title "MYSH' I VREMIA"].
- (49) MORE ZOVET [THE SEA BECKONS (1956, dir. Vladimir Braun)] [Olesha wrote the dialogues and the texts to the sailors' songs in this film about Black Sea fisherfolk, made in Kiev by a director known for his movies about the sea: see SKhF 2, item #2298].

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(B) **Other Books and Articles** (alphabetical listing by author; variant transliterations are as published; in the general works on Olesha and on the cinema, specific page numbers usually indicate the references to STROGII IUNOSHA):

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- (2) Arossev, A., et al. [with design and photomontage by Varvara Stepanova and Aleksandr Rodchenko], Soviet Cinema (VOKS: Moscow, 1935) [an English-language publicity poster for A STRICT YOUTH is on p. 318 (unnumbered)].
- (3) Appel, Sabine, Jurij Oleša: "Zavist'" und "Zagovor čuvstv". Ein Vergleich des Romans mit seiner dramatisierten Fassung (Munich, 1973) [see especially "Bibliographie", pp. 226-234].
- (4) Babitsky, Paul, and John Rimberg, The Soviet Film Industry (New York, 1955), pp. 154, 213 notes 16 & 17, 317-318, 325 n 69.
- (5) Bagaev, B., Boris Shumiatskii. Ocherk zhizni i tvorchestva (Krasnoiarsk, 1974).
- (6) Barghoorn, Frederick C., and Thomas F. Remington, Chapter IV, "Political Socialization", Politics in the USSR (3rd ed., Boston, 1986), pp. 130-164.
- (7) Barrett, Andrew, Yurii Olesha's Envy. Birmingham Slavonic Monograph No.12 (Birmingham, UK, 1981).
- (8) Barthes, Roland, "The Third Meaning. Research notes on some Eisenstein stills", in Image - Music - Text (New York, 1977), pp. 52-68 [originally as "Le troisième sens. Notes de recherche sur quelques

photogrammes de S. M. Eisenstein", Cahiers du cinéma, 222, 1970].

- (9) Beaujour, Elizabeth, The Invisible Land. A Study of the Artistic Imagination of Iurii Olesha (New York and London, 1970), pp. 9, 122, 127-130.
- (10) Belinkov, Arkadii, Sdacha i gibel' sovetskogo intelligenta. Iurii Olesha (Madrid, 1976) [especially the chapter entitled "Sobiraite metallolom!", pp. 411, 440, & passim].
- (11), Bellour, Raymond, L'analyse du film (Paris, 1979).
- (12) Bensmaïa, Réda, The Barthes Effect. The Essay as Reflective Text (Minneapolis, 1987).
- (13) Budden, Julian, "La Traviata", The Operas of Verdi, Volume 2 (New York, 1979), pp. 113-166.
- (14) Condee, Nancy, and Vladimir Padunov, "The Outposts of Official Art: Recharting Soviet Cultural History", Framework no.34 (London, 1987), pp. 59-106.
- (15) " " " " , "'New' Soviet Cinema: Once Again the Most Important Art", in the 1988 San Francisco International Film Festival magazine, S F Film, pp. 32-37.
- (16) Chudakova, M. O. [Marietta Omarova], Masterstvo Iurii Oleshi (Moscow, 1972).
- (17) Cornwell, Neil, "The Principle of Distortion in Olesha's Envy", Essays in Poetics 5, no.1 (1980), pp. 15-35.
- (18) Dover, K. J., Greek Homosexuality (Cambridge, Mass., 1978).

- (19) Downing, Christine, The Goddess. Mythological Images of the Feminine (New York, [1981] 1984).
- (20) Dundes, Alan, "Wet and Dry: The Evil Eye. An Essay in Indo-European and Semitic Worldview", and "The Number Three in American Culture", Interpreting Folklore (Bloomington and London, 1980), pp. 93-159.
- (21) Eisler, Riane, The Chalice and the Blade. Our History, Our Future (New York, 1987).
- (22) Elagin, Iurii, Chapter IX [untitled], Ukroshchenie iskusstv (New York, 1952), pp. 173-196; in English as Jury Jelagin, Taming of the Arts, translated by Nicholas Wreden (New York, 1951), pp. 132-146.
- (23) " ", Temnyi genii (New York, 1955) [a biography of Vsevolod Meierkhol'd].
- (24) Eliade, Mircea, The Two and the One (Chicago, 1965).
- (25) Fevral'skii, A. V. [Aleksandr Vil'iamovich], Puti k sintezu: Meierkhol'd i kino (Moscow, 1978), p. 160.
- (26) Fisher, William, "Gorbachev's Cinema", Sight and Sound, Autumn 1987, pp. 238-243.
- (27) Freud, Sigmund, Volume XXIV - Indexes and Bibliographies, compiled by Angela Richards, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, translated from the German (London, [1953-] 1974).
- (28) Friedrich, Paul, The Meaning of Aphrodite (Chicago, 1978).
- (29) Gimbutas, Marija, The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 6500-3500 BC. Myths and Cult Images (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982 new edition).

