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Family and Family Education in Russian Feature Films During the Years of Media Education Revival (1955–1960)

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Abstract

The article looks into the representation of family and family education in Russian feature films during 1955–1960 when Soviet filmmakers began to explore the complexities of family life, often reflecting the broader social and political changes of the time. Thus, the family became a microcosm for examining issues of identity, personal struggle, and societal expectations. Soviet feature films of the Thaw era offer a rich tapestry of family images that reflect a complex interplay between personal and societal changes during that period. By focusing on individual experiences and emotional depth, these films provide a critical lens through which to understand the evolving of Soviet family life and the broader cultural transformations of the era. They are valuable in the media education context for their nuanced portrayal of human relationships and their subtle critique of the socio-political context of the time. Soviet feature films of the Thaw era represent a rich and transformative period in cinematography, reflecting broader socio-political changes and contributing to the evolution of film as a medium. From a media studies perspective, these films provide valuable insights into the cultural production of the period, the negotiation of ideological boundaries, and the power of narrative and representation in shaping societal values, family values and historical memory.

Keywords: family, family upbringing, media, media text, media culture, media education, Thaw, feature films.

1. Introduction

The Thaw era, named after the political and cultural liberalization that followed the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 and the subsequent rise of Nikita Khrushchev, marked a significant period in Soviet cinematography. This era, roughly spanning from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, saw a departure from the strict censorship and propagandist tendencies of earlier Soviet feature films (Tomoff, Gilburd, 2021). “Soviet industry and filmmakers strove to satisfy audiences’ hunger for films, while accommodating the political mood shifts that characterized the period. Film and filmmakers played a critical role in the Soviet Union’s attempts to get out from underneath Stalinist ideology” (Dobrenko, Woll, 2003).

N. Khrushchev’s policy was aimed at dismantling the cult of personality around J. Stalin and promoting a more open and less repressive society. “After the 20th Congress of the CPSU, political, economic and sociocultural changes began in the country. Overall, the 1960s represent an important milestone for promoting updated children’s and teenagers’ cinematography. The importance of this stage in the development of feature films for children and youth was

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accompanied by the opening of new filming sites designed specifically for the production of children's and youth feature films" (Chelysheva, 2017: 274).

Thus, relaxation of censorship allowed for more creative freedom and the exploration of diverse themes in literature, art, and film. Feature films started to address more contemporary issues and everyday lives of Soviet citizens, engaging audiences more directly. Film directors of the period under study experimented with narrative structures, sometimes employing non-linear storytelling and open-ended narratives. On the other hand, despite the Thaw, filmmakers still navigated a complex landscape of censorship.

Soviet feature films of the Thaw era represent a rich and transformative period in cinematography, reflecting broader socio-political changes and contributing to the evolution of film as a medium. From a media studies perspective, these films provide valuable insights into the cultural production of the period, the negotiation of ideological boundaries, and the power of narrative and representation in shaping societal values, family values and historical memory.

2. Materials and methods

The material of our research is comprised of audiovisual media texts on the theme of family and family education. The main method is a comparative hermeneutic analysis of Soviet films of the thaw era (1955–1960) focused on family issues (including: analysis of stereotypes, ideological analysis, identification analysis, iconographic analysis, plot analysis, character analysis, etc.).

We also reviewed and analysed books and articles related to family and family education in feature films (Bahun, Haynes, 2014; Baranov, Penzin, 2006; Beumers, 2007; Chelysheva, 2022; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2024; Fedorov, 2015, 2016; Fedorov et al., 2017; Graham, 2016; Kenez, 1992; Kosinova, Arakelyan, 2015; Kozlov, Gilburd, 2013; Lorence, 2011; Mikhaleva, Lozovitskaya, 2024; Oukaderova, 2017; Salys, 2014; Selezneva, 2022; Shaw, Youngblood, 2010; Shlapentokh, 1993; Prokhorov, 2013; Pshenitsyna, 2023; Vinogradov, 2020; Vu, 2020; Zhabsky, Tarasov, 2019; Ziborova, 2015). The following methods were used during the study: theoretical analysis and synthesis, comparison and classification, content analysis, descriptive and analytical methods, hermeneutic analysis.

