

Childhood, Violence and Death in the Cinema: Brezhnevism as Aesthetics

Ekaterina Vassilieva-Ostrovskaja

*Потому что Бармалей
Любит маленьких детей,
Любит, любит, любит, любит,
Любит маленьких детей!*

(‘Because Barmalei¹
Is fond of little children,
So fond, so fond, so fond,
So fond of little children!’)

– Kornei Chukovsky, from the poem ‘*Бармалей*’ (‘Barmalei’)

Children are commonly associated with both anarchy and discipline. These two forces are continuously fighting each other on the battlefield of the child’s body. One could say, paraphrasing the well-known French saying, that the process of disciplining is a sort of ‘little death’, or, more exactly, a chain of many such deaths (which are reversible to some extent), with the disciplining subject as a symbolic murderer. Incidentally, this subject does not have to be a person or a group of people who directly interact with the child. The disciplining can also be accomplished through some ideological codes. This process is always violent. Consequently, childhood is generally connected with death and destruction, which is necessary for the subsequent reconstructive renewal of the individual.

Obviously, it is not just children who are involved in the disciplining process within a society. Every citizen has to perpetually modify himself depending on the expectations of the dominant social and cultural system. However, children usually represent a model object for the pedagogical potential of every

¹ Barmalei is a villain, well known from Chukovsky’s fairy tales for his preference for eating little children. However, at the end of this poem he seems to give up his cannibalism and swears absolutely innocent affection for children.

community, especially of a totalitarian one. Evgeny Dobrenko even speaks of the strategy of conservation of childhood inherent in the socialist world view (Dobrenko 2000: 35).

What were the particular conditions for the disciplining process under Leonid Brezhnev? And what were the decisive differences compared with the time before it? Katerina Clark speaks of the 'dialectic between the forces of "spontaneity" and those of "consciousness" that is typical of the socialist culture (Clark 1981: 133). The Soviet hero of the thirties – whether in literature or in the movies – must pass through the stage of childish anarchism in order to achieve the consciousness that marks his successful integration into the world of adults. Whereas the relatively young Soviet system under Joseph Stalin had to underline its own maturity, the 'period of stagnation', on the contrary, needed permanent proof of its juvenile energy and vitality. Arguably, it led to the 'infantilisation' of the whole culture. The visualisation of childhood had no longer the intention of demonstrating the process of becoming adult and conscious, but rather strove to conserve the precious substance of childish energy to serve the artificial rejuvenation of senile social structures.

Paradoxically, it did not contain the liberation of the disciplining process and the elimination of the violent elements in it. This is because the energy of childhood could only be gained through even more intense interaction with the disciplining system. The stronger the attempted suppression of the individual, the more emotions it evoked and the more opportunities the child got to show its affects and to prove its anarchic vitality.

Do you want to know a secret?

The child in the Brezhnevist cinema always has something to hide. He seems to live a life full of many little secrets that are to be carefully kept, first of all from the adults who may disturb his games and put a stop to his anarchic intentions. But this secret life is shown exclusively for the sake of being violently revealed afterwards. And the film offers different instruments for this invasion of privacy, which, according to Michel Foucault, is always about power and disciplining (Foucault 1990: 58).

The favourite way of depicting children in the cinema of Brezhnev's time was to use long close-ups of faces, especially during emotionally moving moments

(for example, crying or laughing). The camera seems to leave no distance between a child and itself and to pursue him in all his intimate movements. Vague indications of the feelings are not wanted anymore. All has to be shown in the most direct and outspoken way. The children on the screen have no possibility of escaping the observing eye of the audience, which itself is violence *par excellence*. This special relationship between the adult observer and the observed child is very distinctly pointed out in the short film *The Spyglass* (*Подзорная труба*²), after a story by Viktor Dragunsky from the cycle *Deniska's Stories* (*Денискины рассказы*). The parents of the little boy called Deniska pretend to have invented a magic spyglass that allows them to see their son wherever he is. Deniska is really horrified by this instrument because he is convinced of its efficacy. So, while playing in the yard, he feels completely controlled by his imagined observers. His extreme discomfort at being spied on is exactly illustrated through a pun repeated several times during the film and there is a transformation from *подзорная труба* ('spyglass') to *позорная труба* (a sort of 'spyglass of shame'). Actually the parents cannot see Deniska, but we, the spectators, can, so the magic 'spyglass of shame' becomes, to some extent, real. Yet it is remarkable that the childish inclination to anarchy finally overcomes the fear of the all-seeing eye: Deniska lets himself get involved in prohibited games, even despite the threat of 'horrible punishment'. Nevertheless, the spyglass has an obviously educational effect on the boy: in the final scene we see him so exhausted from permanent fear that he voluntarily confesses his offences and promises never to repeat them again.