- (30) " " , The Slavs (London, 1971).
- (31) Gor'kii, Maksim, "Proletarskii gumanizm", Pravda, 23 May 1934, p. 3.
- (32) Grashchenkova, Irina, Abram Room (Moscow, 1977), in the series "Masterya sovetskogo teatra i kino". See especially chapter 4, "O 'spetsialistov uma i chuvstva'", pp. 134-196, and the film credits for STROGII IUNOSHA on pp. 260-261 [N.B. the incorrect date 1934, which should be 1936, for the film's completion date; see also her article on the first Room film retrospective, in Moscow: "Sviaz' vremen", Pravda, 14 August 1974].
- (33) Gurevich, A., "Iurii Olesha", Krasnaia nov', 1934 no.3.
- (34) Harkins, William, "The Theme of Sterility in Olesha's Envy", in Major Soviet Writers. Essays in Criticism. Edited by Edward J. Brown (Oxford and New York, 1973), pp. 280-294 [originally in Slavic Review, 1966 no.3, pp. 443-457].
- (35) Heil, Jerry T., DISS. (1984) = "The Russian Literary Avant-Garde and the Cinema (1920s and 1930s): The Film-Work of Isaak Babel' and Jurij Tynianov" (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1984).
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- (37) " " , "Russian Futurism and the Cinema: Majakovskij's Film Work of 1913", Russian Literature XIX-II (1986), pp. 175-192.
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- (53) Nilsson, Nils Åke, "Through the Wrong End of the Binoculars: An Introduction to Jurij Oleša", in Major Soviet Writers. Essays in Criticism. Edited by Edward J. Brown (Oxford and New York, 1973), pp. 254-279 [originally in Scandoslavica XI (1965), pp. 40-68].
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- (66) " " , Izbrannye sochineniia (Moscow, 1956).
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Appendix.**Abram Matveevich Róom (1894-1976): Biographical Outline and Filmography.**

16 (O.S.)/28 June 1894: born in Vilna (Wilno, now Vilnius; then nominally Russian, now in the Lithuanian SSR).

mid-late 1910s: after finishing the gymnasium at Vilna, Room studied in 1915-17 in Petrograd at the Psycho-Neurological Institute (which had no quotas on Jews), and he later entered Saratov University (which, according to some accounts, he left to to be a Red Army medic in the Civil War, returning to Saratov after demobilization).

1919-23: director at the so-called 'Children's Theatre' in Saratov, where he founded and taught at the theatre's Masterskie or 'experimental workshops'; his productions there, including Pushkin's "Mozart and Salieri" and plays by Molière and Cervantes, were in the 'eccentric' mode (some sources mention Room's working at the 'Pokazatel'nyi' ['Show'] Theatre, but this may be the same as the workshops).

1923: after seeing his productions at Saratov, Anatolii Lunacharskii invited Room to Moscow and introduced him to Meierkhol'd; in summer, Room became a director at the Theatre of the Revolution in Moscow (he was assistant director to Meierkhol'd on his production of Aleksandr Faiko's "Ozero Liul'" ["Lake Liul"], which opened on 8 November 1923). By year's end, he had switched to the cinema (Esfir Shub apparently encouraged him).

July 1924: started film work at Goskino's 'First Factory'; assistant director on STARETS VASILII GRIAZNOV [THE ELDER VASILII GRIAZNOV (dir. Cheslav Sabinskii, photog. Eduard Tisse; rel. March 1924; SKhF 1, #210<sup>1</sup>)]; wrote the script and directed CHTO GOVORIT "MOS", SEI OTGADAITE VOPROS [WHAT "MOS" SAYS, GUESS THE QUESTION], a short advertisement film for 'Mosreklam' (an "eccentric comedy": SKhF 1, #217), and directed GON'KA ZA SAMOGONKOI [THE VODKA CHASE], an agitka against home-brew and drunkenness (also an "eccentric comedy": SKhF 1, #163; both of these short films are now lost).

