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## The Model of Cultural Identity Represented in Soviet Cinematography of the Second Half of the 1950s – First Half of the 1980s (The Era of “Thaw” and “Stagnation”)

Roman Salny<sup>a, \*</sup>, Anastasiya Katrich<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rostov State University of Economics, Russian Federation

### Abstract

The article reflects the results of a comparative hermeneutical analysis of Soviet feature films of the second half of the 1950s – first half of the 1980s, including the study of cultural and historical contexts in order to consider their possible influence on the author's views, reflected in the specifics of the depiction of characters and reality, in the choice of plot motifs and other structural components of the film.

Based on the results of the analysis, we described and systematized film images, types of movie characters and plot motives reflecting the prevailing “points of view” about cultural values and traditions, and characterizing stereotypical models of social interaction of characters in accordance with the five types of cinematic discourse (interpersonal, artistic-aesthetic, religious-ideological, historical-cultural, mythological), which constitute the content of the structural-functional model of cultural identity developed by us, which is represented in the domestic cinema.

The analysis of research on the topic of the article has shown that the problem of cultural identity in the period under consideration was gaining relevance. This was due to the beginning of the weakening of the ideological press, which contributed to the revival of interest in culture. Filmmakers increasingly began to turn to folk culture, the peasant world, the history of pre-revolutionary Russia and noble culture. The characters' interpersonal relations were characterized by sincerity and frankness, mutual understanding and mental closeness. The images of nature embodied the feelings of despondency and longing, born of the boundlessness of Russian expanses and contemplation of fading nature. Images of mythologemes of Russian culture – river, tree, house – appeared on the screen.

**Keywords:** cinema, culture, identity, Soviet Union, thaw era, stagnation era.

### 1. Introduction

During the Soviet period of national history, cultural and artistic figures, based on the Marxist-Leninist ideology imposed from above, created not only ideas, symbols and myths, but also ways of their encoding and interpretation. This set the unity of value and meaning orientations of public consciousness, contributed to the formation of a stable picture of the world and the supranational identity of the “Soviet man”. Cinema played a leading role in these processes.

As early as the 1920s, Soviet filmmakers began to create images of a “new” man and the world, imbued with the ideas of class struggle and the building of a just society. Despite the ideologists' desire to break the link between these images and the traditional values of Russian culture, it was

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\* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [roman\\_tag82@mail.ru](mailto:roman_tag82@mail.ru) (R. Salny), [shahanskaya.anastasia@yandex.ru](mailto:shahanskaya.anastasia@yandex.ru) (A. Katrich)

preserved, and the weakening of the ideological pressure, which began in the second half of the 1950s, contributed to the revival of interest in national self-consciousness and cultural identity.

Along with the departure from the canons of socialist realism and the dying out of the screen forms developed by Stalinist cinematography, the image representing the sub-individual, class identity began to disappear from the cinema screens of the Thaw era. Screenwriters and directors increasingly began to look at the inner world of characters. As screen heroes they chose villagers and characters from Russian classical literature, tormented by internal contradictions, searching for moral guidelines and the basis of their own existence. Their images were created in the key of traditional for Russian culture meanings and values: respect for the soil and connection with the native land, love for the open spaces and Russian nature, preservation of connection with the past and the memory of ancestors, compassion, mercy and sacrifice.

## 2. Materials and methods

The article reflects the results of a comparative hermeneutical analysis of Soviet feature films of the second half of the 1950s – first half of the 1980s, including the study of cultural and historical contexts in order to consider their possible influence on the author's views, reflected in the specifics of the depiction of characters and reality, in the choice of plot motifs and other structural components of the film.

The technology of hermeneutical analysis of feature films in historical and cultural contexts that we used is based on the developments of A.V. Fedorov (Fedorov, 2013; Fedorov, 2015), A. Silverblatt (Silverblatt, 2001: 80-81), and U. Eco (Eco, 2005: 209).

We interpret the structure of cultural identity as a multidimensional phenomenon that forms a unity of discursive practices reflecting traditional and innovative for public consciousness forms and ways of relations between man and man, man and society, society and nature, constituting a system of functional blocks (which we formulate as interpersonal, social and being), ontologically connected with the processes of a person's search for his own place in society and the formation of his sense of cultural belonging.

Based on the obtained results of hermeneutical analysis of Soviet feature films of the “thaw” and “stagnation” epochs, we described and systematized film images, types of film characters and plot motifs reflecting the prevailing “points of view” about cultural values, traditions and, characterizing stereotypical models of social interaction of characters in accordance with five types of cinematographic discourse (interpersonal, artistic-aesthetic, religious-ideological, historical-cultural, mythological), constituting the coexistence of the five types of cinematic discourse (interpersonal, artistic-aesthetic, religious-ideological, historical-cultural, mythological).

## 3. Discussion

To date, the problem of cultural identity representation in Soviet art cinema during the “thaw” and “stagnation” eras (the second half of the 1950s and the first half of the 1980s) has not been considered in scientific works. Some of its aspects are presented in studies of the construction of the human image and sociocultural reality on the Soviet cinema screen by culturologists, film historians and historians:

– O.V. Gorbachev explores the characteristic techniques of reflecting the state of social consciousness of the era in the subject world of Soviet cinema of the “thaw”. During this period, in his opinion, “peasant identity at the ideological level was being supplanted by collective farm identity” (Gorbachev, 2022: 171). The model of “demonstrative” consumption developed by Stalinist cinema is represented in village cinema. At the same time, individualization and unification of consumption are becoming more and more evident (Gorbachev, 2022);

– N.V. Glebkina examines the methods of representation of everyday life in Soviet cinematography of the late 1950s-1960s, which reflected the interests and worldview of filmmakers – bearers of a certain cultural tradition. Comparing their screen images of urban and rural everyday life, she concludes that “the city appears as a cold, rational beginning, opposing the sincerity, naturalness, and partly naivety of rural life” (Glebkina, 2010: 18);

– In historiographical studies of “village cinema” L.N. Mazur reveals the tendencies of poetization of the village as a special world filled with sincere feelings, wisdom, and genuine morality. In the 1960–1970s it acquired the features of a broad social phenomenon, acting as a defender of values that were peculiar to the people, the peasantry, contributing to the revival of national consciousness. The confrontation between the village and the city presented in the art

cinema expresses the pain of the peasant life that is being lost (Mazur, 2014);

– Based on the results of cultural analysis, E.V. Salnikova concludes that Soviet filmmakers search for the foundations of national identity in the “village cinema” of the 1970s, where, in a “transparent” space, characters do not find their own selves and find inner unity and peace (Salnikova, 2007);

– I.V. Shestakova, using the example of V. Shukshin's cinematography, shows how films of the 1960s-1970s about the countryside depict the process of disintegration of ancestral ties of the Russian peasantry, the problem of loss of self-identity by characters who lose their connection with home, family, and land is raised (Shestakova, 2015);

– V.Y. Mikhailin examines the methods of constructing a new Soviet identity in the “thaw” cinema. In his opinion, the characterization of the image of a “Soviet man” on the cinema screen of the 1960s has a traditional set of features characteristic of “socialist realism”: “the priority of public interests over personal ones; contempt for “bourgeoisie” and “vulgarity”; readiness for asceticism in the name of” (Mikhailin, 2015: 319);

