



## *Media Culture*

### **Directions, objectives, and author's concepts of audiovisual media interpretations of school and university in the Soviet cinema of the "stagnation" period (1969-1985) \***

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**Abstract.** The films of the "stagnation" period (1969-1985) related to school/university topic show that on the screen:

- the educational process went beyond the previous strict framework of rules, the persistence of rigid communist landmarks, and the anti-religious orientation were no longer imposed;
- the students' activity that mostly used to be directed to the outside world, began to shift to their inner worlds and feelings;
- the main conflicts were built on the opposition of non-ordinary teachers and students vs. stagnation, bureaucracy, mediocrity of the authorities / colleagues / classmates;
- the relationships between teachers and students were becoming more democratic and free;
- the prestige of the pedagogical profession in the eyes of students and society went sharply down;
- there were problem zones at school and university (crisis, disappointment and fatigue, professional "burnout" of teachers; pragmatic cynicism of students, teenage cruelty, etc.).

Transformation also existed in the gender aspect of the school/university films. In the 1960s and the mid-1970s, the screen teacher is usually a man; then in the late 1970s - early 1980s the teachers are mostly female, often single and lonely.

**Keywords:** audiovisual text, cinema, film, school, students, teachers, the USSR.

### ***Introduction***

In this article, we address the objectives and author's concepts of audiovisual media interpretations of school and university in the Soviet cinema of the "stagnation" period (1969-1985). Here, as in our previous work [Fedorov, Levitskaya, Gorbatkova, 2017], relying on technologies developed by C. Bazalgette [1995], A. Silverblatt [Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 80-81], W.J. Potter [Potter, 2001] and U. Eco [Eco, 1998; 2005]; on the theoretical approaches of O.V. Aronson [Aronson, 2003] and N.A. Khrenov [Khrenov, 2006; 2008], we make a generalized hermeneutic analysis of

media texts of Soviet feature films of this period relating to school and university, taking into account such key concepts of media literacy education as "media agencies", "media categories", "media technologies", "media languages", "media representations" and "media audiences".

### ***Materials and methods***

The material of our research is audiovisual media texts on the theme of school and university. The main method is the comparative hermeneutic analysis of Soviet films of the stagnation period (1969-1985), concerning this subject (including the analysis of stereotypes, ideological analysis, identification analysis, iconographic analysis, plot analysis, and character analysis). We also analyze books and articles devoted to school and university in films [Arcus, 2010; Grigorieva, 2007; Gromov, 1981; Kichin, 1977; Mamaladze, 1977, etc.].

### ***Discussion***

The post-thaw period began to point out schoolchildren's pragmatic and ironic attitude towards teachers. About twenty years ago the teacher on the screen was a wise role model, a fair mentor. But in the movie *Cross the Threshold* (1970), a high school student with advanced mathematical abilities, not in the least afraid of the wrathful reaction of the teacher, openly declares: "I don't want to be in your shoes ... I hope to find a better use for my abilities ... You had not thought that you would end up in school, I hope that I manage to avoid such a fate". Thus, as *Literature Lesson* (1968), that was "shelved", i.e. not released in the cinemas, this film crossed the threshold of a positive character's respectful attitude to the pedagogical profession.

Similarly, the teacher's authority was challenged in the drama *Translation from English* (1972), where the teacher-trainee performed by G. Taratorkin did not hesitate to admit that he entered a pedagogical university because of the fear of failing more complicated examinations at technical university. An English teacher, performed by M. Bulgakova looked old-fashioned, deliberately communistically engaged elderly idealist, with fragile health damaged by stressful work.

The main character of the drama *The Diary of the School Principal* (1975), unlike his colleague from *We'll Live till Monday* (1968), has neither an antique-style apartment with an aristocratic mother, nor a girl-admirer with damp eyes, nor a velvet voice; no gestures, no righteous anger, no civic pathos... He has a small two room flat, an aging wife, a chronic time trouble and a face of the man who forgot when he had last looked at himself in the mirror [Arcus, 2012]. Such a teacher, certainly, did not make the young audience willing to take up the burden of the pedagogical profession. In the brilliant performance of Oleg Borisov, the audience saw a person who has already denied himself the right to drama. A person who lives the life as it is, within the time released - because there won't be another life or time. A man who no longer charges life, time, or people - he only hopes to pay his dues. He does not feel himself a hero, he fulfills his duties. This is a quiet standing of the intellectual in the face of a deceitful era [Arcus, 2012]. The principal is bitterly questioned by his own son: "Is *this* what you wasted your life on?"

A similar situation occurs in the drama *Almost the same age* (1984), where a wife sadly tells her husband, a young teacher: "It's time to become someone ... Look at yourself, what are you?". And then, with sarcasm, she adds: "A teacher ...". The situation is no better in the drama *Sweet Grass Juice* (1984), where a beginning teacher complains that children are terrible and her life did not work out precisely because of the recklessly chosen pedagogical profession.

It seems that the authors of the drama *The Follower* (1984) were going to argue with such a pessimistic stance, making a film about the high destiny of the teacher, the noble beauty of his work, the continuity of the pedagogical occupation. From the very first shots, *The Follower* gravitates toward a symbol, parable-like system. Another variation of the return of the prodigal son is played on the screen. The story of a young, ambitious guy who could not fight the temptation (an invitation to move from the countryside to the capital, a prestigious job in the ministry) to change

his occupation (the hero quits his teaching job at a rural school), but then on top of his success he rethinks his life and starts it anew, returning to an abandoned father's home.

There is something about the story of temptation and return for lots of filmmakers. Perhaps, because it allows to show a person at the turning points of life, to look deeper and more closely into his character. In *The Follower* at first it seems that the traditional plot scheme will be filled with deep meaning. There is neither an odd one out scene, nor an accidental detail, everything is carefully thought out - from the texture of the interiors to the costumes of the characters. If a small orphan Valya in the severe post-war years steals a pen from an old teacher Rusov, then a passing truck, by will of fate, will necessarily bring the boy to that wooden house from which he has just escaped. If an old Rusov adopts Valya, Rusov, Jr., after many years, having abandoned his wife and son in Moscow, will also adopt a mop headed boy, deprived of parental love. Even an occasional meeting with a chauffeur has not been spared. In about twenty years, in some incomprehensible way, he will find Valentin Rusov in the ministerial office and ask him to sell a house in a remote town of Kandaurovka.

This deliberate, circular plot sometimes loses the breath of real life. Signs of the time are limited to Robertino Loretti's songs and Yevgeny Evtushenko's poems, and the characters often seem too static and unambiguous. The purity and nobility of the conception are not implemented to the fullest - neither in drama, which suffers from schematism and straightforward motivations, nor in the film direction that attempts to translate the plot in a poetic vein. Alas, the poetics of the movie is based on banal symbols and trite metaphors, like a damaged model set of a rural school that is gathering dust on the balcony of the luxuriously furnished apartment of the protagonist during his career peak.

I. Kalnysh is constrained, unemotional in the role of Valentin Rusov. We cannot sense the inspiration of the teaching talent, which is so often declared in verbal form. Whenever the actor tries to play emotional generosity, it turns out pretentious falsity, as in the scene where Valentin, who for the first time after a long separation, met his beloved woman, eagerly invites his best student Vanechka to enter the room at a moment, frankly speaking, not suitable for onlookers.

Even such a talented master, as Nikolai Grinko, was powerless to overcome the commonplace didactics of his character, the old Rusov. However, in the film opening shots, peering at his wise and sad eyes, one believes that such a person is able to teach goodness and kindness. But as soon as N. Grinko's character begins to speak, the didacticism speaks up. Moreover, after viewing the film, its title raises a different, unplanned by the authors connotation - replication, unwillingness to go further, to introduce something intimate.

Things turn really bad for the teachers in *Practical Joke* (1976). A pragmatic schoolboy here is completely hardened, walks with a pompous gait, has imperious habits, rules the class. He is terrible in anger. The pejorative monologue that he refers to the honorable teacher on the day of her jubilee (the zero result of life, no one needs you now, the old shoe, etc.) almost falls under the crime of personal insult" [Arcus, 2012].

However, one should not think that the 1970s' film represented educators solely as lost (albeit talented) losers who concede defeat in verbal fights to young pragmatists. In the same years, some school films featured talented teachers in full harmony with equally bright students.

Of course, by this time the school theme in the Soviet cinema has undergone significant changes. In *Problem Child (Certificate of Maturity)*, 1954) the "healthy class" unanimously cleared of individuality an extraordinary but too proud and independent tenth-grader. But in the 1970s it were outstanding people who set the tone in such films as *Practical Joke* (1976), *The Key That Should Not Be Handed On* (1976), *Schedule For the Day after Tomorrow* (1978) and *The Tuning Fork* (1979). Their authors unequivocally made it clear that though it happens rather seldom, no school is immune from the presence of outstanding students.

These wunderkinds appeared on the screen for the reason. First, they were an exception. Then they became more numerous, almost the whole class (*The Key That Should Not Be Handed*

*On, Tuning Fork*). And in I. Dobrolyubov's film *Schedule For the Day after Tomorrow*, an experimental "school for geniuses" in physics and mathematics emerged. The school principal matches his position: he is a young Ph.D., he plays water polo with his students. Certainly, the teachers also have academic degrees and titles. They are all cheerful, witty people. Their students catch up with them, too.

While one can doubt how the advanced intellectual teachers from *The Key That Should Not Be Handed On* and *The Tuning Fork* managed to turn the ordinary class into an elite class, it is a different story here. Special teachers. Special school. Special students with special problems? By no means – the problems are the same: the "geniuses" also fall in love, to the best of their ability cause material damage (two school laboratories are blown up in one and a half hours of screen time (not on purpose, of course, but because of a failed scientific experiment), some schoolchildren even have low grades in some subjects.