1926: made two feature films—**BUKHTA SMERTI** [DEATH BAY] and **PREDATEL'** [THE TRAITOR] both for Goskino's 'First Factory', both of which were adaptations of literary works (Aleksei Novikov-Priboi's story "V bukhte Otrada", and Lev Nikulin's story "Matrosskaia tishina", respectively). Viktor Shklovskii wrote the titles for **BUKHTA SMERTI**, and he was Nikulin's co-author on the script for **PREDATEL'**, on which Sergei Iutkevich was both a set designer and Room's assistant director. **BUKHTA SMERTI** is about the effects of the Civil War on two sailors, Ivan Razdol'nyi and his son, with the politically aloof father joining the Bolsheviks after witnessing the cruelties of the Whites, who have occupied the southern port (filmed on the Black Sea). **PREDATEL'** is set just before and just after the revolution, also in a port town, where a whore house is the center of criminal activity and political intrigue, but the revolutionary fervor aboard the 'Saratov' is ultimately triumphant, and the traitor is 'unmasked'. **PREDATEL'** was 'controversial': Room was criticized for following a Western model (it is an almost unique Soviet detective film) and for extreme naturalism (esp. in the whore house), and only about 100 meters remain (though SKhF claims that one part—of eight—is extant). SKhF 1, #325 and #390.

Also in 1926, Room co-wrote the script for **VETER** [THE WIND (dirs. Lev Sheffer and Cheslav Sabinskii, from the story by Boris Lavrenev; SKhF 1, #331)], and he collaborated with four other directors on **KRASNAIA PRESNIA** [RED PRESNIA (the title is the name of a district of Moscow, where the story events of 1905 take place; the film with four episodes is lost; SKhF 1, #360)].

1927: **TRET'IA MESHCHANSKAIA**, alternate title **LIUBOV' V TROEM** [BED AND SOFA]<sup>2</sup>, made at Sovkino (rel. 15 March 1927) from a script by Room and Viktor Shklovskii that had its 'germ' in a news account; Sergei Iutkevich was again a set designer and an assistant director. 'MESHCHANSKAIA' is superficially 'about the housing shortage' in NEP-era Moscow, but it is actually a treatment of sexual morality in post-revolutionary Russia, done with sophisticated simplicity, sensitivity and humor (and without coarseness) as an exemplary actors' ensemble film. Liudmila and Nikolai

are husband and wife whose life together in a one-room basement apartment is altered by the arrival of Nikolai's former army 'buddie' Vladimir, who cannot find a room in crowded Moscow. 'Volodia' is invited to use the sofa. 'Kolia' is called out of town on business; in his absence, 'Volodia' seduces 'Liuda'. An awkward but semi-comic situation ensues when the husband returns, but it transpires that Liuda has become pregnant. Both 'husbands' insist that she abort the fetus, but after witnessing the horror of the abortion clinic (depicted in a mild but effective grotesque fashion), Liuda decides to keep her baby, to leave both men, and to embark upon a new life: she leaves Moscow on a train, which is symbolic of change and of revolution (despite the fact that Volodia had arrived by train, a symbol there of false or partial change, but which nonetheless 'frames' the film). TRET'IA MESHCHANSKAIA was a popular film, but the ideological critics, with no prescience, and failing to perceive the many ironies, lambasted it for advocating the 'bourgeois' lifestyle. The relevance of this film's themes persists into the late 1980s, and it is the most famous evidence of Room's credo that the cinema is a medium for actors and that it is the responsibility of the director and cinematographer to record their performances (as a consequence, the takes are relatively long and there are only traces of rapid montage). Room was known as a very good director of actors, and he preferred actors with stage (theatre) training. In this film, the actors' real names were used for the characters' names: Vladímir Fógel', Nikolái Batálov and Liudmíla Semënova [stresses added here]. (BED AND SOFA is distributed on film and on video in the USA and Europe.) See: Stephen Hill, "BED AND SOFA (TRET'IA MESHCHANSKAIA)", Film Heritage, vol. 7 no. 1 (Fall 1971): 17-20, 36. SKhF 1, #523.

Also in 1927, Room directed **EVREI NA ZEMLE** [JEWS ON THE LAND], a short semi-documentary made by VUFKU about a Jewish agricultural settlement in the Crimea; the film was commissioned by OZET ['Society for Land Tenure for Jewish Laborers']; the scenario was by Viktor Shklovskii, with titles by Vladimir Maiakovskii (written in 1926, this titles list is printed in Maiakovskii's Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, t. 11 [1958], pp. 425-427). Not in SKhF, but still extant.