3. Discussion

The Thaw era in the Soviet Union was a period of significant transformation in both school and family upbringing. Educational reforms and a more open cultural climate allowed for a more complex interaction between these two key institutions. While schools continued to play a crucial role in ideological and academic education, families increasingly influenced the personal and moral development of children, reflecting broader societal changes. This dynamic interplay contributed to the evolution of Soviet society, shaping a generation that was more critically engaged and culturally aware.

From a media studies perspective, examining the portrayal of these themes in contemporary films and literature provides valuable insights into the social fabric of the Thaw era. "In the 1960s, the USSR policy was structured in such a way that raising a child by professional teachers in public education institutions had priority over family education. It was believed that in the process of developing a child's personality, upbringing in the family plays a secondary role compared to school upbringing. This explains the difficulties in developing the theory of family education, as well as the scientific management of family education practice" (Novikova, Pristupa, 2021: 113).

The quantitative and genre analyses of Russian feature about family education provided by I. Chelysheva and G. Mikhaleva show that the number of feature films about family created from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s increased significantly in comparison to the previous periods (Mikhaleva, Chelysheva, 2024). The changes in the ideological course aimed at weakening ideological control over cinema production – all these factors significantly influenced the contents of feature films focused on family issues.

The screen representation of women (working class women, rural and urban women, and women from the intelligentsia) in Soviet cinematography during 1950s-1970s is studied in the book "Women in Soviet Film: The Thaw and Post-Thaw Periods (Routledge Contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe Series)" (Rojavin, Harte, 2017). It depicts the ambiguity of emerging gender roles, pressing social issues, and evolving relationships between men and women. It also casts a light on society and culture in this period of the USSR.

"Filmmakers during the "thaw" period could not even imagine the boldness with which the relationship between fathers and sons would be depicted in modern Russian cinematography.

Children in *Koktebel* and *Return* openly rebel against the ideals of their parents with their habit of obedience. The most openly slavish humility is shown in *Old Women* by G. Sidorov. It was under them – the older generations – that in the 20th century unimaginable outrages were committed against the most talented people, art and culture were corrupted. It was they – fathers and mothers – who silently endured the plunder of the richest country, the transformation of 90 % of the population into beggars. This is where the on-screen intolerance of those who have not yet left their tender age comes from” (Baranov, Penzin, 2006: 35-36).

M. Peacock who analysed Soviet and American film images of children of the 1950s and 1960s came to the following conclusion: “Contrary to the idealized image of mobilized and peaceful childhood created in official rhetoric, a large number of filmmakers constructed young characters with a clear disregard for the consensus that their leaders were so diligently trying to build. These kids had little in the way of ideological conviction. They prioritized their own desires and the needs of their families over their obligations to the state. They also appeared abandoned by the adult world around them as they struggled to survive in a harsh and unforgiving environment. Throughout the Thaw, the contested image of the child reflected Cold War anxieties in Soviet society” (Peacock, 2015).

A.S. Farafonova examines Soviet art of the period of Khrushchev’s “thaw” and its significance for the further formation of avant-garde movements of the late 20th – early 21st centuries. She explores its influence on the further development of avant-garde movements in the context of European movements and analyses the creative searches of artists of the period (Farafonova, 2020: 107).

The aesthetic of Thaw literature and feature films is also analysed by S. Greenwold: “The Brezhnev establishment was able to halt the cultural reforms begun during the Thaw, but a sea change in the cultural mentality of the Soviet Union had already occurred, the damage to the totalitarian edifice had been done” (Greenwold, 2002: 1).

N.I. Churkina provides a thorough study of teacher-parent meetings represented in Soviet cinematography of the 1960s, which allowed her to talk about the liberalization of school culture that began during the Thaw era: “liberalization trends include changes in the material and spiritual components of school culture, which manifested itself in transforming the external appearance of teachers and parents, as a result of which the boundaries of the acceptable norm become more flexible. In the spiritual component of school culture, examples of a departure from the teacher’s monologue, instructions and reprimands to dialogue and even discussion began to appear. The adult community begins to recognize the right to individuality of a student (especially a talented one), their right to express their own position, also in relation to the parental role model of behaviour and upbringing. All this stimulates the process of establishing a parent community. School films capture individual moments when parents have common goals and new values sprout (recognition of individuality, respect for children and their rights)” (Churkina, 2022: 181).