Using the terminology of "young Einsteins", the guarantee of a harmonious development of an individual is the compensation by liberal arts subjects of the gravitation towards sciences. Well, the new Literature teacher successfully copes with the task.

However, something similar has happened before in the films about "ordinary" schools. In the development of the relationships and characters of the "geniuses" the film slid over the surface, not trying to create deeper images.

As some directors say, one can't surpass the acting of children and animals. And it is true that young actors often "overplay" adults. *Schedule For the Day after Tomorrow* came the other way. Adults cast (performed by the remarkable actors O. Dal, M. Terekhova, V. Nikulin, etc.) in all respects surpassed its younger colleagues. One can object that *Schedule For the Day after Tomorrow* features an ideal school. But, it seems, even "ideal" students have many difficult problems that require non-trivial solutions.

Similarly, *The Key That Should Not Be Handed On* can't be perceived today as alive and modern - something elusive. And this "something" is, oddly enough, the falsehood. All senior students are unique: an owlish young man is as talented, inspirational, and wise as a forty-year-old intellectual. Sasha Maidanov is a rebel without a cause, a knight without fear and reproach. The third one is so educated that even now he is ready to defend his Ph.D. thesis [Arcus, 2012].

The film was quite sharply criticized by E. Gromov, who insisted that "one way or another, Marina Maksimovna (a teacher) consciously and unconsciously creates a closed microcosm with her class, with limited access for only gifted, bright, intelligent pupils. And where are those who are not as talented? Those who prefer streets to poetry? How did a charming Marina Maximovna manage to turn an ordinary Leningrad class into a small semblance of the Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum (Alexander Pushkin's school - author's note)? ... Talented teacher, focused exclusively on talented children, willing or not brings up arrogance, and she has it, too. There is only a step away from a haughty neglect of rough, everyday work, and people who do it" [Gromov, 1981, pp. 34-35].

One of the most interesting teacher's film images of stagnation period can be found in the film *The Rescuer* (1980). Its author, Sergei Solovyev, has long been interested in the eternal themes in art: good and evil, friendship and betrayal, truth and lies, love and hatred, conscience, duty, beauty... However, it does not mean that *The Rescuer* was far from the timely problems of the turn of the 1970s - 1980s.

S. Solovyev sincerely and convincingly spoke of the danger of experiencing the beauty. The idea of *The Rescuer* is simultaneously simple and complex. The picture as if continues and develops the message of his previous work – *One Hundred Days After Childhood* (1975). It is no coincidence that one of the main roles was performed by Sergei Shakurov in both films. In *One Hundred Days After Childhood* he played a summer camp counselor who strove to bring the children into the bright world of the Beautiful, to elevate their souls. In fact, he succeeded. But the world of school lessons is sometimes so far from the life around us.

Andrei Larikov (S. Shakurov) from *The Rescuer* is a school teacher of literature, a teacher by avocation. Talent sowing "wisdom, good, eternal".

*– I came here five years ago. Happy...To teach. No luggage... But now something is wrong... I tell them all sorts of things. About the stars. About love. And then everything ends. And very different words come up...He draws this sad conclusion in the conversation with his friends, that culminated the film.*

What if one of Larikov's pupils perceives his lessons as the norm of life? There is such a person - a school graduate Asya. The relationship between Asya and her former teacher embody the main idea of the film.

*– I loved someone very much. And I believed him very much. And then he betrayed me. For no special reason, just like that.* These monologue by Asya Vedeneeva is her soul crying, the tragedy of a person disillusioned with the beloved one.

There is an alternative – the "prose of life", aiming to keep up with the Joneses. As, for example, the sailor of the rescue station Vilya ("Where have you seen it, this spiritual beauty?"). Or, perhaps, as a fashionable dressmaker Grigory Ganin ("I'm content with my life. I have a good life, and Larikov's spells have nothing to do with it!"). The authors are not in haste to deliver a verdict on them: both Vilya and Grisha are still very young. Sergei Soloviev does not give ready didactic solutions to the problem. Nevertheless, the moral result of the picture is convincing: Larikov understands that his efforts are worth it. If the words are confirmed by the deeds:

*– I've taught one, at least. This is, probably, a lot. A good person has a ripple effect...*

The title *The Rescuer* is ambiguous. Larikov seeks to save the souls of his students – Asya, Vilya, and Grisha – from selfishness, callousness. And Vilya literally saves Asya – pulling her out of the water. On the whole, every film character is looking for his/her place in the world.

The film's cast is marvellous. Vasily Mishchenko skillfully conveys sharp changes in the emotional state of his hero. Now, with a contemptuous smile and prickly eyes saying that he was "an evil and lonely man," and then Vilya is capable of a self-sacrificing act. He may stammer and lie to a girl about love, and then really fall in love, unexpectedly and deeply. During his rather short term of work at the rescue station Vilya actually saved only one person. Not many. But at the same time, enough. Therefore, it was this unexpected salvation of Asya that became the beginning of a genuine acquisition of the world around him.

The world created by Sergei Solovyov is surprisingly, provocatively beautiful. "I love the lavish withering of nature," – he echoes the classical poet Alexander Pushkin, ("Autumn"). The events pass before us as if "in a magic crystal of elegies" (A. Medvedev), sensitive to fleeting experiences and moods, able to create an atmosphere of in-depth attention to the internal world of man.

*The Rescuer* often flashes Asya's memory about a few minutes spent together with Larikov: *– Under this tree, we hid from the downpour. You and I. We stood side by side. You know, this pouring rain haunts me in my night dreams...* Pavel Lebeshev's camera envelops these frames with an orange haze of nostalgia. Then the color will return (by the way, by the mid-1970s almost all the films on the school theme had become color, the fashion for the black and white image had passed). The yellow leaves will rustle again and again, and it will rain again, and the mist will cloud over an old, cozy town. The nature, the lake, the deserted beach, and the old rescue station will trustfully open their beauty. The harmony of nature, the harmony of the settled world of antiquities is contrasted in *The Rescuer* with human unsettledness, doubts. The effect is amplified not only by the camera work but also by the elegiac, sad and light melody of I. Schwartz.

How can one measure own life against the ideal concept of it? What should one do if one's dream is betrayed? These complicated questions are facing the main female character of the film, Asya Vedeneeva (T. Drubich). Contradictions between the ideal beauty and reality are at the center of the sharp inner and outer conflicts of the film's heroes. They lead Asya to a tragic decision - an attempt to commit suicide. There are as if two endings in the film. One is semantic and another one

is narrative. The narrative one is a scene of a former classmate Vilya (V. Mishchenko) leaving for the army service. The semantic ending is Asya's failed suicidal attempt, the denouement of her dramatic contradictions.

The beginning of the episode is deliberately serene. On the eve of his departure for the army service, a rescue station worker Vilya wants to see his workplace for the last time: an old, chipped building on the shore of a picturesque lake. It's autumn and pretty cold. In the middle of the veranda with a rotten floor is a billiard table, dimly glittering with holes of a broken cloth. Vilya reluctantly strikes cue, then pulls out the marine binoculars ...

The whole sequence is filmed by the camera man P. Lebeshev slowly, with dignity, with a long panorama over the landscape and the "objective world," admiring the ancient station building, the beauty of the lonesome lake, the signs of autumn, which fully came to power.

...Lazily leading binoculars along the lake surface, Vilya suddenly discovers in the distance a girl in a white cloak comes to the shore. He curiously continues to observe. The girl pushes a rubber boat and sails to the center of the lake. V. Mischenko plays around with the situation: Vilya, like many "small bosses", likes showing off his authority. That's why he starts habitually yelling in the megaphone. But his confidence vanishes, when Asya pierced the boat with a nail and began to sink...

As a little digression, a few words about the boat and the nail. One of the most quoted Anton Chekhov's sayings goes that if in the first chapter there is a rifle hanging on the wall, it should go off in the second or the third chapter. A. Chekhov is one of Sergey Solovyov's favorite writers (his director's debut was a screen adaptation of Chekhov's stories). There is an exact position for such seemingly trivial things as an inflatable boat and a nail, in the film. Asya bought this boat as a gift to her beloved. A big nail is the one on which a poster of Botticelli picture was hanging, Vedeneeva was going to give it to Larikov, too.

Thus, with the help of the object symbolism S. Solovyov once again highlights the main idea of the film: actions in the name of good and love may one day turn around, by no means joyful side of being, experiencing the beauty is not easy.

But let's return to the *The Rescuer* characters. – What's going on? – Vilya is wondering. And a smooth rhythm of the picture is changing. Vilya feverishly rushes to the rescue. First with an empty aqualung, then without it. He has never seen a person drowning before. For the first time, a man who has accustomed to a tranquil float of life must make an Act.

... And here they are on the shore. It is only now that Tatiana Drubich's heroine wakes up from the state of deep trance, in which she had been still. She starts hysterics. Vilya acts almost according to the instructions for saving from drowning, he slaps her on the cheek. But immediately he touches her face with his palm gently.

Apparently far from each other people in everyday life, the author puts them in an extreme situation. The characters of the film tell each other those things that under other circumstances, they could never admit. Deliberately indifferent, Asya tells the story of her unsuccessful marriage: – *He proposed. The family is good. Everyone is getting married. It's time for me, too.* Tatyana Drubich convincingly conveys the intonation of the character, her even and cold tone.

P. Lebeshev is a master of a poetic portrait, sensitive to the director's vision of the frame. Asya's face appears on the screen in the shaky reflections of the veranda glass, as if enveloped in a hazy veil. Unearthly. Detached. Initially, Vilya does not understand Asya. But later, when she tells him about her feelings for Larikov and about his betrayal, Vilya realized it was true love.

A flashback continues the sequence. There are two people under the tree in the rain, Larikov and Asya. He is reciting a poem. The music of I. Schwartz sounds exciting, tender and simultaneously disturbing. Both characters of *The Rescuer* acquire something. Asya regains the outer world, Vilya attains an inner world. No wonder he admits when saying goodbye: – *After this night, maybe, I'll have nothing else in my life.*

The ending is a simple and clear narration wise, but is difficult otherwise. It was important to deliver a complex range of feelings of the characters to the audience, to give a chance to think about the serious turning point in their lives.