927-28: **UKHABY [RUTS]** made by Sovkino (in 1927, rel. Jan 1928), from a script by Room and Shklovskii, this told the story of a wife who is deserted by her worker-husband after the birth of their baby (also based on a news report); the working settings were filmed in two glass factories. UKHABY was very 'controversial' (ideologically criticized) and is lost. SKhF 1, #527.

In 1928, Room worked on 'PYSHKA' ['BOULE DE SUIF'], an adaptation of Maupassant's story that remained unrealized; this was to have been a German-Soviet co-production starring Anna Sten (Room spent three months in Berlin on the project). (Another PYSHKA was made by Mihail Romm as a silent film in 1935.)

929-30: **PRIVIDENIE, KOTOROE NE VOZVRASHCHAETSIA [THE GHOST THAT NEVER RETURNS, sometimes known as THE HUMAN ARSENAL]**, made at Sovkino (in 1929, rel. March 1930; given a sound track in 1933) from a script by Valentin Turkin based on a novella by Henri Barbusse. The film's plot moves toward a revolutionary venture in South American oil fields, and it was well received politically and artistically (though a complaint was that the revolutionary theme was not foregrounded enough). Room's wife, Ol'ga Zhizneva, played Clemence,<sup>3</sup> wife of the prisoner-cum-revolutionary, José Real, played by Boris Ferdinandov, and Maksim Shtraukh played a police agent. Turkin's script changed the story's plot, and Room basically rewrote the script: now, instead of getting drunk on his one-day prison leave, Jose Real takes part in a revolutionary strike and escapes both re-imprisonment and the agent's plan to kill him. SKhF 1, #775.

Also in 1929-30: co-scripted and directed the first two Soviet sound films<sup>4</sup>, both shorts--**PLAN VELIKIKH RABOT [A PLAN FOR GREAT WORKS]**, a "documentary sketch" on the first Five-Year Plan (6 parts/1800 meters), and **TIP-TOP - ZVUKOVOI IZOBRETATEL' [TIP-TOP, SOUND INVENTOR]**, a one-reel film that combined chronicle footage with an animated cartoon character (Tip-Top) who travels in Western Europe and America with a sound-recording device ('TIP-TOP' was made at Sovkino in 1929). These were items 2 and 3 in the



first 'issue' of the series ZVUKOVAIA SBORNAIA PROGRAMMA released by Soiuzkino in March 1930 (item 1 was a speech by Lunacharskii on the significance of the sound film, and item 4 was a recording of the "March" from Prokofiev's "The Love for Three Oranges"—with orchestra, jazz band, soloists, and actors and puppets from the Obraztsov Theatre). 'TIP-TOP' (and probably 'PLAN' as well) was a demonstration of the sound recording apparatus invented by A. F. Shorin. SKhF 2, #1173 (all four films are lost).

1930-31: MANOMETR-1 (1930 [rel. date ?]), and MANOMETR-2 (1931, rel. Jan. 1932), "film sketches" combining documentary footage and played film about worker discipline at the "Moscow Pressure-Gauge" factory. SKhF 1, #876 and #1000 (the films, both silent, are lost).

1934: ODNAZHDI LETOM [ONE SUMMER], a comedy made at Ukrainfilm from a script by Il'ia Il'f and Evgenii Petrov (with motifs from their novel, Zolotoi telenok [The Golden Calf]), starring Igor' Il'inskii (b. 1901) in a dual role. The plot centers on a car race to Moscow. There was a big scandal in 1934 concerning this film, supposedly because of financial misdeeds; it was completed and released in March 1936, with director's credit being given to Il'inskii (curiously, the only film he ever directed), and to Khanaan Moiseevich Shmain (a minor Ukrainian director in theater and films), with no mention of Abram Room, whose contribution to the film as released may have been minor. See: the anti-Room tirades in gazeta "Kino", 1934 nos. 15, 16 & 17; Denise Youngblood, Soviet Cinema in the Silent Era (1984): 202-203 & 289 note 87; Il'inskii's account (with no mention of Abram Room) in his autobiography, Sam o sebe (3rd ed., 1984): 363-365. SKhF 2, #1355.

mid/late 1920s: Room was an activist at ARK (1924-35, ARRK after 1929) and an editor of its journal, Kino-front (published in Moscow, 1925-28); in 1927, he helped to set up ARK's experimental laboratory for film actors. (Room became acquainted with both Valentine Turkin and Viktor Shklovskii at ARK.)