The phenomenon of the culture of the “sixties” in conjunction with the historical and socio-political contexts of the 1960s in the Soviet Union and Western European countries is deeply studied by S.P. Shlykova: “The creativity of the “sixties” of the last century affected all spheres of culture: music, fine arts, cinema, most of all finding its expression in literature and poetry. The cultural renaissance of this period was embodied in a humanistic orientation, an attempt to “humanize” the socialist system. For the first time in the years of the socialist realism dominance, the cultural hero was not a man-fighter, not a man-builder, but a reflective man who survived an ideological crisis. And despite the fact that the sixties continued to remain convinced of the correctness of Marxism-Leninism and the right path of socialist construction, their work had a significant impact on subsequent decades, ultimately contributing to a change in the political course of the Soviet Union” (Shlykova, 2022: 16).

Culturally, the Thaw period was marked by a renaissance in literature, art, and cinema. Filmmakers started to explore more personal and realistic themes, often focusing on the lives of ordinary people rather than the glorified depictions of socialist realism that dominated earlier Soviet cinematography. This shift allowed for a more detailed portrayal of Soviet society and its complexities. We think, “the Soviet cinematography of the “thaw” epoch based on the communist ideology: 1) placed special emphasis on moral education and overall youth culture promotion; 2) propagandized a humanist ideal of the film character – a romantic protagonist whose moral and human properties appeal to the audience; 3) used stereotyped role and gender media text character profiles; 4) broadened the scope of problems, narrative and genre range of media texts about university and students; 5) presented the media image of the Soviet student more realistically in

comparison to the cinematography of the Stalinism epoch; 6) presented an idealized media image of the university teacher as a true professional and transmitter of humanistic moral values and code of conduct; 7) created an idealized media image of the Soviet university in conformity with the government social policy of disseminating the idea of higher education among young people; 8) sometimes allowed the production of politically and ideologically neutral media texts; 9) altered the concept “struggle” in media texts about youth and created for youth: the focus shifted from the ideological or/and political struggle onto the moral and/or social struggle” (Mikhaleva, 2017: 183).

4. Results

The Thaw period feature films (1955–1960) about family and family education. Place of action, historical, social, cultural, political, and ideological context.

1. *Historical context (dominant concepts: media agencies, media categories, media representations and media audiences). 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 Thaw period began after J. Stalin’s death, culminating in N. Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech” in 1956, where he denounced Stalin’s cult of personality and his repressive regime. This speech catalysed a broader movement towards de-Stalinization, allowing for more openness in public discourse and artistic expression. The era saw significant political reforms, such as a general easing of censorship.

2. *Socio-cultural, ideological, religious context (dominant concepts: media agencies, media categories, media representations and media audience).*

Soviet society during the Thaw experienced a cautious reawakening of intellectual and cultural life. People were eager to explore themes of individuality and personal freedom that had been suppressed under Stalin. The younger generation, in particular, was influenced by this new sense of openness, seeking to break away from the rigid constraints of the past. This period also saw a rise in literacy and education, leading to a more informed and critical populace: “The main themes of the movies are the problems of the youth. The filmmakers analyse such themes as education, conflict between a child and an adult, and common mistakes of different generations” (Ianushko, 2022: 75).

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 these media texts.*

The ideological landscape of the Thaw was complex and controversial. On one hand, there was a move away from the rigid Stalinist orthodoxy towards a more flexible interpretation of Marxist-Leninist principles. On the other hand, the state still maintained a firm grip on ideological control, and any artistic work had to navigate this delicate balance. Filmmakers used subtlety and symbolism to critique the regime and explore deeper human and societal issues without directly confronting the authorities.

Thaw films often depicted everyday life in the Soviet Union, focusing on small towns, rural areas, and urban settings. These films highlighted the personal struggles and aspirations of individuals, contrasting sharply with the grandiose and heroic narratives of earlier Soviet cinematography. For instance, films like *The Cranes Are Flying/Letyat zhuravli* (1957) and *Ballad of a Soldier/ Ballada o Soldate* (1959) emphasized human emotions and personal sacrifice, set against the backdrop of World War II, but with a more intimate and humanized perspective. In the film *Land of the Fathers* (1966) An elderly man makes up his mind to find the body of his son who was a Kazakh soldier and died fighting, and to bury him in the land of his ancestors. He is travelling with his grandson: “Toward the end of the journey, the boy loses his grandfather at a station, but they reunite at the end of the film, after the boy has found his father’s grave outside a European village, beyond Leningrad, on the other side of the empire. History materializes as genealogy, personified in three generations of a particular Kazakh family traversing the entire expanse of Soviet territory, first to fight the war, and then to make sense of loss” (Papazian, 2023).

b) *the world outlook of the characters in media texts about family.*

The Thaw period was a transformative era for Soviet cinematography, characterized by a newfound freedom to explore themes of personal and social significance. Filmmakers took advantage of the relative relaxation of censorship to produce media texts that were more reflective, critical, and artistically innovative. This period laid the groundwork for the subsequent

developments in Soviet and Russian cinematography, influencing the further generation of filmmakers and leaving a lasting legacy on the cultural landscape of the USSR.