Summing up, the school in film – both in the 1960s and in the 1970s – was in many respects more vital, more true to life than in the 1930s-1950s, when the main charge of admiration was dedicated to teachers, most commonly presented as a gray haired teacher grading students' essays. Moreover, a different view, a negative image of the teacher was often met with hostility. As E. Gromov wrote, very different teachers are being shown. From very good, almost ideal, to purely negative. Sometimes the critical attitude towards the teacher prevails. There is no need to care of a strict balance, if such bright personalities work in the cinematographic school" [Gromov, 1981, p. 35].

In *Other People's Letters* (1975) a new type of a school student appeared – macabre (from French *macabre*: gloomy, terrible). This type was only new for Soviet cinema, in western countries it has long been known (for example, *The Bad Seed* (1956) by M. LeRoy and *The Exorcist* (1973) by W. Friedkin). In fact, "macabre teenagers are therefore especially scary, that their rebellion is more terrible than that of typical teenagers because it will not pass with age. These characters are interesting primarily because they do not fulfill the main law of the drama – they remain the same in the beginning and at the end, the story does not change anything them. Only adult characters will change – they become aware of their helplessness and horrified. ... It is in *Other People's Letters* that for the first time a macabre teenager appears – a young man who not only causes an unaccountable fear in adults (this type appeared much earlier, back in 1968 *We'll Live till Monday*, its character Batischev has some resemblance but very distant, since his position is debunked by the author), but the new type acts actively, encroaching on some rights. It is important to note that this image will find its continuation in *Plumbum or the Dangerous Game*, *Dear Elena Sergeevna* and a number of films in the second half of the 1980s [Artemieva, 2015, p. 121].

On the other hand, it was in the 1970s when entertaining films about school came out. Perhaps one of the last Soviet black-and-white films about schoolchildren – *Oh, That Nastya* (1971), tells about a ten-year-old girl living in a world of charming fantasies. It is really a pity that this romantic and musical story, where the animation was organically intertwined, was deprived of colors.

The director V. Menshov in his musical melodrama about school and schoolchildren *The Practical Joke* (1976) used color to the full effect. The film critic T. Kukarkina began her article about *The Practical Joke* with praise: "Menshov chose for his first director's work a dynamic form of narration, catchy, bright, and spectacular. Musical acts, beautiful faces, elegant interiors, and the plot tension overrode psychological thoroughness. The director has focused his attention on incessant emotional impact. This is facilitated by a rhythm, original editing transitions, and the lack of long shots and panning. Everything is big, bright. The film is exciting, and easily creates empathy for the characters" [Kukarkina, 1978, p. 119]. But then she practically deleted all this value with a severe verdict: "The declared problems, moral conflicts are blurred, scattered in different semantic series, replaced by normative rules of ethics. ... The playwright's plan to solve essential problems is obvious, but simplified to elementary commandments" [Kukarkina, 1978, p.121].

V. Kichin was also very strict to *The Practical Joke*, arguing that the film, instead of the expected purposefulness at first, reveals an unexpected ambivalence. The director makes a deal with the viewer that there will be a debate film, a reflection film – in a word, a serious conversation. But right there, "call signs" of a game movie, a show clearly sound" [Kichin, 1977, p. 47].

In our opinion, both T. Kukarkina and V. Kichin, being aware of the original entertaining thrust of *The Practical Joke*, in vain tried to assess it as an attempt to create a psychological drama. In our opinion, there was no duality in the film: unlike *The Diary of the School Principal* and *Other People's Letters*, it never pretended to be dramatic, but was elaborate mixture of melodrama and musical.

The bid for entertainment was made by the authors of the comedy *Troublemaker* (1978). The working title of this picture – "Students Male and Female" was self explanatory. But the change was for a reason. The protagonist of the film, a graduate of the rural school Petr Gorokhov, enrolled at the Economics department of a Moscow university, stands out among the other film characters so much that the final title justifies the content, Peter is a real troublemaker. The genre of the film is a comedy, with musical elements. Young people sing and dance, and the rest of the time they attend lectures and fall in love. A comedy is a conventional genre, allowing different approaches. In one instance, the truth of the characters is preserved. In another one, only ridiculous situations that more or less conventional characters find themselves, are important. In the third case, grotesque exaggeration becomes predominant. The example of *Troublemaker* shows that it is possible to simultaneously use three of these trends together. The whole point is whether the unity of the constituents is achieved at the same time. Many episodes of *Troublemaker* are depicted in an eccentric manner, almost in the traditions of silent films' fireworks of laughter. However, along with funny and moderately instructive scenes there are also many weak, inexpressive episodes.

Even explicit school mischief makers sometimes were featured on the screen of the 1970s so impressively that the effect turned out to be, in the end, probably not what the authors had expected. For example, the film about troubled teenagers – *Juveniles* (1976) – turned out to be weak and sketchy: "since the film authors, building up the plot, limit all culminating events within the boundaries of the dance square, they can be misunderstood, as if they sincerely believe that the root of evil for our youth lurks on a small outdoor dance floor. ... since they do not illuminate another motivation, other sources of criminal juvenile activity in the town - stabbing rampage, theft, alcohol addiction. Since nothing in this film has been seriously explained or analyzed, the viewer has nothing else but, based on what he saw, to draw the following conclusions: dances, where everything is permitted, where young people are absolutely uncontrolled, is a hotbed of evil, and therefore it is necessary to eliminate them. ... The film *Juveniles* is bursting into battle, claiming to be a topical report about our life, our imperfect reality. But this report is unreliable. And most importantly, it is pedagogically incompetent [Zhavoronkov, 1977, pp. 42, 46]. In fact, the naive statement: "the boys are naughty because they do not go in for sports", the total failure of the "good" characters, contrasted with the flamboyant hooligan, exposed the artificial plot. A similar scheme but at a higher artistic level was used in *The Last Chance* (1978).

In the TV program aimed at teens, the leading actor from the film *Plead Guilty* (1983) accused his villain film character – the son of successful and wealthy parents, a ninth-grader Kolya. In fact, led by a confident director's hand, the actor did not spare black colors: cigarettes, wine, "elite" possessions, cruelty, excessive self-confidence – the most stereotypical set of interests and inclinations of a young "silver spoon" Nikolay.

Below is a scene typical for the general interpretation of the image. Nikolay is sitting in his room, the walls are covered with posters of international pop idols. He is holding a book in English (the kid is not inept) in one hand, and an imported knife with a retractable blade in another hand. A self-satisfied smile wanders playfully on his face. The scene is a sign, a poster. It can be easily put in the frame and placed on the pages of the Soviet satirical magazine *Crocodile*. Meanwhile, the authors continue to increase the "negative charge" of Kolya's character in the same cardboard style, to a cheerful music. Nikolai beats and loots a drunk, bullies a first-grader, steals alcohol, drowns a poor dog. There is no question about the film's sincere reflection of reality. The trouble with the film is that it is done unnecessarily rectilinearly, didactically, not attempting to penetrate the psychology of the characters.

The authors' message is clear – a guilty person must carry punishment he deserved. The film's creators, obviously, wanted to make the characters and their actions extremely transparent for the young audience. Hence the contrast between Nikolai and most of his classmates – they are modestly dressed, speak the right words, go in for sports and regularly attend extracurricular



activities. Hence the fate's twist of Kolya's ex buddy, who goes on summer holidays to his parents in Siberia, and returns as a reformed person.

Falsehood, even in the smallest detail, vocabulary that is strange to ordinary schoolchildren, the discrepancy between the age of actors and their characters – all these errors are immediately spotted by young spectators, as a result there is a barrier of alienation between them and the screen. Therefore, simplifying, scheming the conflict and characters, the authors do not achieve the desired, effective impact on the audience. Neither modern musical rhythms, nor bright colors of a wide screen can save the day.

By the way, director I. Voznesensky initially wanted to integrate a black and white chronicle, where real juvenile criminals would speak about themselves. The blending between the feature film and the documentary had been planned, but unfortunately, the idea was not realized. Such a hybrid, could have significantly affect if not the drama, then the style of the film *Plead Guilty*, make it closer to real life.

After all, there is the character in the film, that is sharp and recognizable – Kolya's mother. The actress I. Miroshnichenko emphasizes the hypocrisy of her heroine: on the one hand, the exemplary morality she preaches in journal articles, on the other – her own values of personal gain, prosperity, useful connections with "influential people". This fashionably dressed woman skillfully plays the mother, dedicated to her son's interests and his moral principles, she can even shed a tear on her makeup. Next, with a businesslike tone, she makes phone calls to her powerful acquaintances looking for the possibility to sweep under the carpet her son's ill behaviour. All in vain – in the ending Kolya in fury stabs a girl with a knife and is put on trial.

At the very end of the film, an episode suddenly comes up, as if baked in from another film. It is easy to imagine the scene of the trial in the sense of a moralistic poster, with the prosecutor's speech, with the witnesses' testimony, and the last plea of the accused. But I. Voznesensky used a truly cinematic mode. The trial scene is entirely built on black-and-white stop frames, that the camera caught and the director selected the amazingly in-depth moments. Every film character appears only for a few seconds, but these seconds speak volumes. The frozen movements, facial expressions, eyes speak for themselves. Unfortunately, the film on the whole has not been made with such consideration. The script's weaknesses turned out to be insuperable and the conception was not fulfilled.

We agree with E. Gromov: "Films about difficult adolescents touch upon problems that are not easy to solve. The whole thing is the way these problems are considered. It has long been known that if an artist, raising in his work some serious and acute problems, frankly admits that he does not know how to solve them, then no claims can be made on him. The art of posing the right question is justified – you value its (the question's) correct statement, an invitation to arguments and reflections. It is quite another matter that, for the sake of a "happy" ending, they try to convince you of the existence of a positive program, moreover giving it a universal meaning. Then you don't believe the artist, and he rather takes you away from the discussion of the life problem, rather than attracts attention to it" [Gromov, 1981, pp. 37-38].