1924-34: taught at GIK (later VGIK), the Institute of Cinematography in Moscow, on the faculty for film-directing; he began a workshop there in 1926.

- 1932-41: affiliated with Ukrainfilm, later renamed the Kiev Film Studio (Room's earlier and later work was done in affiliation with studios in Moscow, except for the short *EVREI NA ZEMLE*, made at VUFKU in the Ukraine).
- 1934-36: *STROGII IUNOSHA* [A STRICT YOUTH, or A SEVERE YOUNG MAN], made at Ukrainfilm from the script by Iurii Olesha. This film was very problematic from an ideological point of view, as it skirted and even confronted current political issues by suggesting a near-future ideal society without class struggles, into which both the political vanguard and the scientific/intellectual/social elites are integrated into society by way of an all-embracing ideology, in process of its formation; its members retain their imperfect but multi-faceted natures and their right to doubt. Of all Soviet films of the pre-war era, this one is among the most resistant to analysis: a young komsomolets, Grisha, loves an older married woman, Masha, but 'third parties' are Masha's husband, Dr. Stepanov, his live-in guest, Tsitronov, and Grisha's 'double', 'Diskobol' ['Discus-Thrower']; but this simple story line of triangle relationships does not constitute a realistic love story, and the film is interesting more because of its elusive, immensely complex web of 'prima facie' and sub-textual symbolism --cinematic renditions of Olesha's literary devices, cryptic sexual allusions, Classical motifs, etc. In many respects, it subverts the tenets of Socialist Realism (prescribed for the cinema in January 1935), and the film contains several pivotal (but brief) shots and scenes that were not scripted. Analysis reveals *STROGII IUNOSHA* to be an undelimited ~~dream-state~~ (though it is never overtly identified as such) with a central 'dream-within-the-dream' of extreme artifice. This dream or reverie of an ideal future and of an all-inclusive ideology was untimely. It featured Dmitrii Dorliak (1912-1938) as Grisha Fokin (the 'strict youth' of the title), G. Sochevko as Diskobol, Iurii Iur'ev as Dr. Stepanov, Maksim Shtraukh as Tsitronov, and Ol'ga Zhizneva as Masha. The film was denounced as 'ideologically and artistically defective', and it was banned upon completion in 1936 (thus not entered in SKhF 2, but there is a discussion and a credits list in Irina Grashchenkova, Abram Room [1977]: 134-196 &

260-261<sup>5</sup>). A detailed analysis is in Jerry T. Heil, "No list of Political Assets: the Collaboration of Iurii Olesha and Abram Room on STROGII IUNOSHA [A STRICT YOUTH (1934-36)]" [this essay appears in this issue of Slavistische Beiträge].

The aftermath of STROGII IUNOSHA marks the abrupt decline, in any objective sense, of the most imaginative part of Room's career (as its script, published three times [in 1934, 1935, and in Izbrannoe, 1973] is the last truly imaginative thing Iurii Olesha ever wrote). The films of 1924-36 show the younger Room was committed to the Party's ideological programs, while he retained his artistic integrity within the restrictions. But, while his subsequent films need to be re-viewed and re-evaluated, at least to discern their aesthetic achievements, several of them too obviously advocate the political strategies of the Stalinist era;<sup>6</sup> others show his continuing interest in the theatre and literature; all of them show his preference for stage-trained actors in film roles and for performer-oriented cinematography ('biomechanical' acting, typage and documentalism were antithetical to Room's concepts of the acted film: see the four-part statement, "Aktör — polpred ideii", in gazeta "Kino", 1932 nos. 7, 11, 15 and 17).

1939: ESKADRIL'IA No. 5 [SQUADRON No. 5], made at the Kiev Film Studio in 1939 (rel. 7 June 1939); criticized—later—for treating the up-coming war with Germany as merely a series of easy adventures, but it was released at an 'awkward' time (just before anti-German films, such as Eisenstein's ALEKSANDR NEVSKII [rel. Nov. 1938], were removed from Soviet screens). SKhF 2, #1579 (which cites only one notice: gazeta "Kino", 17 March 1939).