Figure 1] *The Spyglass*:
Deniska's mother demonstrates
the spyglass.

² *Подзорная труба*, dir. Mark Genin, Lenfilm, 1973.

Another film, also shot after the story cycle by Dragunsky, indicates the problem of the intrusion into the private sphere of the child in its title: *Telling Secrets to Everybody* (*По секрету всему свету*³). This title can refer both to the presumed willingness of the child to reveal his own secrets at the first opportunity and at the same time to the indiscretion of the camera that lets us see, in great detail, the occurrences that are claimed by the characters to be secret. Thus it is no accident that in several episodes we observe the action through a spyglass or a doorway. The audience always sees much more than the characters are ready to expose.

Corporeality and shame

The violence in the Brezhnevist children's cinema is also often explicitly present in the plot: the children harm each other physically and verbally, even in the most banal everyday situations, and the effects of the violence are photographed in extreme close-up and in full detail.

The depiction of children's fights is remarkable in this respect. In the cinema of Stalin's time episodes that showed direct physical conflicts among children were commonly avoided, obviously because of the sexual connotations that close corporeal contact of the fighters might suggest. Often, as in bedroom scenes, the scene of the fight was discreetly interrupted just before the first blow. The next scene informed us about the outcome of the fight. In the Brezhnevist cinema, however, this taboo did not exist anymore. If we compare, for example, two film versions of the same story by Arkadi Gaidar, *Timur and His Squad* (*Тимур и его команда*) – from 1940 and from 1982⁴ – we find that the process of the brawl is depicted only in the second film, though the fight between two groups of boys is the central theme in both.

The nakedness of children also fulfils an important function in relation to the accentuation of corporeality. Often it is forced in connection with some disciplining measures (for example, flogging or forced washing) and related to shame and despair. Whereas in classical art a naked, abused body of a mature person – specifically of Jesus or of a martyr – serves as a visualisation of the painful search for the metaphysical truth (Iampolski 2004: 173), in the Brezhnevist

³ *По секрету всему свету*, dir. Igor Dobrolyubov, Belarusfilm, 1976.

⁴ *Тимур и его команда*, dir. Aleksandr Razumnij, Soyuzdetfilm, 1940; *Тимур и его команда*, dir. Andrei Benkendorf, Soyuzdetfilm, 1982.

cinema it is more often the child's body which is manipulated as proof of the authentic, true character of the aesthetic effect provided by the movie and moreover for the success of the depicted disciplining process. The point is that it is not the achieved submission but the resistance of the child that indicates this success: if it were too easy to force obedience, the result could not be considered as satisfying.

Generally one could affirm that the most common way of depicting children in the Brezhnev era was to put them in painful, embarrassing situations where their emotions were challenged. One such situation was the exchange of clothes, demanded by circumstances, and the ensuing pressuring of young people into a foreign identity. Often it was the only way to escape the danger of death or to save somebody's life. So the person had absolutely no choice other than to participate in this violent carnival, which was always accompanied by humiliation and denial of own ambitions, for example when a young partisan girl (*The Elusive Avengers*⁵) has to serve the bandits at the table, imitating an obedient peasant woman, or when a boy (*Attention, Turtle!*⁶) has to put on a girl's clothes in order to escape from the hospital and prevent the death of the immeasurably loved turtle.



Figure 2] *Attention, Turtle!*:
A boy, dressed as a girl, is
searching for the turtle under
extremely difficult circumstances.

⁵ *Неуловимые мстители*, dir. Edmond Keosayan, Mosfilm, 1966.

⁶ *Внимание, черепаха!*, dir. Rolan Быков, Mosfilm, 1970.

Sing, don't speak!

A widespread device for underlining the infantilism of a person in the Brezhnevist cinema was the deformation of his speech. Children, even older ones, often speak exaggerated childish language and have defects typical of undeveloped speech. This seems, in some bizarre way, to recall the speech of Brezhnev himself, who was well known for his inarticulate speaking, which in his case pointed to his senility. But in the inner logic of the Brezhnevist culture such connotations were not completely paradoxical. In opposition to the Stalinist world, the evolution of the social person towards some higher quality had no actuality. The society stagnated and even seemed to go backwards, i.e. to return to a happy puerile condition, which in this context also meant decadence. The figure of the child and the figure of the party leader became, to some extent, identical and symbolically interchangeable: both had nothing important to say and were not taken seriously, but at the same time both could claim admiration and an especially careful treatment.