– V.A. Kolotaev characterizes the general picture of the “thaw” era, in which, in his opinion, the works of such authors as, for example, K. Muratova, A. Tarkovsky, G. Shpalikov did not fit in. In the 1960s, society was in a state of reproductive identity, aimed at preserving and reproducing the ideals formed by heroes in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary period. The cinematography was turning to Russian noble culture, folklore and ethnic roots, and religion. The efforts of filmmakers, with the exception of those who were engaged in assimilating what others had created in contemporary Western culture, were aimed at finding a solid foundation in the past (Kolotaev, 2011);

– According to N.A. Khrenov, in the era of the Thaw, the real task for filmmakers was to support collective identity. However, having been called to life in the era of the worker's gestalt and given expression on the screen, it was approaching “sunset” (Khrenov, 2013: 207). In the same period, “in many filmmakers there was a noticeable turn towards the deep foundations of individual life and, consequently, a protest against the depersonalization of the individual by the alienated machine of the totalitarian state” (Khrenov, 2006: 627-628);

– A.I. Tumanov considers the problem of the influence of state policy in the field of cinematography on the creation of genre forms, images of characters and models of social behavior that form ideas about national values and traditions in the audience (Tumanov, 2021);

– G.P. Sidorova, analyzing male images in Soviet cinema of the 1960s-1980s, concludes that the tradition that links modernity with historical memory and helps to preserve ethno-cultural identity continues. Its markers are archetypes of the masculine, first of all – Love, Search, Care and Heroism, and then – Rebellion, Power and Creativity (Sidorova, 2021);

– O. Romanova shows that Belarusian films of the “stagnation” period are characterized by the conflict of different models of national identity. Already at the end of the “thaw”, “non-socialist” author's cinema reflects the characteristic features of national culture: images of nature, peculiarities of family and social relations (Romanova, 2013);

– S.A. Breitman conducts an ethical and philosophical reflection on the trends in the development of Russian cinema in the context of traditional values of Russian culture. In his opinion, despite the harsh ideological dictate, the spiritual (aesthetic, moral, religious, existential) values of Russian culture were in demand in Soviet cinema (Breitman, 2004: 10);

– A.M. Maler, investigating the problem of the representation of christianity in Soviet cinema as the basis of traditional ethno-cultural identity, comes to the opinion that despite the anti-religious dictate, religious motifs appeared in Soviet films. This was facilitated by the fact that the Soviet system from a certain time “tried to adapt itself to the traditional mentality of a significant part of the Russian people, more or less consciously exploiting conservative mindsets – pochvenniki, patriotic, nationalistic, imperial and, finally, religious, i.e. orthodox”. Orthodoxy “was used by the Soviet authorities not as a dogmatic creed, but as the traditional ethno-cultural identity of the Russian people” (Mahler, 2023: 160);

– S.Y. Shchebrova, using the example of Central Asian cinema, shows how in the space of natural elements tamed by man, a paradise garden city emerges, depicted as a happy home, part of the sacred territory of the USSR. The heroes who built such cities displayed sacrifice and deeds, heroism and masculinity – sincerely idealized qualities that form the basis of the mythology of the Thaw (Shchebrova, 2020: 56);

The analysis of studies on the topic of the article showed that in the epochs of “thaw” and “stagnation” against the background of the weakening of ideological dictate aimed at maintaining faith in the ideals of the revolution, the need to appeal to cultural roots, the expression of national consciousness was actualized. Cinematographers in “village cinema” turn to the analysis of problems related to the destruction and restoration of ties with the family, family, home, nature and native land, in screen adaptations of classic works of Russian literature recreate images of noble culture.

#### 4. Results

##### *Features of the historical period of creation of feature films*

In 1953, Stalin died, and three years later, at the XX Congress of the CPSU (February 25, 1956), N.S. Khrushchev read a report “On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences”, which condemned Stalin's terror and repression. In the second half of the 1950s, the rehabilitation of the repressed began, and in 1958 the concept of “enemy of the people” was removed from the Criminal Code of the RSFSR.

In the second half of the 1950s and early 1960s, the country made a tremendous scientific and technological breakthrough. In 1954, the first nuclear power plant in Obninsk was launched. In 1957, the world's first artificial satellite was launched. In 1961 the world's first human space flight was performed, and in 1965 the first cosmonaut's spacewalk in history was performed. Advances in science brought romantic heroes – scientists, engineers, geologists – to Soviet movie screens, whom young people aspired to emulate.

The “iron curtain” was opening between the USSR and the West. In July 1957, the International Festival of Youth and Students was held in Moscow, which opened for Soviet people the free world of capitalist countries with their symbols – jeans and jazz. In 1958, the musical “Man to Man” by G. Alexandrov was released, which depicted the performances of foreign artists at the festival. Jazz began to be heard in Thaw films (*Carnival Night*. Russia, 1956), *Zastava Ilyicha*. Russia, 1964) and others). In 1959, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee N.S. Khrushchev and U.S. President R. Nixon held a debate that initiated the establishment of cultural ties between the two countries, and in 1963, Moscow and Washington signed an agreement on the creation of a hotline.

In the 1950–1960s, the government was actively engaged in overcoming the housing crisis in the country. The situation was aggravated by rural migration and the resettlement from small villages. The number of residents in the cities was rapidly increasing. Overcoming the crisis was facilitated by the implementation of the state program for the mass construction of standard five-storey houses, where residents of communal apartments were relocated free of charge.

With the coming to power of Leonid Brezhnev in 1964, the “thaw” began to fade, democratic freedoms were curtailed, authoritarian-bureaucratic relations and ideological control were strengthened. A new period of Soviet history, commonly referred to as the era of “stagnation”, was coming. It lasted for about two decades.

From the mid-1960s, the authorities, in response to the emerging dissident movement, began to wage a localized struggle against dissidents – cultural and scientific figures (Y. Daniel, A. Sakharov, A. Sinyavsky, A. Solzhenitsyn, etc.), accusing them of actions that defamed the Soviet state. The anti-religious campaign continued. Its scale was much smaller than in the Khrushchev period, and it was of a targeted nature. Active representatives of religious organizations were persecuted.

Despite the implementation of economic reforms, construction of large enterprises and growth in industrial production, economic growth gradually slowed down, labor productivity decreased, commodity shortages increased, and food imports increased. However, economic sustainability was supported by rising oil prices and increased oil and gas exports, which helped to maintain stability in the welfare of the population and socio-political life.

In the 1970s, the USSR authorities took steps to establish international relations with Western countries and the United States. Trade and strategic arms limitation treaties were signed between Moscow and Washington. In its foreign policy, the USSR began to adhere to the concept of ideological coexistence, which contributed to the warming of Soviet-American relations. Meanwhile, by the end of the 1970s, the end of this period had already come. In 1979, the USSR deployed troops to Afghanistan, which caused a negative reaction of Western countries, provoked a new round of the Cold War and served as a reason for them to boycott the XXII Summer Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980.