Thaw film characters often display a desire for personal fulfilment and self-expression, diverging from the collectivist ideals that dominated earlier Soviet narratives. They also seek to balance their personal dreams and ambitions with their roles within the family and society.

The Thaw period in the USSR brought a significant shift in the values reflected in films about family, moving away from rigid collectivist and propagandist themes towards more humanistic portrayals. Thaw films often emphasized the inherent worth and dignity of the individual. Film characters were portrayed with greater psychological depth, and their personal struggles and triumphs were highlighted: in the film *The Cranes Are Flying / Letyat zhuravli* (1957), the plot focuses on the emotional and personal cost of war, portraying the deep grief and resilience of the protagonist, Veronika, thus underscoring the value of individual human experience.

A key value reflected in Thaw films is the importance of emotional authenticity and genuine human connections. Characters are shown striving for honesty in their relationships and dealing with their emotions openly: in *Ballad of a Soldier / Ballada o Soldate* (1959), the brief but touching interactions between Alyosha and the people he meets highlight the value of sincere and heartfelt human connections.

While exploring individual experiences, Thaw films also placed a strong emphasis on the importance of family bonds and love. The depiction of family life became more realistic and multifaceted, acknowledging both the support and the tensions that exist within families.

The main stereotype of success in this world. The main stereotype of success in USSR Thaw films about family and family education centres on personal and emotional fulfilment, moral integrity, resilience, authentic self-expression, and the ability to balance individual desires with family responsibilities. These films reflect a more humanistic and individual-oriented perspective on success, departing from the earlier, more collective-focused Soviet ideals.

3. *Structure and narrative modes in media texts (dominant concepts: media categories, media technologies, media languages, media representations).*

a) *the location and time period in media texts.* The films of the Thaw period often depicted families in realistic settings, emphasizing the everyday struggles and joys of Soviet citizens.

b) *the environment typical for these media texts, household items.* In USSR Thaw films about family, the environment and household items depicted provide a vivid representation of the everyday life and living conditions during this period. These films often emphasized realism and authenticity, showcasing typical Soviet households with a focus on both urban and rural settings. As for urban apartments, many families lived in “khrushchyovkas”, the mass-produced, five-story apartment buildings named after Nikita Khrushchev. These buildings were small, functional, and reflected the state’s focus on providing housing for all citizens. Family photographs were often displayed prominently, emphasizing the importance of family bonds and personal memories. Although less common by the Thaw period, communal apartments (“kommunalkas”) still existed, where multiple families shared common areas like kitchens and bathrooms.

c) *genre modifications.*

During the period under review, family-themed films of different genres were created – dramas, melodramas, comedies and children’s films (Mikhaleva, Chelysheva, 2024: 165). Among them are most films of dramatic and melodramatic genres: *Son / Syn* (1955), *Mother / Mat’* (1955), *My Daughter / Moya Dotch* (1956), *Fathers and Children / Ottsy i deti* (1958), *The Two Fedors / Dva Fyodora* (1959), *The First Date / Pervoe Svidanie* (1960), *Someone Else’s Children / Chuzhiye deti* (1958), *The Fate of a Woman / Sud’ba zhenshchiny* (1958), etc.