The theme of speech defects undergoes an interesting modification in the film *Telling Secrets to Everybody*, where one of the secondary figures is a boy with problems articulating: he lisps and burrs in an extreme way. But in one of the episodes, we are astonished to see him singing perfectly, without any difficulties in articulating the text correctly. It is important that in this scene he is accompanied on piano by his teacher, who also gives him some useful advice before he sings. Thus the child becomes able to express himself only due to the guidance of an adult and competent man. Incidentally, the song the boy performs in the film is actually sung by a soloist from the Great Children's Choir, the model music collective in the Soviet Union in the Brezhnev era. Founded in 1970, the Great Children's Choir corresponded to the tendency towards artificial rejuvenation of the Soviet system and combined the childish charm of the young artists with the professional standards of interpretation. The repertoire of this choir came mostly from famous professional songwriters, so the children had to lend their voices to completely foreign texts that dealt with childhood themes, but reflected an adult point of view. Thus the Great Children's Choir represented, for Brezhnevism, an inspiring example of successful interaction between the subject and the object of the disciplining process.

Destructive laughter

We have already spoken of the role of laughter as an extremely moving personal experience that lets us see the young person emotionally quasi-naked. But laughter, if it comes from outside and has the child for its object, fulfils another important function: this laughter mocks a person or his/her behaviour. Such laughter unavoidably contains a violent element and has a tendency to destroy the object. Actually it is also an important part of the disciplining process, because laughter should expose faults and help to correct behaviour, that is, to bring it into conformity with generally accepted standards. So, one could affirm that a mocking laugh represents a form of killing the individual. This sort of laughter was legitimised in Soviet culture through the term *самура* ('satire'). The Brezhnev era, focused on children, demanded a special child's satire. In 1974 the satirical cinema magazine for children *Eralash* (*Ералаш*) came out for the first time and became a great mechanism for the generation of childish emotions. The laughter in *Eralash* seemed to be very effective, because the immanent laughter on the screen could always be doubled by the laughter of the audience in the cinema or in front of the TV. The intensity of this laughter was, in turn, dependent on the extent of the violence, which became transparent in the humiliating and embarrassing experiences that the characters were undergoing.

The aspect of 'correcting' laughter is very clearly represented and at the same time already deconstructed in the short film *Have You Ever Seen or Heard Something Like That?* (*Где это видано, где это слыхано*⁷), also after Viktor Dragunsky's story cycle. The principal figures of this movie, two boys attending one of the early grades in school, have to participate in a school concert by performing a 'satirical show' containing short songs condemning some vices of everyday school life. The objects of this artistic satire are their real schoolmates, some of whom are obviously sitting in the audience. The texts of the songs, however, were not written by the performing boys, but by another boy, a 'school poet'. So the two singing boys have no definite connection to the songs they are going to perform. They are completely alienated from the texts and find themselves in a situation where they are forced to act automatically. This actually ends in absolute disaster, which underlines the deep conflict between the requirements of the disciplining machine and the anarchic vitality of the childish individual. Both boys experience

⁷ *Где это видано, где это слыхано*, dir. Boris Gorlov, Lenfilm, 1973.

extreme stress, so they become so nervous standing on the stage that they cannot help repeating automatically the same lines of the text again and again, apparently against their own intentions. Thus the satirical performance actually turns out as satire on the satire. The laughter in the audience is now caused by the faults of the subjects of satirical criticism, not of its objects. The affects cannot be controlled any longer – either by the performer or by the spectators. The laughter grows to a destructive level. The concert has to be aborted and the boys, nearly destroyed by shame, run away. The situation can be resolved only by ‘liberating’ laughter at the end of the story, caused by an absurd incident and having no satirical intention.

Children in danger

We have seen that the visualisation of everyday life in Brezhnevist children’s movies involved distinct elements of violence and numerous motifs indicating the symbolic death of the individual, which, incidentally, could become real at any moment. This is not implausible considering the dangerous situations into which the children on the screen often put themselves or which they were forced into by others: for example, risky games in the yard, which were filmed in Brezhnev’s time in a very detailed way, or dangers of city traffic from which the young heroes in many cases escape at the last moment.