In the first half of the 1980s, the government and the General Secretaries of the CPSU Central Committee, Y.V. Andropov and K.U. Chernenko, attempted reforms. They were mainly aimed at streamlining the administrative system, persecuting shady business and reorganizing the school education system. With the ongoing Afghan War, the confrontation between the USSR and Western countries intensified, and the arms race gained momentum. During the same period, relations with China were improving.

*The influence of historical events on the process of creating Soviet feature films of the second half of the 1950s – first half of the 1980s*

I. Ehrenburg's story *The Thaw* (1954) gave its name to the period that came after the Stalin era. The heroes of the story were overwhelmed with feelings of approaching warming in socio-political relations, the coming freedom. These feelings embraced cultural figures and intellectuals, they had faith in the inevitability of change for the better.

The weakening of the ideological press opened up opportunities for creative exploration and the expression of truth. A pleiad of talented filmmakers – former front-line soldiers who had endured all the hardships of war and young VGIK graduates born in the pre-war years – created a new image of Soviet cinema. The epic heroes of Stalinist films gave way to ordinary people overwhelmed by feelings of freedom, romance and justice. Student and worker collectives were transformed from faceless masses of people into a community of individuals united by the spirit of friendship and camaraderie.

One of the key themes of feature cinematography of the late 1950s – early 1960s was the Great Patriotic War. The screen was released many films: *Soldiers* (Russia, 1957), *The Cranes Are Flying* (Russia, 1957), *The House I Live In* (Russia, 1957), *The Ballad of a Soldier* (Russia, 1959), *The Fate of Man* (Russia, 1959), *Peace to the incoming* (Russia, 1961), *Ivanovo's Childhood* (Russia, 1962), *On the Seven Winds* (Russia, 1962), *The Living and the Dead* (Russia, 1964) and others; which expressed the pain of a generation that dreamed of happiness, but by the will of history, got to the front. The authors showed the tragedy of a man facing the catastrophic events of war. The faces of young heroes who left this world before realizing their dreams began to appear more and more often on the movie screen.

With the advent of Khrushchev, a new anti-religious campaign was launched in accordance with the program of building communism in the USSR. A wave of clergy arrests and destruction of churches swept across the country. Compromises with the church, which had taken place in the war and post-war years, were now perceived as a departure from the true Leninist path. One after another, anti-religious pictures were released, exposing various forms of belief, especially sectarianism. They played with situations in which lonely people are lured into sects or the Orthodox Church, deceive gullible parishioners, cooperate with the German occupiers: *Ivanna* (Russia, 1959), *Wonderworker* (Russia, 1960), *Deceived* (Russia, 1961), *Clouds over Borsky* (Russia, 1961), *Sinner* (Russia, 1962), *Confession* (Russia, 1962), *The End of the World* (Russia, 1962) and others.

At the beginning of the Thaw, filmmakers began to turn to the revolutionary ideals of the past, recreating the sacred aura of revolution and civil war on the screen. However, if at the beginning of the “thaw” this period of history was romanticized (*Forty-First*. Russia, 1956), *The Communist*. Russia, 1957), then by its end it began to acquire an increasingly tragic tone. In the anniversary year of 1967, films dedicated to the October Revolution were released. Their authors dared to interpret the main Soviet myth in their own way, depicting it in forms and motifs far removed from ideological canons. This caused a storm of criticism from Soviet film bureaucrats, who banned some of the pictures. The films *Komissar* (Russia, 1967) and *The First Russians* (Russia, 1967) were shelved.

In Panfilov's film *There is no ford in the fire* (Russia, 1967), the events of half a century ago were reinterpreted. Despite the traditional narrative based on the ideas of the victory of the oppressed class and the pursuit of universal happiness, in the movie the revolution in Tatyana Tetkina's eyes appears as violence against all people, both white and red. She confesses that she believes that there will come a time “when people will stop being tortured”.

The “thaw” lasted a little more than ten years. According to researchers' observations, M. Khutsiev's two films became symbols of hope (*Spring on Zarechnaya Street*. Russia, 1956) and disappointment (*July Rain*. Russia, 1966), signifying the beginning and the end of this romantic era. According to A.M. Mahler, “if the first film story testified only to the first timid questions and contradictions of the dominant Soviet worldview, the second one already revealed its complete

hopelessness” (Mahler, 2023: 174).

According to A.V. Fedorov, “the film *We'll live until Monday* (Russia, 1968), no less than M. Khutsiev's masterpiece *July Rain* (Russia, 1966), talentedly marked the crisis (or even the collapse) of “thaw” ideals among the Soviet intelligentsia, which felt the essence of regressive political and socio-cultural trends in the USSR more acutely than others” (Fedorov et al., 2017).

In the epochs of “thaw” and “stagnation” migration of rural population became a serious social problem. Young people left the villages for the cities to enter universities, and the older generation in search of income. This led to the devastation of villages.

Film directors (M. Kalatozov, L. Kulidzhanov, S. Rostotsky, V. Shukshin, L. Shepitko, etc.) made films about the countryside and peasant life. Against the background of industrial subjects (the struggle for the harvest, increasing the number of livestock, land reclamation, etc.), the authors told about moral problems: the relationship between fathers and children, the breakdown of the family, the severing of ties with the native land. They expressed their worries about the disappearance of the peasant world.

In the “village cinema” of the 1960s – 1970s, the authors turned to traditional Russian culture, preserved in a patriarchal, agrarian society. Their heroes were people who were seemingly silly and funny, but sincere, kind and morally pure, and the village appeared as a special religious world that opposed urban civilization.

In the 1970s, a series of films (*Return of Feelings*. Russia, 1979; *Our Debts*. Russia, 1976; *Red viburnum*. Russia, 1973; *Native Village*. Russia, 1979 and others) on the theme of returning to the village were released. The heroes of these films come to realize the wrongness of the path they have chosen, experience a sense of duty to their small homeland. “The call to return to one's roots, to the origins of folk morality can be considered as the main mythologem of village cinema... One of the late-Soviet films made in 1984 was so called – *Prodigal Son* (Russia, 1984)” (Mazur; Gorbachev, 2013: 50).

From the second half of the 1960s to the early 1980s, the intensity of atheist propaganda decreased markedly. In 1971, an unprecedented event occurred that violated all ideological canons of Soviet culture. A. Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* (Russia, 1966) was shown on the big screen. The viewer saw the story of a Russian monk-icon painter who waged a spiritual struggle, in humility and silence preserving inner purity in the cruel world around him. Incredible was the ending of this story. “The contrast of the lingering dirty, gray, aggressive agelessness and the pure, peaceful, sublime image of the Divine Trinity in the form of three reverent angels created the effect of a direct sermon...” (Mahler, 2023: 183). There has never been a more overtly religious statement in the history of Soviet cinema. Despite the fact that the number of copies was very modest and distribution was limited mainly to Moscow and Leningrad cinemas, the religious and philosophical theme in cinema struck a powerful chord.

In 1967, the movie *The Commissar* (Russia, 1967) was made, which remained “on the shelf” for 20 years. The main heroine, a convinced communist Vavilova, takes her newborn child to be baptized in the nearest church, which could not but cause perplexity among the censors.