In the 1970s, films appeared about evening schools for adults (*The Big Break*, 1972, *Different People*, 1973, *Every Night After Work*, 1973). There were obvious significant changes in their interpretations. One can agree that the *The Big Break* (1972) paraphrases *The Spring on Zarechnaya Street* (1956), but "if in the first film there is a feeling of sincere faith in the possibility of building a new society, faith in the possibility of creating / educating a new person, then in the second – it's just a game that both the characters of the film, and the audience who watch the film, agree to. In both films, a special role, a special status of the teacher is emphasized. The ideal of a teacher who, proudly fulfilling his special mission both at home and at school, has remained the exclusive teacher's image in Soviet cinema for decades. But while in the 1950s this image is perceived as the only possible one, and the presented models of behavior could be considered as role models, the same image of the "correct" Soviet teacher in the 1970s acquires a touch of irony"

[Grigorieva, 2007]. And while in *The Spring on Zarechnaya Street* workers are first and foremost the history's leaders, factory workers in *The Big Break* are ordinary people with their own problems, and simple feelings [Grigorieva, 2007].

As well as in the thaw period, a significant share of films about school and university in the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s was devoted to love stories. It would seem that just recently, in the late 1950s – early 1960s, Soviet cinema heatedly asserted the right of school seniors to love. In the 1970s films about younger teenage love appeared (*Woodpeckers Don't Get Headaches*, *One Hundred Days After Childhood*). The right of high school students to love was already undeniable, the filmmakers were interested in the variety, complexity of modern thoughts and feelings, their relationship with each other, and with adults.

However, this kind of complexity was not intrinsic to all films about school / student love. Some of them were made according to the old plot templates. For example, the film *Yulka* (1972) did not narrate so much about love, but agitated graduates of the eighth class to enter vocational schools, where the teaching staff was wonderful, and the students were all good and smart.

*My Anfisa* (1979) features a love story of Anfisa and Nikolai, charismatic young people. Anfisa is a house painter, a good cook, and a skydiver. Nikolai is a student majoring in Language Arts, likes sleeping, dreams of travelling to Africa, he is lazy, and is not really good at anything. These simple initial data are transformed by the laws of melodrama rather traditionally [Demin, 1980]. Firstly, influenced by Anfisa, Nikolai drops out of the university (since he's disillusioned with the profession of the teacher). Secondly, he learns to jump with a parachute. In other words, he completely re-educates and becomes a different person. That is the actual impact of their love.

However, the future is envisioned by Nikolai rather vaguely: he might serve in the army for two years, and then he'll see where it goes from there. To put it mildly, the moral outcome of his "re-education" does not look as optimistic.

Anfisa and Nikolai were played by talented actors – M. Levtova and L. Kayurov, but the script's poverty did not allow them to create authentic, psychologically profound images. Nikolai is a university student, but the range of his interests has remained unclear to the film audience. Kolya, as a rule, is either meaningfully silent or demonstrates some lazy movements.

A few decades ago, cinema industry had presented such situations in a dramatic, edifying and didactic way. The authors of *My Anfisa*, undoubtedly, wanted to avoid this. That's why this is not a melodrama in its pure form - there are elements of a musical, and a lyrical comedy, too. Humor and melodic tunes, to some extent, concealed the lack of fresh thought and made trite situations more lively. But it seems that the artistic value of the film did not benefit from this and as a result, it was part of the gray mainstream.

Curiously enough, a film that was made two years later, *Double trouble will come* (1981), featured a similar storyline: a young hero from a well-to-do family (this time a high school student) falls in love with plasterer / house painter in her twenties. Due to the Soviet censorship of the stagnation period their relationship was limited only to the chaste kiss of the schoolboy on the cheek of the seductive representative of the working class, and his (also very modest) amorous dreams. A similar innocent plot design of the misalliance (this time between two teenagers) was also used in the drama *Before the Snow Falls Down* (1984).

Naturally, the school-love theme was used in the comedy genre, too. For example, the film *All The Way Around* (1981) used a motif which was well attested in classical literature and, consequently, in cinema, too: parents are trying to protect their daughter from dating with her classmate. Then he changes into female clothes and comes disguised as her friend. The girl's parents were played by great actors O. Tabakov and S. Nemoliaeva, and they, of course, did their best to breathe life into the storyline. But the finale of the film, that could be summarized by the sentence from a popular song lyrics "The First Love Comes and Goes Away", micrified their efforts. The authors' message to the audience was: teenage problems should not be exaggerated, school students are not able to understand their feelings yet.

Films on school/student love theme plunged into the retro atmosphere quite more seldom. The end of the fifties-the beginning of the sixties was the time to reconsider the past. Time of spiritual renewal, of space exploration, of poems being recited on Mayakovsky Square. This time, on behalf of the current generation in their forties, i.e. those who were in their twenties back then, was remembered in the film *How Young We Were*, written and directed by M. Belikov. His previous work, which title also cited the line from the popular song – *The Night Is Short* (1982), spoke about the difficult post-war childhood. In the drama *How Young We Were* (1985), the director as though continued following his character, who turned from a schoolboy of a provincial town into a student of an engineering construction university.

The film impresses with the accuracy of the period features, from a musical phonogram, carefully bringing back the melodies of those years, to the meticulous signs. The camera, escaping from the cramped, dimly communal (shared) apartments, bathing in bright colors and in bewitching mirror glare, takes us away to wide avenues filled with people enthusiastically shouting the same word – "Gagarin!". From the dance floor filled with fireworks of lights we transfer to the emerald meadow and rocky seashore. Together with the film character Sasha, we get into a noisy student dormitory, where there is a lively exchange of a fresh saucepan of borsch for a snow-white shirt, and a tape recorder - for fashionable shoes. The first lectures, the first dates, the first part time jobs. A typical life of an ordinary student, familiar to many of us. M. Belikov makes his hero surprisingly vulnerable, open-minded, romantic, capable of a reckless act and human compassion.

*How Young We Were* is a nostalgic melodrama. Sasha, captivatingly performed by T. Denisenko, seems to be concerned about one thing: is it love or not? What if it's love? Is it enough or not? Probably a lot, since the authors are not tempted by excessive symbolism. Although the author's slightly indulgent and touching attitude to all without exception, actions of the protagonist, gives rise to a certain bewilderment – what about the hypertrophied infantilism of Sasha?

Another love melodrama – *School Waltz* (1977), traces its characters on the illusive border between the last school waltz and the independent adult life. According to the storyline, an interesting, remarkable Zosya (E. Tsyplakova) sincerely entrusted her first love to her classmate Gosha, who turned out to be disgraceful.

While Zosia for E. Tsyplakova was a natural spin-off of her previous roles: of a seventh grader (*Woodpeckers Don't Get Headaches*), a ninth-grader (*The Key That Should Not Be Handed On*), E. Simonova was more likely to be seen in adult roles (*Afonya*, *Missing Expedition*, *Ordinary Miracle*). Nevertheless, E. Simonova managed to play the first, obsessive, ready to be ridiculed, love. The culmination of her image was the episode in the marriage registry office. Dina is standing next to Gosha, now her lawful husband, but stolen from Zosya. The desire is achieved, but the actress almost without words copes to say about lots of things: that having Gosha as a husband does not mean being loved by him, that she could not be able to make him happy, and they were not going to be together for a long.

Unfortunately, Gosha's image is less convincing, not dramatically justified. Having left his beloved girlfriend in a difficult moment and subsequently declaring that he values his personal freedom more than anything else, Gosha gives way to the insistent but unloved Dina, and marries her. The reasons for such a contradictory behaviour remain behind the scenes, the viewer will perhaps remember his tightness and restraint.

Without support in the psychological motivation, the authors of the film force their hero to commit a strange act: Gosha, having run away from Dina directly from the wedding ceremony, teams up with complete strangers, drunkards in the backyard and shares a bottle with them. This must have depicted the highest degree of despair, the turmoil that seized him. But as a matter of fact, the effect is the same as traditional, tacky cigarettes draw, designed to replace psychology, deep penetration into the image with a conventional sign, which denotes a person's commotion. This episode seems an unfortunate mistake, because in general, *School Waltz* is quite compelling.

Low-keyed conversations, soft color tones, ordinary interiors (not everybody lives in luxurious apartments, as some heroes of *The Practical Joke*), no unnecessary editing and optical effects.

In the film *I Ask to Accuse Klava K. Of My Death* (1979), the filmmakers again, as in the thaw period drama *What if it's love?* (1961), turned to the theme of unhappy love, that makes one think about a suicide. *Grasshopper* (1979) was bold enough to show how a nice female student uses amorous / sexual connections for career growth and material well-being. The heroine of the film jumps onto the steps of success with victorious ease, not really pondering the future of those who helped her to climb up there. She, as a Grasshopper, is a certain social type, very accurately observed by the script writer F. Mironer. This type is distinguished first of all by a utilitarian approach to science, to their job, to people who are close, and the desire to live at someone else's expense. Lena behaves as a prospector, greedily seeking gold placer mines, in her pursuit of imaginary values she misses the true values - spirituality, fidelity, kindness, wrote film critics in the 1970s [Atamanova, 1979].

We remember how important it was for the Soviet cinema of the 1920s-1950s (and even in many films of the 1960s and 1970s) to show the positive impact of the collective/community/class on the person who had dropped out of it. At the end of the stagnation period, this storyline acquired a new interpretation in *Scarecrow* (1983) by R. Bykov: the cruelty of the "children's community in need of a black sheep for self-assertion and aggression output. This story is about being an outsider against one's will, and not as a conscious choice" [Arcus, 2012].