1940: VETER S VOSTOKA [WIND FROM THE EAST], made at the Kiev Film Studio in 1940 (rel. Feb. 1941). According to one source (Kino i vremia. Biulleten' Gosfil'mofonda, issue 3, 1963: 235), this film is about the 'liberation' and 'union' with the USSR of Transcarpathia (Zakarpatt'e, i.e. Ruthenia). The synopsis in SKhF places the action in the village of "Lentovnia" in a generalized Western Ukraine/Western Belorussia, but also indicates that the village is in Poland. Grashchenkova (1977: 36-43) mentions Galicia and the Carpathian approaches (Prikarpatt'e) and says that the filming was

done in L'vov. The film lacks a pinpointable geographical setting, and it obviously rationalized the annexations at large; it was made after the division of Poland but released just before Hitler's invasion of the USSR. The film's story line tells of a multi-cultural peasantry, 'liberated' by the Soviet army, in 1939, from its bondage to the Polish landowning class (the pani): Ol'ga Zhizneva played the cruel but elegant Countess Janina Przeżyńska; the Ukrainian actor Amvrosii Buchma (1891-1957) played the victim of persecution, Khoma Habrys'; there is also a schoolteacher, Hanna, who sides with the people and who hides a Bolshevik activist, Andrei, from the police. SKhF 2, #1596.

1942: "TONIA", a short war-time propaganda effort scheduled for Room in Alma-Ata (where he spent almost a year during the war-time evacuation of the Leningrad and Moscow studios). Sergei Prokof'ev wrote a symphonic score (at least one song remains: "A Soldier's Love"). The film was not made, or at least not released.<sup>7</sup>

1944: NASHESTVIE [THE INVASION (1944, rel. February 1945)], an anti-Nazi film set at the outbreak of war (1941), made at the Combined Studio (TsSOKS) in Alma-Ata (location filming in Kalinin) from the play (1942) by Leonid Leonov. (Boris Barnet had been originally assigned as director.) The story centers on an embittered former prisoner (a political prisoner in the play, but the film makes him a murderer) named Fedor Talanov, who returns to his family and home town, now occupied by Germans; he remains emotionally cut off from the inhabitants' guerrilla war against the occupiers until he personally sees the horror, whereupon he shoots a Nazi officer, is caught, and dies a hero. The long admired Oleg Zhakov (b. 1905) played Fedor, and Zhizneva was cast as his mother, Anna Nikolaevna. The film, and two of its actors, won 'Stalin Prizes' in 1946, but aside from its ideological 'laudability', NASHESTVIE is a film of talent, with certain aspects that are of more durable interest than its politics: its symbolism, its thematic treatment of the intelligentsiia, its location filming on the streets of war-ravaged Kalinin, etc. (An opera by V. Dekhterev, "Fedor Talanov", was written after the war on the same theme, with verse script

by Leonov.) See: Boris Chirskov, "NASHESTVIE. Montazhnaia zapis' zvukovogo fil'ma". M.: Goskinoizdat, 1945. SKhF 2, #1796.

19466: V GORAKH IUGOSLAVII [IN THE MOUNTAINS OF YUGOSLAVIA], produced by Mosfilm (rel. October 1946); a story of the anti-Nazi partisans during the war, with Marshal Tito as the central figure (played by the Soviet actor, I. Bersenev); a co-production with Yugoslavia; filmed by Eduard Tisse. The Tito-Stalin rupture later made the film politically 'embarrassing'. SKhF 2, #1842.

19488: SUD CHESTI [COURT OF HONOR (1948, rel. Feb. 1949)], made at Mosfilm, one of the Zhdanovite 'Soviet science' films--and anti-American and 'anti-cosmopolitan' (cf. MICHURIN [dir. Dovzhenko, 1948, rel. Jan. 1949] and ACADEMICIAN IVAN PAVLOV [dir. Roshal', 1949]). SUD CHESTI is about an incautious Soviet scientist and how Americans managed to plagiarize a Soviet scientific achievement; it received a 'Stalin Prize' in 1949 (the two 'State Prizes' mentioned in some accounts are the same as the 'Stalin Prizes' awarded to NASHESTVIE in 1946 and to SUD CHESTI in 1949). SKhF 2, #1912.

In 1949, Room became a member of the CPSU (Communist Party), and in 1950 he was designated 'Merited Artist of the USSR'.

19522: SHKOLA ZLOSLOVIAA [THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL], a Mosfilm version of the Mosco Art Theatre's production of Sheridan's play (1777). SKhF 2, #2025.