In 1968, M. Kalik's film *To Love* (Russia, 1968) was released. In the movie, random passers-by and archpriest A. Men, an Orthodox missionary, talk about love. Answering the question: “What does it mean to love?”, he says that true love is connected with experiencing the state of eternity and reminds of the relationship in the Kingdom of Heaven. For Soviet censorship, a priest's direct preaching on the big screen was unacceptable. In 1971, the movie was banned from theaters.

In the first half of the 1980s, a landmark event for believing people took place – the Moscow Danilov Monastery was handed over to the Orthodox Church (1983). During this period, only one movie (*At the Ghosts in Captivity*. Russia, 1984) with anti-religious themes was made.

The era of “stagnation” was a period of screen adaptations of works of Russian classical literature: *The Nest of the Nobility*. Russia, 1969; *The Seagull*. Russia, 1970; *Uncle Vanya*. Russia, 1971; *Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano*. Russia, 1977; *A Few Days in the Life of I.I. Oblomov*. Russia, 1979, and others, recreating melancholic images of pre-revolutionary Russia. The frozen time of closed spaces of dilapidated houses and half-abandoned estates recreated the languid atmosphere of noble society. Film historians (Davidenko, 2004; Mahler, 2023, etc.) have repeatedly noted the parallels between the screen images of representatives of noble culture and the Soviet intelligentsia of the 1970s, who had lost faith in their strength and were experiencing the collapse of their hopes and dreams.

*Ideology, worldview of the authors of feature films in the socio-cultural context*

The release of E. Ryazanov's film *Carnival Night* (Russia, 1956) at the dawn of the “thaw” symbolized change in the political climate in the country. Perhaps for the first time on the Soviet cinema screen, the authorities were openly ridiculed, and the characters allowed themselves a familiar attitude towards its legitimate representatives without fear or hesitation. It is no coincidence that the film was shot in the year when Khrushchev read a report on Stalin's cult of personality at the 20th Congress of the CPSU Central Committee.

In G. Chukhrai's film *Clear Sky* (Russia, 1961), the scene where the characters learn of Stalin's death is replaced by shots of a spring ice drift, accompanied by solemn music. In the sky, gray clouds disperse, ice block smelt, and bright sunlight is reflected in the streams. The episode is a metaphorical illustration of the fall of the cult of personality.

With the advent of the “thaw”, the main symbolic images of Stalinist cinema were reinterpreted. The monumentalism and idealization of Stalinist pictures were replaced by the poetics of “documentalism”, which recreates the truth of human feelings and relationships, and a philosophical perception of reality. One of the main signs of the coming freedom for filmmakers expressed in the ability to tell the language of cinema about real life, to show it as it is, in the desire to create an authentic environment, the authenticity of characters, live natural actors.

Not only the experience of the avant-garde cinema of the 1920s, but also the discoveries of Italian neorealism played an important role in the formation of the film language of the 1960s. According to B.V. Reifman, its appropriation became “one of the main “external” reasons for the formation of Soviet post-Stalinist cinema” (Reifman, 2020: 42). Of course, it was “pink neorealism”. The movie screen portrayed an atmosphere of romance and love, the loyalty of friendships, and the general excitement caused by scientific discoveries and achievements in the space industry.

Filmmakers were now interested in the individual inner world of a person tormented by contradictions, experiencing an existential crisis. In the stories unfolding on the screen, they began to show how a personality matures in the collision with a multifaceted and ambiguous world, how, searching for answers to complex questions, it finds support in the form of sacrificial images of heroes and the ideals of the revolution, the Civil War and the Great Patriotic War. For the “sixties” these ideals were the measure of a true and just life.

In the late 1960s, there was a sense of disillusionment with the ideals of the Thaw and the future. Pictures about the spiritual crisis of the Soviet man, depicting the illusion of collective existence, began to appear on the screens more and more often. On the faces of the characters appeared longing and despondency. Now the only psychological support for them is another unhappy person capable of showing sincere and warm feelings.

Despite increasing ideological pressure, filmmakers retained their inner freedom. Some of them in the 1970s managed to say goodbye to ideology altogether and create authorial works characterized by a vivid individual style and metaphysical issues, exploring the role of religious and Christian foundations in the life of an individual and the whole of humanity (A. German, E. Klimov, A. Tarkovsky, L. Shepitko, etc.). Others had to make compromises and shoot pictures in an ideological vein, subtly hinting at the falsity of socialist ideals (V. Abdrashitov, G. Danelia, E. Ryazanov, etc.).

*Worldview of the characters portrayed in Soviet feature films of the second half of the 1950s – first half of the 1980s*

The characters of many feature films of the “thaw” era were young people searching for themselves, falling in love and dreaming, full of optimism and faith in the realization of hopes. They no longer harbored hatred for class enemies, nor did they display ideological fanaticism, as was the case in Stalinist cinema, but as before, they also sought justice in life, sincerity in their relationships with others, and unity in the collective. Their belief in the values of friendship and family, the memory of the war and the ideals of the revolution were their main guidelines in solving moral problems.

Meanwhile, already at the end of the “thaw”, characters appeared who found their happiness in material values and were attracted to Western materialism, something that at the dawn of the Soviet era was considered bourgeoisie. For example, Dima Semitsvetov from the movie *Beware of the Car* (Russia, 1966) and Kostya Batischev from the movie *We'll live until Monday* (Russia, 1968) stood out from other characters with their fashionable clothes.

At the turn of the 1960s-1970s, the “poetic documentary” and the idealist hero believing in a bright future were replaced by the “new conventionality” and the hero experiencing an existential crisis. During this period, two contrasting types of hero emerged. The first type includes the characters of “village cinema”, who are in a state of crisis, but have not lost their purpose and desire to fight for their own happiness. The second type includes characters belonging to the urban culture, withdrawn in themselves, who have lost their values and are disappointed in life.

The first type is represented in the pictures: *Native Village* (Russia, 1979), *Hello and Farewell* (Russia, 1972), *Return of Feelings* (Russia, 1979), *Your Son and Brother* (Russia, 1966), *Strange People* (Russia, 1969), *Stoves-benches* (Russia, 1972), *Redviburnum* (Russia, 1973), and other, raising the theme of contrasting the moral foundations of villagers to the people of urban culture. Their heroes are sympathetic but distrustful, with a keen sense of justice, tormented by a sense of loss of connection with their native land, home and family.

Representatives of the second type include the heroes of the films of V. Abdrashitov (*Word for Defense* (Russia, 1976), *Turn* (Russia, 1978), *Fox Hunt* (Russia, 1980), *Parade of Planets* (Russia, 1984), I. Averbakh (*Monologue* (Russia, 1972), *Alien Letters* (Russia, 1975), *Fantasies of Feryatev* (Russia, 1979), *The Voice* (Russia, 1982), R. Balayan (*Flying in a dream and in reality* (Russia, 1983), G. Daneliya (*Autumn Marathon* (Russia, 1979), *Tears dripped* (Russia, 1982), E. Ryazanov (*Officeromance* (Russia, 1977), *Station for Two* (Russia, 1982), M. Khutsiev (*Afterword* (Russia, 1983), L. Shepitko (*You and Me* (Russia, 1971) and other directors. They do not follow the ideals of collectivism and socialism, but live separate private lives and defend individual interests. And the characters who continue to faithfully serve socialist ideals look strange and ridiculous, such as the brigadier Potapov in the movie *Award* (Russia, 1974) or the chairwoman of the town executive committee Uvarova in the movie *I ask for the word* (Russia, 1975).