"Won't I ever laugh again? Has my life passed by and nothing else is going to happen? I will not love anybody else!" the twelve-year-old girl cries in despair. You believe these words, they do not seem to be a stretch, a falsity. R. Bykov, who had previously directed films for and about children in a comedy, musical tone, this time turned to drama with tragic notes. The script based on V. Zheleznikov's novel presented a serious conflict – mocking and bullying a sixth-grader Lena Bessoltseva. At first, she tries to adjust herself to her new school, to fit in with her new classmates who promptly nickname her.

The world of Lena's classmates is extremely sour and miserable. Most of them long for their academic service, school lessons to finish, so that they can put on a branded jeans, get a little money and have fun. Their entertainment is monotonous - dull trampling to music, retelling ambiguous anecdotes, or jokes about teachers. They talk about money, clothes, other people's success. However, the circle of interests of their teacher (E. Sanaeva) is not much wider – all her thoughts seem to be focused on one thing: her engagement and future marriage.

This is the world where Lena Bessoltseva, a thin, awkward girl who always finds herself in ridiculous situations. She is just as unlike her classmates, as her kind grandfather is unlike other adults in the film. He buys old paintings that once belonged to his ancestral home, but walks around wearing a shabby, mended coat. A long conversation of an old man Bessoltsev (Y. Nikulin) with Lena sounds like a soul confession. The audience understands that they are related by spiritual closeness, such an open-hearted outlook, consonant with the autumn landscape of an ancient Russian town filmed by the camera work. The scene when Lena falls asleep on a disturbing, chilly, windy autumn evening, and wakes up on a sunny winter morning, goes out into the yard and sees the snow dazzlingly shining, how clear and deep the sky is above her head, acquires a special meaning. She feels renewal, finds the strength to fight on.

The pinnacle of her struggle is a scene in church's ruins, where a good-looking and popular Dima Somov, renounces Lena, being afraid to admit his own cowardice. When the teenagers burn a scarecrow of a "traitor" on bonfire, the drama reaches a point of a real tragedy.

Where were the adults meanwhile? One of the scenes answers this question. The tourists descend from a tour boat to see the sights of the town. They are offered to refreshments when a group of teenagers runs out into the square, chasing a thin girl. They knock her off her feet and begin beating. "How horrible!", someone in the crowd exclaims. But next the teenagers scatter in different directions, and vacation mood takes over – in a minute the tourists forget about what

happened. Indifference, vanity, spiritual emptiness cause the authors' sadness as much as a mercantile interest. They urge to stop and think not only teenagers "having fun", but also adults, passively watching their, sometimes cruel entertainment. *Scarecrow* is a warning film. It speaks with genuine pain that under certain circumstances a conspiracy of silence may destroy or conquer everything moral.

The film was in many ways unusual for Soviet cinema. It was arguing with the sugary sweetness of the school theme, where neat boys and girls diligently studies and listened to their parents. The film turned out to be tough to watch, very disturbing.

In the same year, 1983, an equally sharp drama about teenagers was made - *Boys* (screenplay by Y. Klepikov, directed by D. Asanova). This film was about more than troubled adolescents, it was of those who had already chosen a slippery path of crime, those who had been bailed out by a former athlete, the head of the correctional labor colony Antonov (V. Priyomykhov).

There are two scenes in the film, short but very significant. In one of them, grandmother pitifully gives her grandson a packet of cigarettes, habitually saying, that he should quit smoking. "I will, granny, of course I will", her grandson as usually answers. In the second scene, the TV journalist asks Antonov about his educational method. And when he can't specify some rules, the journalist complains that it's not good enough for a TV show.

In fact, Antonov doesn't have a graduate degree. He doesn't know how to speculate about the principles of pedagogy. But he knows more than that, he managed to find the key for his students' hearts, the key that so hopelessly escapes from the hands of his well-educated deputy, who seems to be building his relations with the teenagers by textbooks.

The teacher Antonov is not ideal. He sometimes screams and scolds, but he is always just because he values trust, respect and honesty foremost. He is aware that if there is no mutual understanding, there will be no upbringing.

The film's authors are also not inclined to idealize the situation: in *Boys* there are no episodes of hasty moral healing of lost souls. On the contrary, there are scenes of painful failures - a sudden rebellion, escapes from the colony (some of the actors were actual juvenile offenders). However on the whole the film gives hope and faith in the future of troubled adolescents.

The drama *Games for School Children* (1985) turned to the problem that Soviet cinema had tried to avoid before: the formation of personality in orphanages. There are a lot of brutal, naturalistic scenes at an orphanage filled with isolation, aggressiveness, hysteria, and anger. Violent fights between the girls, one of the scenes is shocking: a high school girl locks a seven-year-old in the washing machine and switches it on. The main character of the film is a high school student Marie. Self-absorption and detachment change for a spark of hope; uncompromising decisiveness of actions gives way to helpless depression.

Teachers rarely appear in the film. *Games for School Children* try to provide an insider's view: we see the events through the eyes of Marie, choosing from dozens of daily impressions what she considers the most important. Hence the motives of loneliness and the lack of spiritual warmth are dominating.

## **Results**

*The stagnation period films (1969-1985) on the school/university topic.*

*Place of action, historical, social, cultural, political, and ideological context*

1. *Historical context (dominant concepts: "media agencies", "media categories", "media representations" and "media audiences").*

a) *features of the historical period when media texts were created, market conditions that contributed to the idea, the process of creating media texts, the degree of influence of that time on media texts.*

The timeframe for the historical period of the “stagnation” has been defined conditionally from 1969 (increase of censorship and ideological control after the invasion of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia) to 1985 (M. Gorbachev's coming to power).

The main characteristics of this historical period:

- essential extirpation of the "thaw" tendencies (including the cinema industry), the actual rejection of Stalin's criticism against the backdrop of the growing expansion of the spectrum of solemn celebrations of Soviet-communist jubilees on a national scale;
- continuation of the exploitation of the official doctrine of the established common community of the Soviet people and the absence of class, ethnic, or racial problems; the possibility of peaceful coexistence of socialist and capitalist systems (in the framework of the so-called *détente* (policy of the lessening of tensions between the West and the East));
- maintenance of the ideological struggle with bourgeois states, militarization, military and economic support for pro-communist regimes in developing countries, armed intervention in Afghanistan;
- aggravation of tension with the People's Republic of China;
- increasing tension with the West (esp., the USA) in connection with the events in Afghanistan, Poland and the incident with the South Korean airliner shot down by a Soviet interceptor;
- "soft" struggle against dissenters: A. Solzhenitsyn, A. Sakharov, etc.;
- continuation of the industrialization (mainly heavy and military industry), construction of BAM (Baikal-Amur Railway);
- mass housing construction for the population;
- continuation of space exploration (including the first Soviet-American space project);
- end of the intensive struggle with religion;
- unusually swift change of the Soviet leaders: within a relatively short period of time from November 1982 to March 1985, one after another, the three General Secretaries of the CPSU died;
- another attempt of the education reform (Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On the main directions of the reform of the general and professional school" of April 12, 1984 N 13-XI).

The so-called ideological struggle against the imperialist West was going on very intensely during the stagnation period. As a response to the attempt to liberalize socialism in Czechoslovakia in early January 1969, there was a secret Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On increasing the responsibility of the senior officers of the press, radio and television, cinema, culture and art institutions for the ideological and political level of all published materials and repertoire", 1969]. It stated that in the context of the escalating ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism, "it is the task of journalists, writers, film directors and artists to oppose any manifestations of bourgeois ideology, but propagandize the communist ideals, the advantages of socialism, the Soviet way of life, to analyze and expose various kinds of petty-bourgeois and revisionist trends. Meanwhile, some authors, directors, etc. depart from class criteria when assessing and covering complex social and political problems, facts and events, and sometimes they reflect the views, that are alien to the ideology of socialist society. There are attempts to assess the important periods of the history of the party and state in a one-sided, subjectivist way, and to criticize the shortcomings not from the position of communist and civic interest, but as outsiders, that contradicts the principles of socialist realism and communist journalism ... Some heads of publishing houses, television channels, cultural and art institutions do not take the proper measures to prevent the publication of ideologically erroneous works, they do not work well with the authors, they show compliance and political expediency in making decisions about the publication of ideologically perverse materials. ... The Central Committee of the CPSU considers it necessary to emphasize the special responsibility of the heads of organizations and departments and editorial teams for the ideological orientation of the published works" [Decree ..., 1969].

Of course, this decision could not but affect the cinema industry, so the practice of replenishing the list of films banned by the censorship continued, and ideological control of screenplays and the filming process intensified.

In the year of the 50th anniversary of the USSR, on January 21, 1972, the Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee "On Literary and Art Criticism" was issued, where, in unison with the above mentioned decree, it was argued that "criticism is still not sufficiently active and consistent in affirming the revolutionary, humanistic ideals of the art of socialist realism, the disclosure of the reactionary essence of bourgeois "mass culture" and decadent trends, in the struggle against various kinds of non-Marxist views on literature and art, and revisionist aesthetic concepts" [Resolution, 1972].

In the same year, 1972, the Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On Measures for the Further Development of Soviet Cinematography" (2.08.1972) was issued, where it was once again reminded that "cinema art is called upon to actively promote the formation of a Marxist-Leninist world outlook among the broad masses, to shape the spirit of selfless devotion to our multinational socialist homeland, Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism, the assertion of communist moral principles, the irreconcilable attitude toward the bourgeoisie ideology and morals, petty-bourgeois remnants, to everything that prevents our progress" [Resolution On Measures ..., 1972].

Thus, in about three years, a series of resolutions were adopted concerning culture and ideology aimed not only at combating the harmful influences of the West, but also at propagating communist ideology. Trying to influence the formation of the worldview of Soviet youth, the country's leadership in October 1976 published the Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On working with creative youth", which also affected the cinema and other media.