19533: SEREBRISTAIA PYL' [SILVERY DUST], a colour version of A. Jakobson's play "Shakaly" ["The Jackals"], from his script, produced by Mosfilm; filmed by Eduard Tisse. Room's first colour film has an anti-American theme about an American scientist named Samuel Steel, who invents a "radioactive silvery-gray dust" for mass annihilation of people, whose "powerful trust" supporters aim to test it out on Negroes, but whose elder son works with the "simple people" to foil the plans, who dies at the hands of "gangsters" (because his invention is "priceless"), and whose younger son, a "fascist", is killed by the "dust". The film seems to have been released only in

peripheral regions (Vladivostok, Minsk, Frunze [Kirghizia], Kemerovo).  
SKhF 2, #2067.

1956: SERDTSE B'ETSIA VNOV' [THE HEART BEATS ANEW], filmed in colour at Mosfilm, adapted from V. Diaghilev's play, "Doktor Golubev"; ostensibly about the "struggle of Soviet doctors against conservative-bureaucratic views in medicine". SKhF 2, #2331.

1965: GRANATOVYI BRASLET [THE GARNET BRACELET (1964, rel. March 1965)], produced by Mosfilm, a colour and wide-screen version of Aleksandr Kuprin's story (1911) from a script by Room and Anatolii Granberg. SKhF 5, #3430.

Also in 1965, Room was designated a 'People's Artist of the USSR'.

1965-67: plans for a film based on stories by Ivan Bunin; Room had two script variants, the first called "SOLNECHNYI UDAR" ["SUNSTROKE"(1965)], based on "Rusia", "V Parizhe" and "Solnechnyi udar", and the other called "VYSHLO SOVSEM, SOVSEM DRUGOE" ["IT TURNED OUT QUITE DIFFERENTLY" (1966-67)], from "Natal'ia", "Sukhodol" and "Poslednyi den'"; after four years of work, permission to film was denied.

1970: TSVETY ZAPOZDALYE [LATE-BLOOMING FLOWERS],<sup>8a</sup> produced at Mosfilm, from Room's script based on the early story (1882) by Anton Chekhov. (Iurii Olesha had adapted this story as a stage-play in 1959; it remains unpublished, but may have had some influence on Room's script.)

1973: PREZHDEVREMENNYI CHELOVEK [A MAN AHEAD OF HIS TIME],<sup>8b</sup> produced at Mosfilm, from Room's script based on Maksim Gor'kii's play, "Iakov Bogomolov" (unfinished and undated [before 1917]).

The unrealized 'Bunin project' and these final three films were conceived as a 'tetrad' of films "about love", and to merge the cinematographic arts with music and literature. Besides directing the completed films and writing the scripts, Room was responsible for the projected or realized musical

configurations of all four (with help from Beethoven's "Sonata No. 2", from a variety of Rachmaninov's works, Berlioz' "Fantastic Symphony", Scriabin's piano music, etc.).

26 July 1976: Abram Room died in Moscow after a long illness.

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Room's best known film remains TRET'IA MESHCHANSKAIA, while Soviet sources have given more praise (but less accumulated print space) to 'PRIVIDENIE' and NASHESTVII Grashchenkova (1977) attributes twenty three films to Room, of which seven, mostly shorts, no longer exist. By the count here, he worked on twenty eight completed films (as assistant director on one, as scriptwriter on another, and as director or writer/director on the rest), with nine now lost. There were many unrealized projects, some of which are mentioned above; some other unmade films have familiar titles nonetheless:

"KHOCHU REBĚNKA!" ["I WANT A CHILD!"] and "SLEPAIA" ["BLIND"], both scripts offered to Room by Sergei Tret'iakov (after 1927, perhaps in 1930): the first was a play written in 1927 for Meierkhol'd—it was rehearsed, but censored and never staged, while SLEPAIA was Mikhail Kalatozov's first film, made in 1929-30 in Georgia, but it was banned and is now lost (with some of the same footage, Kalatozov then made DZHIM SHVANTE! [SALT TO SVANETIA! (1930)], also scripted by Tret'iakov).

"26 BAKINSKIKH KOMISSAROV" ["THE 26 BAKU COMMISSARS"], with script by Pavel Bliakhin (sometime after 'PRIVIDENIE'); another version was filmed in 1932 in Georgia by Nikolai Shengelaia, scripted by Aleksandr Rzheshevskii.

"ZHELEZNYI POTOK" ["THE IRON FLOOD"], from the novel by Aleksandr Serafimovich.