During this period, comedy films about family and family upbringing were also filmed, which were widely popular among viewers: *The Honeymoon / Medovy Mesyats* (1956), *Young One from Sabudara / Posledniy iz Sabudara* (1957), *A Bridegroom Without a Diploma / Zhenikh bez diploma* (1961), *Be Careful, Grandma! / Ostorozhno, babushka* (1961).

d) *(stereotyped) devices to depict reality.*

Characters in Soviet Thaw feature films were often everyday people facing relatable, real-life problems rather than heroic or idealized figures. The films were frequently set in recognizable, ordinary environments like communal apartments, factories, and small towns. Topics such as the generation gap, alcoholism, and housing shortages were explored more openly. Unlike the clear-cut, ideologically sound endings of earlier films, Thaw cinematography often left conclusions open

to interpretation, thus mirroring the uncertainties of real life. Characters were shown making morally ambiguous choices, reflecting the complexity of human nature.

e) *character typology (character traits, clothing, physique, vocabulary, facial expressions, key gestures, presence or absence of the stereotypical manner of representing the characters in these media texts):*

- The age of characters: the age of children is in the range of 7–17 years, however, teenagers are more common. The age of the adult characters (parents, grandparents, etc.) can be anything;
- The education level: characters can have any level of education;
- Social status, occupation: the financial situation of children is approximately the same, they can be either from families of workers and farmers, or from the intelligentsia. The professions are different.
- The marital status of the characters: adult characters are mostly married; however, single parents also appear in films;
- Appearance, clothes, body build, features of their characters, vocabulary.

Characters ranged widely in age, from young children to elderly people, mirroring the demographic diversity of society. Characters are portrayed with psychological complexity, highlighting personal and familial relationships. Actors often appeared with minimal makeup and natural hairstyles, reflecting the everyday appearance of ordinary Soviet citizens. Costumes were typically simple and practical, often depicting the common clothing of the working class, such as workers' overalls, plain dresses, and military uniforms. This choice helped ground the characters in the reality of Soviet life. Sometimes, clothing was used symbolically to convey a character's social status, profession, or internal state. For instance, a worn-out coat might indicate a character's economic hardship. Thaw films featured characters with a variety of body types, reflecting real-life diversity. Characters were not idealized in terms of physical fitness or attractiveness. This inclusivity in body representation contributed to the films' authenticity. Characters displayed relatable human traits such as vulnerability, doubt, resilience, and kindness. They were depicted as neither entirely good nor bad but as multifaceted individuals. Dialogue was often in the vernacular, using colloquial and regional expressions to enhance the authenticity of the characters. This approach made the characters' speech more relatable to the audience. Conversations in Thaw films tended to be more realistic and less formal, reflecting the way people actually spoke in their daily lives. This included pauses, interruptions, and informal speech patterns. Characters often communicated through subtle, understated dialogue rather than overt, didactic speech. Some films included humour and irony in the characters' vocabulary, reflecting the complexity and sometimes the absurdity of everyday life.

f) *a significant change in the life of media characters.*

Significant changes in characters' lives often revolved around themes of personal freedom, individuality, and social progress (*Life Lesson / Urok zhizni*, 1955).

j) *the challenge that the characters face.*

Characters often face the challenge of balancing their personal dreams and desires with the expectations and norms imposed by society and family. This includes navigating career choices, romantic relationships, and personal identity. The films often delve into the emotional and psychological struggles of characters, including feelings of isolation, disillusionment, and the quest for meaning and purpose. Complex family and interpersonal relationships are central to many Thaw films. Characters deal with conflicts, misunderstandings, and the need to maintain or restore familial bonds.

Despite the challenges, characters frequently exhibit a sense of hope and optimism for the future. They believe in the possibility of change and improvement, both within their personal lives and in the broader societal context.

Characters strive for authenticity and truth in their lives and relationships. They seek genuine connections and honest expressions of their emotions and thoughts, rejecting the artificiality and pretences of the past. For instance, in *The Lady with the Dog / Dama s Sobachkoy* (1960) by Iosif Kheifits, based on Anton Chekhov's story, the characters Dmitri and Anna struggle with their feelings and societal norms, seeking an authentic and honest relationship despite the constraints around them.

Many characters deal with the lingering effects of past traumas, particularly those related to World War II (*Annushka*, 1959; *Lullaby / Kolybel'naya*, 1959). These films explore how individuals and families cope with their experiences and memories. For example, in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Ivan's*

Childhood / Ivanovo Detstvo (1962), young boy Ivan grapples with the trauma of losing his family during the war, highlighting the enduring impact of past events on the present.

Economic difficulties and material hardships are common challenges, reflecting the realities of Soviet life during the Thaw period. Characters often struggle with limited resources and the need to improve their living conditions. Some feature films, such as *Alyonka* (1961), depict rural and urban families dealing with economic constraints and the efforts to provide for their loved ones.

Female characters, in particular, face challenges related to gender roles and expectations. Thaw films explore the evolving roles of women in society and the conflicts arising from traditional versus modern values (Rojavin, Harte, 2017).