However, apparently, some alarming signals about the real moods of the population (especially young people) that reached the Kremlin through the special services did not allow the CPSU ideological apparatus to relax. In April 1979, the Central Committee of the CPSU adopted a resolution "On the further improvement of ideological, political and educational work," which, in particular, stated that: "The communist party organizations, cultural bodies, ideological institutions and departments, creative unions, are assigned the mission to improve the ideological and political education and the Marxist-Leninist education of the artistic intelligentsia. They should constantly care for the upbringing of high ideology, citizenship, the development of creative activity of writers, artists, composers, theater and cinema specialists, and journalists. They must pay attention to the creation of new significant works of literature and art that talently reflect the heroic accomplishments of the Soviet people, the problems of the development of socialist society, used by our ideological opponents. They must intensify the activity of creative unions in analyzing trends in the development of literature and art" [Resolution, 1979].

Later on, similar to the previous documents, it was stressed that "imperialist propaganda ... is continuously conducting fierce attacks on the minds of Soviet people, striving to use their most sophisticated methods and modern technical means to poison their understanding with slander against Soviet reality, to tarnish socialism, to embellish imperialism and its predatory, inhuman policies and practices. Perverted information and biased coverage of facts, underreporting, half-truth and shameless lies - everything is put to use. Therefore, one of the most important tasks of ideological, educational and informational work is to help Soviet people recognize the whole falsity of this slanderous propaganda, in a clear, concrete and convincing manner to expose its insidious methods, to bring the truth about the world's first country of victorious socialism to the international community. It should always be remembered that the marginalization of the coverage of actual problems, lack of promptness, questions left unanswered, are beneficial only to our class enemy" [Resolution, 1979].

It was 1979 that was almost the final for a brief *détente* in political relations between the USSR and the West, *the cold war* began to gain momentum. Soon after the invasion of Soviet

troops in Afghanistan (late December 1979), the jamming of the broadcasts of Voice of America and other Western radio stations in Russian on the territory of the USSR resumed (from August 20-21, 1980).

The power of Yu.V. Andropov (years of life: 1914-1984) further exacerbated ideological confrontation and counterpropaganda: in June 1983, the Resolution of the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee "Actual Issues of the Party's Ideological and Political Work with Masses" was adopted.

The brief office period of K. Chernenko (years of life: 1911-1985) was marked not only by the escalation of ideological confrontation, but also by an attempt of the education reform (relatively stable in the 1970s). The decision about the reform was taken at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in June 1983. K. Chernenko approved it and published the Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On the main directions of the reform of the secondary and vocational school" (April 12, 1984 N 13-XI), which presupposed:

- return to the eleven-year secondary education;
- streaming high-school students into various advanced level classes (i.e. Language Arts, Science, Maths);
- the establishment of secondary vocational schools;
- limiting the number of students in a class to 25-30 people;
- increase of teachers' salary [Decree ..., 1984].

Again, as in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the task was "to radically improve the implementation of labor education, training and vocational guidance in the general education school; to strengthen the polytechnical, practical orientation of teaching; to expand significantly the training of skilled workers in the vocational training system; to implement the transition to universal vocational education for young people" [Decree ..., 1984].

However, in reality, the idea of labor training in schools (as it had happened in the first half of the 1960s), was very soon rejected: since 1988, vocational training in secondary school became elective, not obligatory. In fact, neither the teachers' salary, nor the prestige of the pedagogical profession really increased (the latter, by the way, was reflected in the films on the school topic).

It is clear that the Decree of the Supreme Council of the USSR "On the main directions of the reform of the secondary and vocational school" has to some extent been embodied in Soviet audiovisual media texts, but because of "perestroika" started in 1986, films, violating prior taboos of school representation in films, have appeared.

As for the direct reflection of political events (see Table 1), it barely appeared in the films on the school/university theme of the stagnation era: neither the Soviet-Chinese conflict nor the war in Afghanistan affected the "school" films in any way. The only truly politicized film was *The Diary of Carlos Espinola* (1976), depicting the international boarding school for children of foreign (often – Latin American) oppositionists. In the course of action, a schoolboy named Carlos learns that his father was sentenced to death for an opposition struggle (most likely in Chile) and (apparently) for pro-Soviet views.

*Table 1. Key dates and events in the USSR and worldwide in stagnation period (1969-1985): politics, economics, culture (compiled by A. Fedorov)*

<i>Years</i>	<i>Key dates and events in the USSR and worldwide in stagnation period (1969-1985): politics, economics, culture</i>
1969	Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On increasing the responsibility of the executive managers of the press, radio and television, cinema, culture and art institutions for the ideological and political level of published materials and repertoire": January 7. The publication of the New Edition of the Third Program of the CPSU, that didn't contain promises to build communism in the near future. Armed conflict between the USSR and China on Damansky Island: March.



	<p>Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On measures for the further development of Soviet children's literature": March 26.</p> <p>The approval by the Ministry of Education of the RSFSR of the elective course for the secondary school "Fundamentals of the Cinema Art": April.</p> <p>The landing of American astronauts on the moon: July 20.</p> <p>Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the USSR on the measures for the development of color television in the USSR: August 9.</p> <p>Organization of preparatory courses at universities: August 19.</p> <p>The beginning of Soviet-American negotiations on the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons: November 17.</p> <p>The exemption of A. Solzhenitsyn from the USSR Writers' Union: November.</p>
1970	<p>100-year anniversary of V. Lenin: April 22.</p> <p>Twentieth anniversary of victory over Germany in the Great Patriotic War: 9 May.</p> <p>The treaties between the USSR and Germany, Germany and Poland on the recognition of postwar borders in Europe: August.</p> <p>Adoption of the Charter of the secondary school: September 8.</p> <p>A. Solzhenitsyn is awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature: October 8.</p>
1971	<p>XXIV Congress of the CPSU: March 30 - April 9.</p> <p>Five hundred thousand people in Washington, D.C. and 125,000 in San Francisco march in protest against the Vietnam War - April 24.</p> <p>The United Kingdom accused about 100 Soviet diplomats of espionage - September 24.</p>
1972	<p>Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On Literary and Art Criticism": January 21.</p> <p>Visit of US President Richard Nixon to the USSR. Between the USSR and the United States, an agreement was signed on limiting missile defense and on the joint space program "Soyuz" - "Apollo": May 22-30.</p> <p>Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On measures for the further development of Soviet cinema": August 2.</p> <p>Trade agreement between the USSR and the USA: October 18.</p> <p>The 50th anniversary of the USSR: December 30.</p>
1973	<p>Armed insurgency in Chile. The President of Chile S. Allende was killed. General A. Pinochet came to power in Chile: September.</p> <p>War in the Middle East: October.</p> <p>Increase in world oil prices.</p> <p>The publication (in Paris) of the first volume of the anti-Soviet / anti-communist book of A.I. Solzhenitsyn "The Gulag Archipelago": December.</p>
1974	<p>A. Solzhenitsyn was expelled from the USSR: February 13.</p> <p>Visit of the US President Richard Nixon to the USSR. The agreement on restriction of underground nuclear tests is signed: on July, 3rd.</p> <p>The resignation of US President Richard Nixon: August 8.</p> <p>Visit of the US President J. Ford to the USSR: November 23-24.</p>
1975	<p>The Soviet Union's refusal to trade with the US in protest against the statements of the American Congress on Jewish emigration: January 15.</p> <p>End of the Vietnam War: April 30.</p> <p>The 30th anniversary of the victory over Germany in the Great Patriotic War: 9 May.</p> <p>Signing the USSR (together with 35 countries) of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: August 1.</p> <p>Another break in the jamming of "enemy votes" (except for Radio Liberty) - as a result of the signing of the Helsinki Act.</p> <p>Joint Soviet-American space flight: July.</p> <p>A Russian nuclear physicist, and an activist for disarmament and peace A.D. Sakharov is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize: October 9.</p>
1976	<p>XXV Congress of the CPSU: February 24 - March 5.</p> <p>Reaching of the agreement between the USSR and the USA on the prohibition of underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes with a capacity of over 150 kilotons: on May 28.</p> <p>Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On work with creative youth": October 12.</p>
1977	<p>The Soviet icebreaker <i>Arktika</i> becomes the first surface ship to reach the North Pole - August 17.</p> <p>Opening of the Belgrade Conference on Monitoring the Implementation of the Decisions of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: 4 October.</p> <p>The 60th anniversary of Soviet power: November 7.</p> <p>The Soviet National Anthem's lyrics are returned after a 24-year period, with Joseph Stalin's name omitted.</p>

