Upon assuming control over the adaptation of Vladimir Bogomolov’s story “Ivan” from Eduard Abalov in 1961, Andrei Tarkovsky, in his first feature-length film, immediately set to work changing the existing script. Though in the finished version of *Ivan’s Childhood* Bogomolov (along with Mikhail Papava) is still credited with the screenplay, critical additions such as the dreams that frame the story, a waking dream, and the seeds of a romance between Masha and Kholin were the creations of the young director and introduced over the protests of the story’s original author. Despite the considerable praise the film received in the Soviet Union and abroad, Bogomolov continued to express dissatisfaction with the changes made to his original text, complaining (among other things) of an inattention to military detail and the unsatisfactory portrayal of certain characters.

This paper examines Tarkovsky’s conversion of “Ivan” into a specific (and specifically Tarkovskian) film narrative. While the changes introduced by the director mentioned above considerably alter Bogomolov’s story, an analysis of the narrative’s spatial attachment to the characters of Galtsev and Ivan demonstrates that in many ways Tarkovsky did not stray far from Bogomolov’s first person narrative. The inserted dream sequences and the burgeoning romance between Kholin and Masha remain the most conspicuous alterations, but this paper will also show that Tarkovsky disrupts Bogomolov’s linear syuzhet with a hidden flashback, alternates between different perceptual filters in key sequences and even engages in multiple filtration as the film nears its conclusion. This consideration of the director’s faithfulness and departures from the source text will then provide a new basis for analyzing the film’s central thematic concerns.