*Narrative structure and techniques in Soviet feature films of the second half of the 1950s – first half of the 1980s.*

#### *Place and time of action*

The time of action in the films: the past (mythologized depiction of the events of the Revolution and Civil War; truthful and epic depiction of the Great Patriotic War) and the present. The events depicted take place on the territory of the Soviet Union, in urban or rural areas.

*Characteristic settings and everyday objects:* bright and spacious streets, apartments and houses of towns and villages in the films of the “thaw” epoch are replaced by gloomy and gray streets, dark corridors and rooms in the films of the “stagnation” epoch. An example of this is G. Danelia's films *I'm Walking on Moscow* (Russia, 1963) and *Autumn Marathon* (1979), shot at the peak of the two eras.

There is a noticeable difference between village houses and city apartments. In village houses the conditions are modest and ascetic. They contain the utensils necessary for cultivating the land and caring for livestock. The furnishings of urban apartments have different variations. In some cases, it is characterized by modesty, in others, emphasized refined and flamboyant. The interior of apartments characterizes the individuality of the owner, his desire to follow fashion trends or passion for intellectual leisure.

*Genre modifications.* Cinematography “thaw” and “stagnation” is distinguished by genre diversity. More often there were films shot in the genre of lyrical melodrama and comedy, drama and tragicomedy, less often – in the genre of tragedy, science fiction, philosophical parable, adventure (*Vertical*. Russia, 1967), and horror (*Viy*. Russia, 1967).

*Stereotypical methods of depicting reality:* characters full of optimism and hopes of the “thaw” era are replaced by melancholic characters of the “stagnation” era, disappointed in friendship and love.

#### *Character typology:*

– *social status, profession:* Throughout the period under review, changes in attitudes towards professions and representatives of different social groups took place. For example, while in the second half of the 1950s, movies emphasized the high social and cultural status of the teacher (*Spring on Zarechnaya Street* (Russia, 1956), *The Case was in Penkov* (Russia, 1958), in the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, his authority declined. The image of the policeman, on the contrary, remains constant on the screen. The defenders of law and order look like cultural heroes fighting for justice (*Beware of the Car* (Russia, 1966), *Investigators Lead the Investigation* (Russia, 1971–1989), *Born by Revolution* (Russia, 1974–1977), *The Meeting Place Cannot Be Changed* (Russia, 1979).



Intellectuals gradually cease to be champions of socialist ideas, but turn into marginal representatives of late Soviet society. Villagers, migrating to the city, acquire a certain marginality, only outwardly and superficially mastering urban culture.

– *the character's marital status*: in many “thaw” films, the image of a complete family was dominant, but the image of single mothers whose husbands died at the front was no exception. In the “stagnation” era, the absence of the father and the husband who left the family became commonplace in feature films. Such destructive socio-cultural phenomena as emancipation (in the 1920s it was the direction of Bolshevik class policy), secularization, ideologization and urbanization contributed to the increase in divorce rates in late Soviet times.

– *the appearance, clothing, and personality traits of the characters*.

The characters of “thaw” cinema were young romantics and intellectuals, looking forward to the future with hope, and engaged in solving existential problems, searching for their way of life. They were characterized by courage and tenacity, principle and determination, simplicity and modesty, passion for science and poetry, the desire to find their vocation and willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of “high” ideas.

In the 1970s, they turned into middle-aged intellectuals and workers who had become disillusioned with life, melancholic, and who did not believe in socialist ideals. They did not become insecure and indecisive, “but as if experiencing a certain paralysis of the creative will from a profound rethinking of ... the surrounding reality” (Mahler, 2023: 222).

In feature films of the “stagnation” era, the image of a man lost his masculine character traits, but the image of a strong and businesslike woman building a career appeared. Female, for example, were the roles of the director: *Wings* (Russia, 1966), *Service Romance* (Russia, 1977), *Moscow does not believe in tears* (Russia, 1979), chairman (*Please say a word* (Russia, 1975), master at the factory (*Five Evenings* (Russia, 1978).

In the 1960s-1970s, a series of films depicting heroic images of women were released. The films *Mother's Field* (Russia, 1967), *Zhuravushka* (Russia, 1968), *Varka* (Russia, 1971), *Russkoe Pole* (Russia, 1971), *Stepmother* (Russia, 1973), and *Widows* (Russia, 1976) tell about women's hardships. The authors aspiration “to epitomize the maternal beginning, to create not just certain female types (mother, beloved, village girl), but symbols of the Russian Land is noticeable in them” (Mazur, 2014).

*The model of cultural identity represented in the Soviet cinema of the second half of the 1950s – first half of the 1980s*

The problem of cultural identity in the period under review was gaining relevance. Cinematographers gradually reoriented themselves from the ideological discourse to the cultural one, and increasingly began to refer to folk culture, the peasant world, the memory of pre-revolutionary Russia and noble culture.

The model of cultural identity represented by Soviet cinema of the second half of the 1950s and the first half of the 1980s presented below includes five types of cinematic discourse: interpersonal, artistic-aesthetic, religious-ideological, historical-cultural, and mythological.

*An interpersonal type of cinematic discourse*

In Russian culture, the distinctive features of interpersonal relations are the diminutive and affectionate types of addresses expressing kindness, warmth and tenderness: “brothers”, “darling”, “dove” and others. They are often used by characters in a number of films of the “thaw” and “stagnation” epochs. For example, in *Girls* (Russia, 1961), a canteen visitor thanks Tosya Kislitsina for lunch: “Thank you, daughter”. In *The Fate of Man* (Russia, 1959) Andrei Sokolov addresses the boy Vanyusha, calling him “brother”. In the movie *Seryozha* (Russia, 1960) Korostelev calls his stepson Seryozha: “brother”. In the movie S. Rostotsky *The dawns here are quiet* (Russia, 1972) commander Fedot “sisters” calls anti-aircraft gunners who went with him on a combat mission, and calls himself a brother: “I'm kind of like a brother to you”.

One of the peculiar Russian appeals, practically not found in other cultures, is “native”. It is used by characters in many Soviet feature films of the period under consideration. Foreexample, in G. Chukhrai's film *Forty First* (Russia, 1956), the Red Army soldier Maryutka calls the captured White Guard lieutenant Vadim “native”. In *Girls* (Russia, 1961) Tosya Kislitsyna asks her roommate a question: “Katya, my dear, is it true?”. In G. Panfilov's film *There is no ford in the fire* (1967) Tanya Tetkina calls the dog “dear, you are mine”; doctor Fatey Semyonovich shouts to the fleeing commissar Evstryukov at the front: “stop, my dear”. In the painting by V. Sokolov *Friends and Years* (1965) Lyudmila addresses Vladimir Platov, leaving for the front: “My dear! ... You really are dear!”.