1978	A military coup in Afganistan - April 27. Start of Islamic Revolution in Iran.
1979	Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On further improvement of ideological, political and educational work": April 26. The agreement between the USSR and the USA on the limitation of strategic offensive weapons: June 18. The 60th anniversary of Soviet cinema: August 27. The second coup d'état in Afghanistan, supported by the USSR: September 16. The entry of the USSR troops into Afghanistan, the beginning of the Afghan war: December.
1980	In response to the invasion of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, the United States suspended ratification of the treaty on the limitation of strategic offensive arms, announced a boycott of the Olympic Games in Moscow and an embargo on the supply of modern technologies and grains to the USSR: January 4. Academician AD Sakharov was exiled to Gorky. By decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, he was deprived of the 3 titles of Hero of Socialist Labor, and by a decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR - the title of laureate Stalin (1953) and Lenin (1956) prizes: January 22. The Olympic Games in Moscow: July 19 - August 3. The USSR resumed jamming the broadcasts of "Voice of America" and other Western radio stations in Russian on the territory of the USSR: from August 20-21. Activity of the Solidarity movement in Poland.
1981	XXVI Congress of the CPSU: February 23 - March 3. Abolition of the US embargo on grain supplies to the USSR: April 24. The beginning of the production of neutron weapons in the United States. The signing of a contract between the USSR and Germany on the supply of gas to West Germany: November 20. Imposing the martial law in Poland: December 13. Statement by US President R. Reagan on the inadmissibility of Soviet interference in the affairs of Poland, the announcement of new sanctions against the USSR: December 29.
1982	Signing a contract between the USSR and France for the supply of Siberian gas: January 23. The British-Argentine armed conflict in the Falklands: March-April. Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On the creative links of literary and art magazines with the practice of communist construction": July 30. The death of Leonid Brezhnev: November 10, Yu.V. Andropov comes to power. Cancellation of the US sanctions imposed against the USSR in connection with the events in Poland: November 13. The 60th anniversary of the USSR: December 30.
1983	Resolution of the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU "Actual issues of the ideological, mass-political work of the party": June. The government of Poland announces the end of martial law and amnesty for political prisoners - July 20. A South Korean civilian aircraft was shot down over the territory of the USSR: September 1. Y. Andropov's statement with a statement against the deployment of Pershing-2 missiles in Europe and the abolition of a moratorium on the deployment of medium-range nuclear missiles: November 24.
1984	The conference on disarmament is opened in Stockholm: January 17. The death of Y. Andropov, K. Chernenko comes to power: 9 February. Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On the main directions of reform of the general and vocational schools": April 12. Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On measures to further enhance the ideological and artistic level of motion pictures and strengthen the material and technical base of cinematography": April 19. Statement on the Boycott of the USSR Olympic Games in Los Angeles: May 8. The French President F. Mitterrand visits the USSR: June 21-23. The Soviet protest against the US military program "Star Wars": June 29. Visit of the member of the Politburo M. Gorbachev in the UK, his meeting with Prime Minister M. Thatcher: December 15-21.
1985	The death of K. Chernenko, Mikhail Gorbachev comes to power: March. The resumption of negotiations on arms limitation in Geneva: March 12. The 40th anniversary of the victory over Germany in the Great Patriotic War: May 9. Meeting of M. Gorbachev and Reagan in Geneva: November 19-21.

According to the authorities, the Soviet audiovisual texts in 1969-1985, related to school and university, were supposed to support the main lines of the then state policy in the educational,

social, and cultural spheres, that is, to show that while maintaining common ideological guidelines, the Soviet system of education, upbringing and culture:

- cares about the inner world of a school student and focuses on the formation of a "comprehensively developed personality";
- the relationship between teachers and students remains democratic, to some extent creative;
- there are problem zones at school and university (criticism became especially visible in the first half of the 1980s, with the release of such significant works as *The Rescuer* by S. Soloviev, *Boys* by D. Asanova and *Scarecrow* by R. Bykov).

b) how the knowledge of real historical events of a particular period helps to understand the given media texts, examples of historical references in these media texts.

*The Golden Watch* (1968) and *Our Calling* (1981), features a positive view on the pedagogical experience of Soviet educators and the pioneer movement of the 1920s, however, these films no longer had such broad resonance as the thaw period film *Republic of ShKID* (1966). In the 1970s and early 1980s, the tendencies of returning to the Lenin's norms of life and the ideas of "good Bolsheviks" have already lost their appeal.

The films *The Big Break* (1972), *Translation from English* (1972), *Different People*, 1973; *The Diary of the School Principal* (1975), *The Key That Should Not Be Handed On* (1976); *Refutation* (1976); *The Rescuer* (1980) reflected the problems in the pedagogical environment, which to some extent echoed the message for self-criticism, contained in the reports of the CPSU congresses.

2. Social, cultural, ideological, and religious context (dominant concepts: "media agencies", "media categories", "media representations" and "media audience").

a) ideology, directions, goals, objectives, world outlook, the concepts of the media texts' authors in the socio-cultural context; ideology, culture of the world, depicted in media texts.

In the era of "stagnation", the communist ideology (including the anti-capitalist theory of socialist realism) in the USSR continued to dominate, the film industry found itself under harder censorship than in "thaw" period, so the authors of most audiovisual media texts on the school-university theme were working within these strict frames, although every year the school and university subjects in Soviet cinema step by step won back new "permitted" territories.

In the films *Woodpeckers Don't Get Headaches* (1974), *Love at First Sight* (1975), *One Hundred Days After Childhood* (1975), *School Waltz* (1977), *I Ask to Accuse Klava K. Of My Death* (1979), *Love and Lies* (orig. *Vam i ne snilos*, 1980), *All The Way Around* (1981), *Cheating* (1983), etc. the theme of love relationships between school students was unveiled on the whole in a puritan way. However, such events as the triumphant march of rock music and the sexual revolution sweeping western countries in the 1970s, touched upon popular culture in the Soviet Union, too. Thus, in *School Waltz* (1977), a pretty senior not only had sexual relations with her classmate, but was also pregnant (the situation had been absolutely impossible in the chaste cinema of the previous years). *Alyosha* (1980) featured a young teacher in the technical college falling in love with his seventeen-year-old student and proposing to her. Despite all the rigors of Soviet censorship, some films contained episodes exposing adolescent interest in sex: schoolchildren examined a low neckline of a good-looking teacher in binoculars (*We Used to Live Next Door*, 1982), a schoolgirl admired the nude figure of a young teacher taking the shower (*Good Intentions*, 1984).

While in the film *Little Confession* (1971) rock music was still a novelty, a few years later it sounded in many films about school/education (*Brother is the Whole Point*, 1976; *The Practical Joke*, 1976; *I Will Wait*, 1979, etc.).

b) the world outlook of the characters of the "school world" depicted in media texts

In general, the world view of the audiovisual media texts' characters featuring school and university storylines during the stagnation period, as in the previous decades, was optimistic, however, some anxiety about the morale of teachers and students (*The Diary of the School Principal* (1975), *The Key That Should Not Be Handed On* (1976), *The Rescuer* (1980), *The Chair*

(1982), *The Boys* (1983), *Scarecrow* (1983), etc.). There were outstanding personalities, troubled with reflection and doubt among the characters (schoolchildren, students and teachers) (*Cross the Threshold*, *Translation from English*, *The Diary of the School Principal*, *One Hundred Days After Childhood*, *The Key That Should Not Be Handed On*, *The Traitor*, *The Rescuer*, *The Boys*, *Scarecrow*). But there were also new dramatic plot twists: in *Other People's Letters* (1975), an impudent high school student rudely interfered in personal life of the teacher who sheltered her, and in *Scarecrow* (1983) aggressive classmates harassed a defenseless girl.

At the same time, there was a mass production of "school" films, where the usual hierarchy of values dominated (communist ideology, collectivism, diligence, honesty, willingness to give a helping hand): *Yulka*, 1972; *Valka's Sail*, 1974; *Such High Mountains*, 1974; *Little Dad's Adventures*, 1979; *Sail, Ship*, 1983; *The Diary*, *The Letter and The First Grader*, 1984, *The Sun in Your Pocket*, 1984; *Watch Out - Vasilyok*, 1985, etc. It seems that the story of a reformed struggling school boy from the comedy *Malicious Sunday* (1985) could have been filmed in the late 1940s and 1950s. Such films generated a touching, pathetic intonation in relation to the school children characters [Gromov, 1981, p. 36].

Meanwhile, Soviet economy problems were highlighted on the screen more and more often. For example, *Translation from English* (1972) shows the excitement of schoolchildren about petty but deficit foreign merchandise (chewing gums and badges). The comedy *Crank from the 5B* (1972) features a shot taken at the department store and consumers' hype at the counter. In *Quiet C-Students* (1980), one of the characters proudly declares that he waited for three years for his turn to buy the sought after car.

### 3. Structure and narrative techniques in these media texts (dominant concepts: "media categories", "media technologies", "media languages", "media representations")

Schematically, the structure, plot, representativeness, ethics, features of genre modification, iconography, character characters of audiovisual media texts on school and university topic in the "stagnation" period can be presented as follows:

- a) *the location and time period in media texts*. The main location in films is school classes and corridors, schoolyards and flats; the plot is set mostly (if it's not a retro about 1920s) at the time when the film is made.
- b) *the environment typical for these media texts, household items*: the furnishings and household items of school films are still modest, however sometimes wealthy apartments are shown (*The Practical Joke*, *Grasshopper*, *The Chair*, *The Follower*).
- c) *genre modifications of school and university subjects*: drama, comedy, melodrama, less often - fiction;
- d) *narrative techniques, narrative bias*: positive characters are rarely idealized, and negative ones tend to be presented ambiguously too, although there are many relapses from the "soothing" cinema of the 1950s;
- e) *typology of characters (character traits, clothing, physique, vocabulary, facial expressions, character gestures, the presence or absence of the stereotypical manner of representing the characters in these media texts)*:
  - *characters' age*: the age of schoolchildren is in the range of 7-17 years, however, teenage characters are most common; the age of other characters (teachers, parents, grandparents, etc.) varies, but adults but adults below 60 prevail;
  - *education level*: corresponding school year for students, teachers presumably have a university degree, supporting characters can have any level of education;
  - *social status, profession*: the financial situation of students is basically the same (although from the second half of the 1970s the material inequality of individual characters began to be more clearly indicated), they can be either from the families of workers and farmers, or from the intelligentsia. The parents' jobs are diverse.

- *characters' marital status*: school students, naturally, are not married; adult characters are mostly married, however, single teachers often appear on the screen (resulting in plot twists connected with the love relationships of male teachers with university or college female students);

- *appearance, clothing, physique of characters, features of their characters, vocabulary*: the appearance of the characters of school children and students in the films of the stagnation period is within the framework of the canons of the student's image of that time. The boys' hairdo changed in the mid 1970s: the western fashion for men's long hair no longer shocked the teachers. Schoolchildren in the films 1969-1985, as in the "thaw" period, did not exhibit fanaticism of their peers in the films of the 1920s -1930s, but on the whole they retained optimism. However, more and more often villain characters, who clearly had no chance of reformation, appeared on screen. Teachers from the films of the stagnation period, like in the days of the late thaw, were increasingly confronted with doubts and sad contemplations. The distance between them and the students became more fragile (this was especially evident in the dramas *Other People's Letters*, *Traitor*, *Alyosha*, *4:0 in Tanechka's favor*, *Good Intentions*, *Almost Peers*). As for the appearance, now they could already afford some liberties in their clothes (for example, a suede jacket, a flirty scarf, in-style blouse and hairdo).

