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From Spontaneity to Consciousness: Body and Mind Transformation in Grigorii Aleksandrov's Comedies of the 1930s

Grigorii Aleksandrov's films of the 1930s focus on a protagonist that transforms into a different person traveling from the Soviet periphery to Moscow. In *The Bright Path* (1940), by the end of the story, the audience sees a Soviet activist who has almost nothing in common with the girl who begins her journey. This ideological change reveals the process that Katerina Clark describes as "'spontaneity'/'consciousness' dialectic." This paper will examine the transition from spontaneity to consciousness of Aleksandrov's protagonists by engaging a Freudian psychic apparatus (id-ego-superego) and Jacques Lacan's understanding of Freud's super-ego and the gaze. Slavoj Žižek's application of Freud's theory on Stalinist culture helps to discuss the question of guilt management and the collective. The paper argues that the transformation of Aleksandrov's protagonist from spontaneity to consciousness can be seen not only as the increasing "actions or political activities that are controlled, disciplined, and guided by politically aware bodies" (Clark 15) but also as the embodiment of these political figures through the development of the superego and as the implementation of the Stalin figure onto the protagonist's body and mind. The protagonist does not just repress and discipline the spontaneous part of her mind, but she also existentially kills it: she sacrifices her subjective autonomy for the sake of the Party and the collective. This process is led by the mentor, who substitutes Stalin and influences the protagonist's super-ego through ideological violence and guilt management. This process can be traced via the protagonist's visual change. The paper also draws the reader's attention to the fact that the result of the transformation into consciousness does not stop at the moment of the individual's implementation of Stalin's figure and its glorification. The process experiences its final phase in the dissolution of the star into the collective body.