Cinematographers portrayed the characteristic features of interpersonal relations of characters in “village cinema”. Responsive, open and modest villagers are shy and distrustful in their relations with towns people (*Three poplars on the ivy* (Russia, 1968), *Stoves-benches* (Russia, 1972), *Kinship* (Russia, 1981) and others), while they are close to their fellow villagers in a familial way. They share their innermost thoughts with each other and in a flurry of feelings “pour out their souls”, “turn their souls inside out”.

During the “thaw” and “stagnation” periods, the Soviet cinema screen recreated images not only of popular culture, but also of the noble culture that remained in the past – in pre-revolutionary Russia. Cinematographers screened works of Russian classical literature, in which the writers of the XIX century told about the destruction of the upper class, which had lost its greatness and attractiveness, but also described the characteristic features of the high culture of communication of the nobility: restraint, delicacy, courtesy, courtesy, obliging. The positive characters of the feature films based on the works of I.A. Goncharov, I.S. Turgenev, A.P. Chekhov, follow the principle of the unity of word and thought, word and deed. This makes them sincere and honest in conversation with other characters, arrogantly imitating aristocratic manners. Such on the screen were Lavretsky from *The Nest of Nobles* (Russia, 1969), Voynitsky from *Uncle Vanya* (Russia, 1970), Platonov from *The Unfinished Piece for Mechanical Piano* (Russia, 1977), Oblomov from *A Few Days in the Life of I.I. Oblomov* (Russia, 1979).

#### *Artistic and aesthetic type of cinematic discourse*

Stalinist cinema “culturalized” nature, subjugated it to its will, mastered its elements, and gave them a static image. In the 1960s, the situation changed. In the films of A. Tarkovsky, M. Khutsiev, V. Shukshin and other directors, nature gained a voice, which it had been deprived of. The screen made her world dynamic and mobile.

Wildlife, helping and caring for man, is a plot-forming motif of Russian fairy tales, a part of Russian cultural memory. Its image is recreated in S. Bondarchuk's movie *The Fate of Man* (Russia, 1959), where it saves a man. The main character Andrei Sokolov makes an escape from fascist captivity. “Having overcome a great distance, he falls helplessly on a field of ripe oats... The boundless field covers him with its waves, hides him from prying eyes” (Zaitseva, 2017: 37). A little later he is “taken in” by a birch grove, hiding him from the German soldiers.

In L. Kulidzhanov's film *When the Trees Were Big* (Russia, 1961), nature plays a key role in the hero's spiritual rebirth. “Freely spreading meadows, quiet village streets, some untouched beauty - the river, gardens, dusk and dawn – itself seems to heal the calloused soul of a man who finds in all this a sense of his own roots” (Zaitseva, 2017: 84).

In the final scene of N. Mikhalkov's movie *A Few Days in the Life of I.I. Oblomov* (Russia, 1980) little Ilya runs through the tall grass, gradually sinking into the depths of the vast valley.

The images of nature recreated by late Soviet cinematography began to sound dreary and sad notes. The sense of longing rooted in Russian culture, born of the immensity of the Russian expanses and contemplation of fading nature, was transferred by cinematographers to the screen from the landscapes of Russian painters F. Vasilyev, I. Levitan, V. Polenov. Vasilyev, I. Levitan, V. Polenov, I. Repin, A. Savrasov and others. In the images of the noble estate, depicted in the films of A. Konchalovsky: *The Nest of the Nobility* (Russia, 1969); *Uncle Vanya* (Russia, 1971), N. Mikhalkov (*Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano* (Russia, 1977); *A Few Days in the Life of I.I. Oblomov* (Russia, 1979), E. Ryazanov: *Cruel Romance* (Russia, 1984), recreated the space of idyllic measured flow of life, aimlessness and meaninglessness of the characters' pastime. Long shots, panoramic shots of Central Russian autumn landscapes enhanced the feeling of pinching sadness.

#### *Religious-ideological type of cinematic discourse*

During the “thaw” era, filmmakers recreated the sacred aura of the revolution and civil war on the screen and romanticized this period of history. By this time, revolutionary ideals had become the foundation of Soviet man's religious worldview. This was clearly expressed by the authors of *Zastava Ilyicha* (Russia, 1964). Its hero Sergei Zhuravlev searches for the answer to the question “how should one live?” for three hours of screen time, and in the final frames of the movie he utters the words: “nothing is terrible if you are not alone and you have something to believe in...”, after which on the screen the guard comes to Lenin's mausoleum with a marching step, the music of the Internationale is played and the Kremlin chimes are heard. The religious pathos of this scene is obvious – the eternally living symbol of hope for a bright future fills life with meaning.

Already at the end of the “thaw” the characters of feature films began to lose faith in the future communist paradise and stopped finding answers to existential questions within the

framework of secular ideology. At this time, A. Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* (Russia, 1966) (the film was released in a small edition in 1971) and M. Kalik's *To Love* (Russia, 1968) (the film was banned in 1971) appeared, in which the authors spoke directly about the role and importance of Orthodox faith in Russian history and human life.

The plot of A. Tarkovsky's picture is based on the story of the spiritual feat of humility and silence of icon painter Andrei Rublev, who managed to preserve his inner purity and during the years of princely feuds, Tatar raids and famine to reveal to the world the icon of the Divine Trinity – a peaceful and sublime image of three reverent angels, bringing light and harmony, uniting and healing the people.

In M. Kalik's movie, orthodox priest A. Men speaks about the Christian understanding of love, the mystery of sex, the great mystery of marriage, and the fact that true love is connected with the experience of the state of eternity, reminiscent of relationships in the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the Brezhnev era, priests, monks, monasteries, icons and crosses began to appear more frequently on the movie screen, and orthodox rituals without anti-religious overtones were shown. The ambivalent relationship between orthodox faith and pagan beliefs that had developed in Russian culture was reflected in the feature films of this period. Episodes in which characters guess and make conspiracies are found, for example, in the films *Russian field* (Russia, 1971), *Shores* (Russia, 1973), *Did you call a doctor?* (Russia, 1974); *Odnoluby* (Russia, 1982), *Who Knocks at My Door* (Russia, 1982) and others.

The authors of feature films of the “stagnation” era began to explore the feelings and attitudes of characters at critical moments in their lives, when they had to turn to God out of hopelessness. For example, the hero of A. Konchalovsky's film *The Nest of Nobles* (Russia, 1969) Lavretsky thanks God for returning from Paris to his “sweet Russia”. At the all-night service he addresses God: “...Lord forgive me. I pray for the forgiveness of my soul, in which there will be no more room for resentment, anger...Thank you for the returned hope”. The hero of V. Shukshin's movie *Redviburnum* (Russia, 1973), an unaccompanied Egor Prokudin lives in a world of God's abandonment, the symbols of which appear in the frame – a flooded church, destroyed and abandoned churches. In one of the episodes after visiting his elderly mother, he, sobbing brokenly, says: “Lord forgive me! Lord, if you can! I can no longer tolerate this torment”. The hero of the picture *Twice Born* (Russia, 1983) Andrei Bulygin – the only surviving sailor from the sunken by the Germans steamship with wounded soldiers. He was left alone in the ice of the White Sea. Exhausted from hunger and cold, losing his last strength, he hides from the pursuit of a German pilot. Once again, falling under his fire, he burs tingly prays to God for help: “Lord, help the unbeliever now. I beg you now. Help, Lord! Do you hear me?”. Miraculously he manages to save himself.