A frame from *Translation from English* (1972) gives a good idea of the appearance, clothing, physique of the schoolchildren in the early 1970s.



*The frame from Translation from English (1972)*

In the frame from the film *Practical Joke* (1976) it is clearly visible how the boys' hairdresses changed to the middle of the 1970s: the western fashion for men's long hair no longer shock teachers .



*The frame from the film Practical Joke (1976)*

The frames from the films *Pupils with an average level of academic achievement* (1980) and *If You Believe Lopotukhin* (1983) reflects the appearance, clothes, physique of the characters-teachers of "stagnant" years.



The frame from the film *Pupils with an average level of academic achievement* (1980)



The frame from the film *If You Believe Lopotukhin* (1983)

f) a significant change in the life of media characters and the challenge that the characters face (a violation of the usual life):

*Option 1:* among the next-door characters, schoolchildren who live a normal life, are those who for some reason do not fit into the standard framework of interpersonal communication and learning process, that is:

- they perform weekly at school and thus hold back the class' rating (*The Last "Fail" Grade*, 1977, *Quiet C-Students*, 1980, *Another Student's A*, 1982 etc.);
- try to dominate, subjugate their classmates, acting sometimes violently (*Kindness*, 1977; *Plead Guilty*, 1983; *Scarecrow*, 1983; *Leader*, 1984; *Games for Schoolchildren*, 1985, etc. .);
- stand out among classmates (in a good way or in a bad way) so conflict with the rest of the class and / or teachers (*Cross the Threshold*, 1970, *Little Confession*, 1971, *Oh, This Nastya*, 1971); *Translation from English*, 1972; *Crank from the 5B*, 1972); *Stunning Berendeev*, 1975; *Other People's Letters* , 1975; *What's Wrong With You?*, 1975; *The Practical Joke*, 1976; *Kindness*, 1977;

*Once Upon a Time There Lived the First Grade*, 1977; *Flat with the Child to Rent*, 1978; *The Tuning Fork*, 1979; *Unfinished Lesson*, 1980; *Revision For the Exam*, 1980; *Lullaby for Brother*, 1982; *If to Believe Lopotukhin*, 1983; *Mascot*, 1983; *Scarecrow*, 1983, *The Morning Without Marks*, 1983; *The Leader*, 1984; *The Third One in the Fifth Row*, 1984; *Malicious Sunday*, 1985; *Different*, 1985);

- fall in love (*Boys*, 1969; *Yulka*, 1972; *Woodpeckers Don't Get Headaches*, 1974; *Love at First Sight*, 1975; *One Hundred Days After Childhood*, 1975; *School Waltz*, 1977; *I Ask to Accuse Klava K. Of My Death*, 1979; *Love and Lies*, 1980; *All The Way Around*, 1981; *Cheating*, 1983; *Overheard Conversation*, 1984, *Before the Snow Falls Down*, 1984, etc.).

Option 2: there are extraordinary teachers among faculty - those who also do not fit into the standard school framework, that is, they try to:

- resist the outdated and / or, from their point of view, incorrect methods of the school principal and / or teaching staff and collide with him / them (*Every Evening After Work*, 1973; *The Key That Should Not Be Handed On*, 1976; *Refutation*, 1976; *Kindness*, 1977; *Alyosha*, 1980, *Unfinished Lesson*, 1980, etc.);

- establish trust-based relations with the students, no matter how difficult it may be (*The Big Break*, 1972; *The Key That Should Not Be Handed On*, 1976; *The Traitor*, 1976; *Kindness*, 1977; *The Tuning Fork*, 1979; *Alyosha*, 1980; *Unfinished Lesson*, 1980; *4:0 in Favor of Tanechka*, 1982; *Good Intentions*, 1984; *Almost Peers*, 1984; *Men Are Men*, 1985).

j) Solving the problem:

Option 1 (student-centered):

- "correct" characters (schoolchildren, teachers, parents, other adults) return non-conformist and / or students in love to ordinary life by individual and joint efforts (*Translation from English*, 1972; *Yulka*, 1972; *Kindness*, 1977; *The Last "Fail" Mark*, 1977; *The Tuning Fork*, 1979; *Quiet C-Students*, 1980; *All the Way Around*, 1981; *The Morning Without Marks*, 1983);

- "odd ones out" school students keep their belief, because they do not comply to educational/parental influence (*Cross the Threshold*, 1970; *Other People's Letters*, 1975; *The Practical Joke*, 1976; *Love and Lies*, 1980; *The Leader*, 1984).

Option 2 (teachers-centered):

- unconventional teachers triumph (*Translation from English*, 1972; *Kindness*, 1977; *Quiet C-Students*, 1980; *4:0 in Favor of Tanechka*, 1982; *Good Intentions*, 1984; *Almost Peers*, 1984), or (as in *Every Evening after Work*, 1973; *Other People's Letters*, 1975; *The Key That Should Not Be Handed On*, 1976; *The Traitor*, 1976; and *Alyosha*, 1980) the result of their effect on students is ambiguous.

The transformation of the gender aspect within the school/university theme in cinema is notable. In the 1960s - the mid 1970s, the on-screen teacher was often a man (*Mishka, Serega and I*, 1961; *The Fallen Angel*, 1962; *Come Tomorrow*, 1962; *The First Teacher*, 1966; *The Republic of Shkid*, 1966; *The Literature Lesson*, 1968; *We'll Live Till Monday*, 1968; *Cross the Threshold*, 1970; *The Big Break*, 1972; *Translation from English*, 1972; *A Teacher of Singing*, 1972; *Yulka*, 1972; *The Diary of the School Principal*, 1975; *One Hundred Days After Childhood*, 1975). But in the late 1970s - early 1980s, due to the actual state of things, images of female educators, often single, lonely and disturbed, appear: *Other People's Letters*, 1975; *The Key That Should Not Be Handed On*, 1976; *The Traitor*, 1976; *The Practical Joke*, 1976; *Flowers for Olya*, 1976; *Flat with the Child to Rent*, 1978; *French Lessons*, 1978; *The Tuning Fork*, 1979; *Love and Lies*, 1980; *Quiet C-Students*, 1980; *Lullaby for Brother*, 1982; *Scarecrow*, 1983, *Good Intentions*, 1984; *The Third One in the Fifth Row*, 1984; *Men Are Men*, 1985);

The gender aspect in cinema on the school topic culminated, in our opinion, in the film *Men Are Men* (1985). A pompous pioneer complains to the teacher that boys in her class perform poorly and hold the whole class back, so that she wishes a separate education returned. The male

part of the class takes this as a challenge and literally starting the next day boys impress the whole school both by exemplary behavior and by excellent grades.

### **Conclusions**

One may agree that most of the films dedicated to school during the stagnation period in the USSR were based on typical stereotypes that to some extent reflected life-like patterns: the emergence of non-fitting-in teachers, their opposition to the routine; a non-standard student, an intelligent student who often conflicts with a class and a doctrinal teacher and does not always find an ally represented by an intelligent mentor or a peer [Mamaladze, 1977, pp. 75-76]. But the thesis about the isolation of the screen school from real school life has been refuted by storylines, conflicts and characters of such debated and remarkable films as *Other People's Letters*, *The Diary of the School Principal*, *The Rescuer*, *Scarecrow* and *Games for School Children*.

Summing up, the analysis of the films of the stagnation period (1969-1985) about school/university showed that on the screen:

- the education/ formation process went beyond the previous strict framework for the preservation of rigid communist landmarks, and the anti-religious orientation was no longer imposed;
- the storyline was not directly linked to key international political events, although to varying degrees they were dependent on domestic political attitudes;
- the main story clashes were built on the opposition of non-ordinary teachers and students with stagnation, bureaucracy, mediocre authorities / colleagues / class. The problem zones (economic crisis, disappointment and fatigue, professional "burnout" of teachers, bureaucratism, pragmatic cynicism of students, teenage cruelty, etc.) were not concealed;
- schoolchildren in the films 1969-1985, as in the "thaw" period, did not exhibit fanaticism of their peers in the films of the 1920s -1930s, but on the whole they retained optimism. However, more and more often villain characters, who clearly had no chance of reformation, appeared on screen;
- the activity of students, that used to be mostly directed to the outside world, even more than in the 1960s, in the stagnation period began to touch upon their inner world (*Oh, this Nastya*, 1971; *Spring Flips*, 1974; *Woodpeckers Don't Get Headaches*, 1974; *One Hundred Days After Childhood*, 1975; *Other People's Letters*, 1975; *French Lessons*, 1978; *The Rescuer*, 1980; *Scarecrow*, 1983);
- the relations between teachers and students have become more democratic, in some instances even reaching back-slapping terms;
- the prestige of the pedagogical profession has begun to decline in the eyes of students and general public;
- images of female teachers, often lonely and anxious, began to prevail;
- income and property differentiation increasingly manifested itself;
- there were changes in the appearance of students and teachers, it became more casual; in a latent form, the motif of female sexuality gradually emerged;
- stories about university students (*We Have Not Covered It*, 1975; *Troublemaker*, 1978; *Grasshopper*, 1979; *I Will Wait*, 1979; *Since We've Been Together*, 1982; *My Little Wife*, 1984; *Valentin and Valentina*, 1985; *How Young We Were*, 1985) unlike the "thaw" analogues were practically devoid of intellectual disputes, and were densely immersed in the genre element of melodrama and / or comedy. On the whole, the love theme in the cinema about school/university was generally delivered with the melodrama accents;
- since the mid-1970s, the color image has led to an increase in the entertainment aspects of films.

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