Figure 3] *The Spyglass*: A boy, who shortly before seemed to have drowned in the pool, appears to have only been playing.

At the end of the film *Attention, Turtle!*, we can see the direct passing from latent, permanent dangers accompanying daily children life, to frank military menace: two boys, obsessed by the anarchic idea of testing the stability of the turtle’s shell

under extreme conditions, take the animal to a military training facility and put it in the path of a tank. In the course of this experiment, they not only expose the turtle to danger, but also themselves and their schoolmates, who nearly risk their own lives to save the turtle from death. So this exciting episode obviously represents the emotional climax of the film and at the same time a metaphor of the death wish, which is the most radical expression of a child's readiness to guard his anarchic individuality against the rigidity of the system. It is paradoxical that the system itself could not exist without this 'childish' resistance or, more exactly, without the possibility of perpetually proving its stability in this conflict.

Topics from the Civil War

In this context it is interesting to take a look at Brezhnevist children's films that deal directly with military topics and in which children are actually involved in war operations or participate in an ideological fight. It is remarkable that these adventure films mostly portray topics from the time of the Civil War. Firstly, the Great Patriotic War (the Second World War) was obviously not yet sufficiently distant in time and did not permit enough free associations needed for the metaphorical approach. Secondly, the Civil War was the start of the Soviet historical myth and it seemed quite logical to search in this era for legitimisation of the present political regime. Arguably, children were the perfect characters to visualise the youth of the Soviet system.

A particular condition of the depiction of the Civil War in Brezhnev's time was the general consciousness of the current ideological and economic failure of the system, which had to be reaffirmed in this struggle. From the contemporary point of view, this war seemed completely lost. Therefore it had to be simulated in art again and again in the hope of coming, in some magical way, to another result or at least of compensating for the unsatisfying outcome of the fight through a revaluation of the process. The depictions of the war concentrated on the romanticism and the aesthetic effect of the struggle rather than on the obligatory victory. This led to an increasing intensity of violence on the screen, as well as, and even more so, in films for children and young people.

Immortality and death

According to Sigmund Freud, depiction of death in art corresponds to the elementary human need to confirm its own immortality, for a death on the stage or on the screen seems reversible and can be experienced by the audience through identifying itself with the heroes, again and again (Freud 1974: 51). War action in the cinema perfectly fulfils this task because of the dynamic character of death on the fictitious battlefield: a dead body in a film has to be immediately replaced by a living one, which is now likewise ready to die. An uninterrupted chain of deaths and symbolic rebirths leads in this way to a complete abolition of the idea of the irrevocable character of death and to the triumph of immortality.

But it is also remarkable that, though young heroes were constantly shown in the extreme proximity of death, direct depiction of a child's death, even at the heart of the war, was taboo for Brezhnevism. The real victims could only be adults. Children in the Brezhnevist cinema seem truly immortal, which makes them often more successful in military operations than are adult and experienced fighters. One of the most popular Brezhnevist films for the young audience about the Civil War has the significant title *The Elusive Avengers*. However, while violent death in war movies is a necessary condition for the confirmation of symbolic immortality, fictive immortality in the face of permanent danger also directly refers to death: only those no longer alive can be truly immortal (and truly elusive). Consequently, the children in the Brezhnevist war cinema are the living dead among the dying living.

It is thus no accident that the theme of the living dead permanently emerges in *The Elusive Avengers*. Four young avengers (three boys and one girl) who terrorise groups of bandit anarchists exist and do not exist at the same time. They commit their incredibly heroic deeds nearly without becoming visible to the enemy, which makes them unreal even to the Red Army forces they are actually fighting for. As the commander of the regular army orders his men to establish contact with the successful avengers, he gets the answer: 'It is impossible to contact them because they do not exist.' In one episode, playing in a cemetery, the avengers act directly like ghosts imitating the dead rising from their graves in order to irritate the bandits. The nearly obsessive repetition of the report on this experience by a shocked member of the bandit group is a comic leitmotif of the whole film. From the point of view of the visualisation of death, the beginning and final sequences are also very important. Following the title, the

black contours of four huge horsemen appear, backed by the red rising sun. They move very slowly, accompanied by a man's voice whose quiet singing resembles a spell. This scene, a variation of which has also been placed at the end of the film, creates a very mystical atmosphere and clearly refers to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