"PRESTUPLENIE I NAKAZANIE" ["CRIME AND PUNISHMENT"], with Shklovskii's script of Dostoevskii's novel (in 1955);

"BEG", based on Bulgakov's novels Beg [Flight], Belaia gvardiia [The White Guard] and other materials (in the late 1960s); another BEG was produced in 1971 as an 'epic' in two parts by Aleksandr Alov and Vladimir Naumov.

This film director's epitaph might read:

"Room's creative path [was] complex and contradictory".<sup>9</sup>

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**SKhF** 1, 2-5 = the catalogue of Soviet feature films, Sovetskie khudozhestvennye fil'my. Annotirovannyi katalog, tt. 1-5. M.: Iskusstvo, 1961-1979.

rel. = a film's date of release (given if it is different from its production year or is otherwise significant).

All film titles here are put in all-capital letters; filmscripts (and unrealized projects) are in quotation marks; the most important items are in bold face.

Usually known abroad as **BED AND SOFA**, but sometimes as **MÉNAGE À TROIS** or **THIRD MESHCHANSKAIA STREET**. The original title comes from the once so-named street in Moscow. It contains the play on meanings that apply mostly to Liudmila: the 'third', 'bourgeoise' (feminine/female).

Ol'ga Zhizneva (1899-1972), whom Room married soon after filming '**PRIVIDENIE**' (in 1930?), continued to be an actor favored by Room: she appeared in seven of his subsequent films--**STROGII IUNOSHA**, **VETER S VOSTOKA**, **NASHESTVIE**, **V GORAKH IUGOSLAVII**, **SUD CHESTI**, **GRANATOVYI BRASLET**, and **TSVETY ZAPOZDALYE**.

Nikolai Ekk's **PUTĚVKA V ZHIZN'** [**THE ROAD TO LIFE** (rel. 1 June 1931; **SKhF** 2, #1179)] is usually acknowledged as the first-released Soviet feature-length sound film, while Dziga Vertov's **ĖNTUZIAZM** [**ENTHUSIASM**, subtitled **A SYMPHONY OF THE DONBAS** (rel. 2 April 1931; not in **SKhF** 2 because it is officially a 'documentary')] deserves credit at least for being the first Soviet 'avant-garde' sound film.

But Grashchenkova gives an incorrect completion date (1934), which should be 1936.

The political contexts of Room's films of the next twenty years are framed by several historical facts:

The Stalin-Hitler Pact (Molotov-von Ribbentrop Pact) of mutual non-aggression, 22 August 1939.

The German invasion of Poland, 1 September 1939, followed by the Soviet invasion of Poland, 17 September 1939.

Poland was divided between the Third Reich and the USSR, 28 September 1939: the Soviets' share included several cities (L'vov, Pinsk, Vilna, Belostok [Bialystok]), and part of Galicia (Belostok was returned to Poland in 1945,



but the other territories are now incorporated into Belorussia, Lithuania and the Ukraine); the USSR also seized Ruthenia (the formerly [1919-39] Hungarian and then Czech parts of the western Ukraine, formally ceded by Czechoslovakia to the USSR in 1945).

The USSR seized Bessarabia and other lands from Rumania in June 1940 (these lands are now incorporated into Soviet Moldavia and the Ukraine).

After garrisoning them in autumn 1939, the USSR annexed Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, 3, 5 & 6 August 1940 (East Prussia, including Koenigsburg, was formally annexed to the RSFSR in 1945).

(Over the centuries, of course, Russia's western borderlands, Galicia and Bessarabia included, have been passed back and forth between Lithuania, Poland, Ottoman Turkey, Austria-Hungary, Romania and Russia, and some post-war boundaries approximate those set in the nineteenth century.)

Hilter's armies invaded the USSR, 22 June 1941, beginning that stage of the war. circa 1946-48: the misanthropic Zhdanov era in Soviet art, followed by the less strident but also inimicable 'Cold War' era into the late-1950s.

<sup>7</sup> This is a correction to the literature on Prokofiev, which assumes that this film was completed. More important in 1942 was the composer's work on "Voina i mir" and on the score for Eisenstein's IVAN GROZNYI.

<sup>8a-b</sup> These last two films are too recent to be included in the last published fifth volume of SKhF (1979, covering films of 1964-65), but see the filmography in Grashchenkova (1977): 264.

<sup>9</sup> "Tvorcheskii put' Rooma [byl] slozhen i protivorechiv." Cited from Biulleten' Gosfil'mofonda, 3 (1963): 235.