Thaw films often contain subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) critiques of the social and political system. Characters face challenges related to bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and the limitations of the Soviet regime. For example, the film *Nine Days in One Year / Devyat' dney odnogo goda* (1962) deals with the pressures and moral dilemmas faced by scientists working within the Soviet system, reflecting broader social and political tensions.

i) *solving the problem:*

The characters in USSR Thaw films often find solutions to their challenges through a combination of personal resilience, moral integrity, emotional connection, and subtle defiance of societal norms. Characters often draw on their inner strength and resilience to confront and overcome their challenges. This personal fortitude allows them to persevere through difficult circumstances: in *Ivan's Childhood / Ivanovo Detstvo* (1962), despite his traumatic experiences, Ivan's determination and resilience help him survive and fight for his cause, reflecting a deep inner strength. Maintaining moral integrity and making ethical choices are central to many characters' resolutions. These films emphasize the importance of staying true to one's values, even in the face of adversity. For example, in *Ballad of a Soldier / Ballada o Soldate* (1959), Alyosha's consistent acts of kindness and his ethical choices throughout his journey reflect his moral integrity, which ultimately brings him a sense of inner peace.

Emotional connections and strong family bonds play a crucial role in overcoming challenges. Characters often find solace and strength in their relationships with family and loved ones (*Test of Fidelity / Ispytanie vernosti*, 1954).

Thaw film characters often seek self-expression and personal growth as a way to address their struggles. Pursuing their passions and developing their identities help them navigate societal pressures and personal dilemmas (*The Fate of Marina / Sudba Mariny*, 1954; *A Man Was Born / Chelovek rodilsya*, 1956).

Adapting to new circumstances and accepting the realities of their situations are common ways for film characters to find solutions to their life challenges. This often involves adjusting their expectations and finding contentment within their limitations (*Life Lesson / Urok zhizni*, 1955).

Finding support within the community and fostering solidarity with others helps characters overcome their challenges (*The House I Live In / Dom, v kotorom ya zhivu*, 1957). This sense of collective strength is a recurring theme in Thaw films.

Maintaining hope and optimism for a better future is a vital coping mechanism for many characters (*It Happened in Penkovo / Delo bylo v Pen'kove*, 1958; *A Story About Newlyweds / Povest' o molodozhenakh*, 1960). This forward-looking perspective provides them with the motivation to continue striving despite difficulties.

5. Conclusion

During the Thaw era in Soviet cinematography, the portrayal of family life underwent significant transformation. Filmmakers began exploring the complexities of family life, often reflecting the broader social and political changes of the time. The family became a microcosm for examining issues of identity, personal struggle, and societal expectations.

Soviet feature films of the Thaw era offer a rich tapestry of family images that reflect the complex interplay between personal and societal changes during this period. Films began to emphasize individual experiences and personal narratives over collective ideology. Characters were depicted with psychological depth and complexity, showcasing a range of human emotions and moral dilemmas. These characters often embody a mixture of hope, disillusionment, and a yearning for personal and emotional freedom. The Thaw period allowed filmmakers to explore more realistic portrayals of Soviet life, focusing on individual experiences and interpersonal relationships within the family context.

By focusing on individual experiences and emotional depth, these films provide a critical lens through which one can understand the evolution of Soviet family life and the broader cultural transformations of the era. From a media studies perspective, they are valuable for their nuanced portrayal of human relationships and their subtle critique of the socio-political context of the time.

The characters in USSR Thaw films face a range of challenges that mirror the complexities of Soviet life during this transformative period. These challenges include reconciling with past traumas, balancing personal desires with societal expectations, navigating emotional and psychological struggles, dealing with complex family contradictions, facing moral and ethical dilemmas, overcoming economic hardships, and confronting evolving gender roles and social critiques. These films provide a rich portrayal of the human condition, reflecting the aspirations, struggles, and resilience of individuals within the broader context of Soviet society.

The solutions to the challenges faced by characters in USSR Thaw films are multifaceted, reflecting the complexity of their lives and the societal context. Personal resilience, moral integrity, emotional connections, self-expression, adaptation, community support, subtle defiance, and hope for the future are common themes that guide characters toward overcoming their struggles. These solutions underscore the humanistic and realistic approach of Thaw films, highlighting the strength and resilience of individuals in the face of adversity.

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