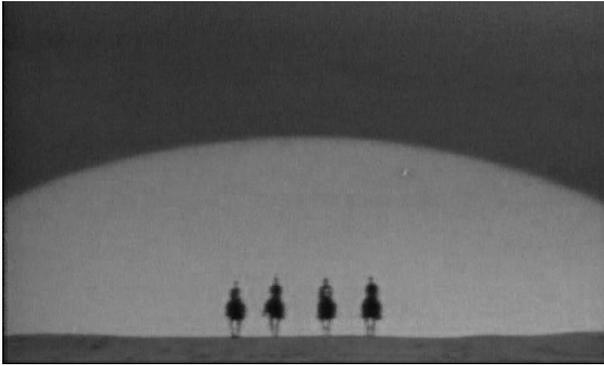


Figure 4] *The Elusive Avengers*:
The four riders.

Obviously, the figures that we see are not the real avengers, but merely their ghosts, which should continue to live in our memory after the real heroes have died (provided, of course, they had ever really existed). This echoes the Brezhnevist nostalgia for the heroic past and an insistent wish to prolong it into the present. But the present guided by the past was condemned to turn itself into a pantheon of heroically disposed individuals who never had a chance to commit their own deeds. Therefore the heroes of the past were being 'collected' and preserved like museum exhibits, a tendency that finds its expression, for example, in the cult of the Pioneer heroes. At the same time, the rituals of the Pioneers of Brezhnev's time started resembling memorial and funeral ceremonies. In this way the Pioneers of the present could approximate their dead idols as much as possible. Shortly before the end of *The Elusive Avengers*, we see the four avengers just after they have joined the regular Red Army. They are standing motionless in front of the camera with completely immobile faces, which are shown in close-up one after the other, accompanied by quiet, solemn music, a scene that is, in its character, reminiscent of the 'post-mortem aesthetics' Nikita Braguinski speaks of in his article on the Soviet Great Children's Choir (Braguinski 2005).

Numerous references to life beyond the grave can also be found in other children's films about the heroic past. For example, in the television miniseries

The Dirk (*Копчик*⁸), gossip about the dead housed in a Moscow cellar occupies the young heroes throughout the action. Moreover, in an episode, not exactly motivated by the plot, they find themselves in an old cemetery, where the camera has enough time to move along the gravestones and monuments. In this location an abstract conversation about death takes place. A boy states that half of the dead are usually interred alive, being only comatose. The other boys do not want to believe it. Finally he presents his last argument, saying to an especially sceptical friend: 'You will see, when you get interred alive yourself!' Indeed, Brezhnevist children's cinema about the Civil War was a sort of symbolic grave where young heroes were condemned to lead an existence of the living dead.

It is remarkable that the immortality of children did not mean their invulnerability. On the contrary, the young heroes seemed more often than adults to be exposed to explicit violence, and its effects on them were shown in a much more detailed way. A very concise example is the whipping episode from *The Elusive Avengers*, in which the camera is concentrated on the face and body of the punished boy and attentively fixes on the expressions of his pain. One other interesting aspect is that the punishment is public and the village people, gathered in the market place, can witness it. Some of them, shocked and abashed, turn their eyes away from this scene. This indicates the extreme cruelty of the execution, which incidentally also has definite sexual connotations: immediately before it, the punisher seems to have been sexually provoked by a performance of an attractive songstress. From this point of view the execution might well be seen as a substitute for a non-realised sexual act.

The two fathers

In the movies about the Civil War, the conflict between discipline and anarchy obtained some new aspects. It is remarkable that in *The Elusive Avengers*, the young Red partisans have to struggle not against the White Guard but against gangs of anarchists, whereas they manifest a distinct inclination towards anarchy in their own actions. Obviously (and paradoxically), they are also struggling at the same time against their own anarchic tendencies. At the end of the film the disciplining process is finally accomplished by the integration of the avengers into the regular Red Army. It seems that we are dealing with some sort of 'self-

⁸ *Копчик*, dir. Nikolai Kalinin, Belarusfilm, 1973.a

disciplining'. However, this is not completely true, because the avengers actually have two disciplining instances embodied in two symbolical fathers who play a major part, especially because of the virtual orphan-hood of the young fighters.