The heroes of A. Tarkovsky's films. Tarkovsky, L. Shepitko, V. Shukshin and other directors, when they find themselves in a state of despair, having lost hope, strive for truth. They have to immerse themselves in reflections on faith and love, sacrifice and forgiveness, humility and asceticism – the key categories of Christian consciousness, which are the ontological foundation of Russian culture.

#### *Historical and cultural type of cinematic discourse*

In the epochs of the “thaw” and “stagnation” in the conditions of devaluation of socialist ideals, destruction of the peasant world, and oblivion of folk culture in urban society, the ideas of national self-consciousness became relevant. They referred to the subjects of the long-standing dispute between Westerners (V.G. Belinsky, A.I. Herzen, I.S. Turgenev, P.Y. Chaadayev and others) and Slavophiles (N.Y. Danilevsky, I.V. Kireyevsky, N.N. Strakhov, A.S. Khomyakov and others), opposing liberal and traditional ideas, progressive and conservative views, material and spiritual values. This traditional for Russian history and culture confrontation of worldview concepts became the subject of cinematography research.

The authors of screen adaptations of works of Russian literature of the 19th century explored phenomena detrimental to Russian culture. For example, A. Konchalovsky in the movie *Uncle Vanya* (Russia, 1970) retold Chekhov's story about how “the characters inhabiting the dilapidated manor house are searching for the strength to resist the destruction and mercantile pragmatism of their metropolitan relatives” (Zaitseva, 2017: 191). At the same time, Uncle Vanya (Voynitsky) himself – an intelligent and decent man “with a delicate and tender soul” (A.P. Chekhov) – does not cease to show humility while serving Professor Serebryakov – a valiant, arrogant, incapable of labor and, in fact, a talentless man.

In the movie *A few days in the life of I.I. Oblomov* (Russia, 1979) Stoltz is a representative of an idle society. He conquers the world with his calculativeness and pragmatism. His spiritual emptiness, overshadowed by external activity, is contrasted with the reflective contemplation of Oblomov, who will never “bowdown to the idol of lies, his soul will always be pure, bright, honest” (I.A. Goncharov).

Voynitsky and Oblomov – characters of different character and outlook – retreat under the onslaught of cynical people who find the meaning of life in acquiring material wealth, achieving position in society, and yet lack the qualities valued in Russian culture – sensitivity, responsiveness, openness and soulfulness. Both characters humble themselves and preserve the inner integrity and nobility of their souls.

Another hero of Brezhnev's cinema was the intellectual who had lost his integrity, suffering from internal contradictions and emptiness – one of the main symbols of the era. Such on the screen appeared history teacher Melnikov in the film *We'll live until Monday* (Russia, 1968), professor Sretensky in *Monologue* (Russia, 1972), the Writer in *Stalker* (Russia, 1979), Poluorlov in *Old New Year* (Russia, 1980), Makarov in *Flights of Dreams and Dreams* (Russia, 1983). They are united by the experience of spiritual crisis, caused by the realization that the new reality has closed the opportunities for the realization of personal potential.

If the intellectuals who once served high ideals have become disoriented at this stage of history because of the impossibility of fulfilling their social and creative functions, the ordinary villager has lost the meaning of life, being torn away from his roots.

The plot of the “village” cinema of the 1960s – 1970s was based on the conflict between the original world of the village and the soulless urban civilization, which was destroying family and kinship relations and weakening ties with the native land. Many characters who found themselves far from their village home lost their naturalness, openness and simplicity, the need to participate in collective labor and the common cause, became arrogant, calculating and selfish. But there were also those who did not let go of their homesickness, who felt responsible to the land that had nurtured them. For example, Stepan Voevodin in the movie *Your Son and Brother* (Russia, 1966), Egor Prokudin in *Redviburnum* (Russia, 1973), Ivan Shalnev in the film *Native Village* (Russia, 1979) and other characters.

A.Konchalovsky's *Sibiriada* (Russia, 1978) and E. Klimov and L. Shepitko's *Farewell* (Russia, 1981) show how the scientific and technological progress coming to the village destroys its traditional way of life, destroys cemeteries – the ancestral memory of the villagers. The spread of technology becomes a devastating phenomenon for the peasant world, undermining the foundations of centuries-old traditions that the Russian people have lived by: sedentary lifestyle, unity with nature, living with a large family in one house, practicing crafts and trades. In this way, the “village cinema” of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras indirectly reflected the idea of soil-bound mode of life, which was formed in the 19th century under the influence of the Slavophiles.

#### *A mythological type of cinematic discourse*

With the onset of the Thaw, the mythologemes of Stalinist cinema (abundance of food and goods, love as a reward for the worthy, sacral power, and others) lost their significance. Cinematographers began to turn more often to the mythological roots of Russian culture. Images of a river, a tree, a house appeared on the movie screen with symbolic meaning.

The image of the river plays a significant role in the dramaturgical basis and in the plot of the films: *The Cranes Are Flying* (Russia, 1957), *The Quiet Don* (Russia, 1957-1958), *Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano* (Russia, 1977), *Red viburnum* (Russia, 1973), *Sibiriada* (Russia, 1978), *Farewell* (Russia, 1981) and others.

M. Kalatozov's *The cranes are flying* (Russia, 1957) begins with an image of the wide Moscow River, which occupies three quarters of the frame, flooded with sunlight. Along the embankment, the lovers Boris and Veronika run along it. They are running towards their bright future. This image reflects the fullness of their feelings and hopes.

*The Quiet Don* (1957-1958) by S. Gerasimov begins with an extended choral performance of the song *The Quiet Don, Our Father!* The Don symbolically expresses the fate of the homeland, the ever-flowing life of the people rooted in one place, the unity of past, present and future. He witnesses the development of the relations of the main characters and expresses their inner state. By the river Grigory confesses his feelings to Aksinya, tells his wife that he does not love her, Aksinya embraces the son of Grigory and the deceased Natalia. Daria Melekhova drowns herself in the Don. Don sees off the Cossacks leaving for war. At the end of the movie on the frozen river

Grigory returns home, throws his rifle, nagan and cartridges into it.

In the final scene of N. Mikhalkov's painting *An Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano* (Russia, 1977), Platonov flees from the manor house and jumps off a cliff into the river. His wife Sashenka rushes to him. Standing in knee-deep water and embracing him, she says: "I love you very much. I love you in every way. The whole world for me is you". Platonov apologizes to her. They then walk away down the river along the shore.

In A. Konchalovsky's *Sibiriada* (Russia, 1978), the lives of generations pass by the river. They go to the city, to war and return home along it. In the movie by E. Klimov and L. Shepitko *Farewell* (Russia, 1981) the river has a metaphysical function. It girdles the village of Matera and hides the inhabitants who did not agree to leave the village before it was flooded.

