

Title: Alexander Grin's *The Scarlet Sails*: The Red Cinderella?

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The plot of Alexander Grin's extravaganza tale (feeriia) *The Scarlet Sails* (*Alye parusa*, 1920-1921) is modeled on the well-known *Cinderella*, a tale, which, according to Anna and Barry Ulanov, "offers a direct road into and through the thickets of envying and being envied" (Ulanov, 10). Melanie Klein's theory of breast envy is applied to two film versions of Grin's story: *Alye parusa* (1961, dir. Alexander Ptushko) and *Assol'* (1970, dir. Boris Stepantsov).

The first part of the paper deals with the social implications of Klein's theory, showing how, by way of politically complacent editing, Ptushko reinterprets the main heroine as a kind of a red Cinderella, a walking reproach to the world of prosperity ("breast") as the source of all evil. The second part investigates the ingenious artistic means employed by Stepantsov to highlight the author's explicit condemnation of social envy and compensate for the unfortunate sexism of Grin's story, in which even the function of the benevolent godmother is performed by a male character, while the neighbor who breastfeeds the orphan heroine is demonized as a cunning impostor, an objectionable candidate for the mean stepmother's role.

Despite Stepantsov's more insightful reading of the tale, each of the two productions can be alternatively said to exemplify the "good" and "bad" breast when judged by their respective aesthetic merits; therefore the ultimate verdict is left open for discussion.

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