In the opening scene of the film we observe the killing of the actual father of two of the avengers – a brother and a sister – by the ataman of the bandits. The parents of the other two avengers are not mentioned at all. So the father's place is initially vacant and is immediately filled by a 'bad' father, the ataman, the annihilator of the real father, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by a 'good' father, Semyon Budenny, the legendary commander of the Red Army, who becomes an ideological reference figure for their military operations. Interestingly, whereas the 'bad father', as the most important antagonist of the young partisans and especially of their leader Danka, is involved throughout the film, the 'good father' appears only in two short episodes not strictly necessary for the plot. So the bad father has to accomplish the task of disciplining the four young people and of preparing them for integration into the hierarchical order of the adult universe. His duel with Danka is not only a conflict of different political interests, but also a process of attempted subjection of a teenage boy to an adult man. Significantly, the ataman, who has the nickname Lutyj ('cruel'), possesses extreme masculine sex appeal, a contrast to the decent juvenile charm of his adversary. The episode in which Lutyj violently whips Danka in the village is the temporary climax of this disciplining. Shortly before the end of the film, we see a corresponding episode which exactly reverses this constellation: now it is Lutyj who is being whipped by Danka. It is clearly an act of revenge, but also a confirmation of the success of the disciplining process in producing a new, crueller individual, i.e. more adapted to accomplishing his military tasks. So Lutyj's mission as the severe, punishing father is now fulfilled, whereas the cruelty finally turns against him. The 'good' father Budenny, who has not yet personally intervened in the disciplining, can now profit from it. In the final scene of the film we see him receiving the avengers, who are gazing at him with veneration, in his commodious headquarters. In his short speech he stresses that he does not want to know all the details of their adventures: for him, the most important things are their qualities as Red Guards and their readiness to serve Soviet power.

The splitting of the disciplining instance in the films about the Civil War can be explained as an attempt to avoid the basic paradox of disciplining, which becomes especially obvious in the situation of war. A well-disciplined individual

should be obedient and at the same time rebellious in order to effectively defend the system he is integrated into. In other words, during war he may break some rules of correct behaviour, but afterwards he has to return again to the conventional ethical standards demanded by the 'good father', who wants to distance himself from the 'bad father', who demands cruelty.

The duality of the father figure can be also observed in *The Dirk*, where the central character Misha (incidentally a boy growing up without a real father) finds himself between two adult men throughout the film: the good Red commissar Polevoy and the evil White officer Nikitsky. Remarkably, the boy's relationship to both is constructed around a mysterious dirk – a clearly phallic symbol – that Polevoy gives to Misha and that the boy must guard from its illegitimate ex-owner Nikitsky. Thus the disciplining involves a search for male identity, which is to be violently taken from the 'bad father' and put in the service of the 'good' one.

Aesthetics of the dragon

The correlation between rebellion and obedience in the disciplining process is very interestingly pointed out in the short film *Avengers from the Second 'B' Grade* (*Мстители из 2-го 'Б'*⁹), which assumes a meta-perspective position in relation to the heroic movies of the time. The action of the film takes place in the present and shows the second 'B' grade being taken to the cinema to watch *The Elusive Avengers*. Obviously this trip has the pedagogic intention of adoption of the heroic past. However it results in an anarchic affray directly in the cinema hall: inspired by the avengers in the movie, the children feel challenged to take part in the fight against the enemy and set up a bombardment of the screen with catapults and other self-made toy weapons. At the end of the film, though, we see them forced to acknowledge their guilt to the headmaster and to give up their weapons – which represents the triumph of the disciplining instance over childish anarchy that temporarily got out of control.

So the children in the Brezhnevist cinema, being permanently involved in a violent disciplining process, are likely to undergo many little metaphorical deaths for the sake of a system that has abused them for its own aims and that steals their vitality to rejuvenate itself. Consequently we can metaphorically compare

⁹ *Мстители из 2-го 'Б'* (part of the film *Волшебная сила искусства*), dir. Naum Birman, Lenfilm, 1970.

the Brezhnevist aesthetics to a dragon that is always demanding new sacrifices in order to survive. But in contrast to the dragon from the fairy tales it has a more radical desire: not just virgins, but children.

I would like to conclude with a quotation by Fyodor Dostoevsky. These words are spoken in the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Братья Карамазовы*) by the middle brother Ivan during the conversation with his brother Alyosha: 'Marvel at me, Alyosha – I, too, love children terribly. And observe, that cruel people – passionate, carnivorous, Karamazovian – sometimes love children very much.' (Dostoevsky 1997: 238.) This quotation, I think, very well represents the 'paedophile' character of the Brezhnevist culture, which was actually fond of children and at the same time truly cruel to them.

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