A tree is a symbol of life and family, of the connection between the worlds of the lower and upper worlds. The image of a tree can be seen in the films *Quiet Don* (Russia, 1957-1958), *Red viburnum* (Russia, 1973), *Farewell* (Russia, 1981) and others.

At the end of the movie *The Quiet Don*, Grigory buries Aksinya, who was killed by a White Guard shot, in a large tree. Under its sprawling crown, she ended her earthly journey and found peace. The camera slowly glides through its bubbling foliage, then moves down to where Grigory is sitting. Behind his back, the wide trunk of the tree is visible, evoking a sense of timelessness and immobility.

In *Red viburnum*, the image of the birch tree is recreated, symbolizing motherhood, female tenderness and beauty. Egor Prokudin, the main character of the movie, addresses the trees. In one episode, approaching a large birch tree, he says: "What Vasilisa? Is it time to give birth?", and in another he gently addresses the trees: "Little ones. Look, they have hidden themselves. What are they? Hidden and silent. My good brides..." He comes up to them: "Hello. Oh, my good brides. Well? How are you? Tired of waiting?. Soon it will be warm". This episode conveys the joy of his return to his native land, to his roots.

In the film *Farewell*, there is an image of an age-old magic tree, symbolizing "human roots", the metaphysical connection between man and his deceased relatives. They tied a rope to it and tried to pull it down with a tractor, but it survived. It was burned, but at the end of the movie it blossomed. After the episode with the burning of the tree, the old woman Daria goes to the cemetery and there talks to her departed ancestors, telling them that she is "pulled by the earth", that "the truth is in memory" and that "he who has no memory has no life". In Russian culture, memory is considered the basis of morality.

The house is the repository of family traditions and ancestral ties. In the films *Solaris* (Russia, 1972) and *Mirror* (Russia, 1974) by A. Tarkovsky, E. Klimov, L. Shepitko *Farewell*, a sacral image of home is created. In the last scene of *Solaris* there is an explicit quotation from Rembrandt's biblical painting *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (c. 1666-1669, Hermitage Museum). Chris Calvin kneels on the threshold of the house, bows his head to his father, who embraces him by the shoulders. According to A.M. Mahler, this scene conveys "a return to a kind of primordial, pure, paradisiacal state, damaged not so much by original sin as by spiritless civilization" (Mahler, 2023: 217).

In *Mirror*, the house is a metaphysical space around which the elements rage: fire (the hayloft burns near the house), air (the gusty wind bends bushes and tree crowns, topples a lamp and a loaf of bread from the table), water (it is raining outside, inside the house water runs down the walls, drops of water fall from the ceiling), earth (the house is surrounded by fertile land on which plants, shrubs, and tall trees grow abundantly). In the movie, the young children live in a whole log house. It begins to crumble along with the destruction of their parents' relationship. One episode features the voice-over of Arseny Tarkovsky reading his own poem *Life, Life*: "Live in the house – and the house will not collapse. I will summon any of the centuries... And your wives at one table, – And one table to great-grandfather and grandson... My immortality is enough for me, That my blood flows from century to century...". In these lines, the house is represented as an embodiment of the mythology of eternity.

In *Farewell*, the house is portrayed as a living thing. Before the villagers' houses are burned down, they wash them, whitewash them, decorate them, stoke the furnace, warm them up so that the house is not cold and empty. They dress the houses like dead people, seeing them off on their last journey.

## 5. Conclusion

The problem of cultural identity in the period under review was gaining relevance. Cinematographers gradually reoriented themselves from the ideological discourse to the cultural one, and increasingly began to refer to folk culture, the peasant world, the memory of pre-revolutionary Russia and noble culture.

The interpersonal relations of characters in Soviet feature films of the “thaw” and “stagnation” are characterized by sincerity and frankness, the attitude towards mutual understanding and mental closeness. They are characterized by diminutive and affectionate appeals expressing kindness, warmth and tenderness: “brothers”, “darling”, “dove”, as well as a peculiar Russian address, which is practically unheard of in other cultures – “native”.

In the screen adaptations of works of Russian classical literature, the characteristic signs of high culture of communication of the nobility were recreated: restraint, delicacy, courtesy, courtesy, obliging.

During the period under review, the Soviet cinema screen reflected and constructed the relationship between man and society in the context of a changing social and cultural situation. The events of the Revolution and the Civil War were losing their former pathos and were increasingly viewed as a national tragedy. The system of socialist ideals was subjected to a critical rethinking. In the second editions, the ideas of national self-consciousness became relevant. In various forms, they were embodied in “village cinema”, in screen adaptations of works by Russian writers of the 19th century, in films about intellectuals experiencing a spiritual crisis, and in films with religious themes.

In the “village cinema” the cross-cutting motif was the opposition between the original world of the village and the soulless urban civilization, which undermines the foundations of centuries-old traditions that the Russian people lived by: soil-bound mode of life, unity with nature, living with a large family in one house, engaging in crafts and trades.

In feature films based on the works of I.A. Goncharov, I.S. Turgenev, A.P. Chekhov, open, sensitive and noble characters try to resist the world of pragmatic and cynical people who find the meaning of life in the acquisition of material wealth and social status.

The hero of feature films of the “stagnation” era is an intellectual who has lost his values and his faith in communist mythology. In the world around him, he feels the instability of social roles, shaky relationships with other people and with reality. This knocks the ground out from under his feet. He loses his main purpose – to serve high ideal and transmit them to society.

In films with religious themes, the authors spoke directly about the role and significance of the Orthodox faith in national history and human life. Their characters, finding themselves in a state of despair, having lost hope, strive for the truth, immerse themselves in reflections on faith and love, sacrifice and forgiveness, humility and asceticism – the key categories of Christian consciousness that act as the ontological foundation of Russian culture.

Nature in the movies of the “thaw” and “stagnation” eras received its voice, which it was deprived of in the Stalinist period. The image of a living nature helping and caring for man was created in the movie *The Fate of Man* (Russia, 1959) by S. Bondarchuk, where it saves a man. In L. Kulidzhanov's film *When the Trees Were Big* (Russia, 1961), nature contributes to the spiritual rebirth of the hero.

In late Soviet cinematography, the images of nature embodied the feelings of despondency and longing, born from the boundlessness of the Russian expanses and contemplation of fading nature, depicted in the landscapes of F. Vasilyev, I. Levitan, V. Polenov, I. Repin, A. Savrasov and others. Vasilyev, I. Levitan, V. Polenov, I. Repin, A. Savrasov and others. Long shots, panoramic shots of Central Russian autumn landscapes increased the feeling of pinching sadness caused by the images of fading noble manor in the films of A. Konchalovsky: *The Nest of the Nobility* (Russia, 1969); *Uncle Vanya* (Russia, 1971), N. Mikhalkov (*An Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano* (Russia, 1977); *A Few Days in the Life of I.I. Oblomov* (Russia, 1979), E. Ryazanov (*Cruel Romance* (Russia, 1984).

Cinematographers began to turn more often to the mythological roots of Russian culture. On the movie screen appeared images of the river as a reflection of the fate of the homeland, the ever-flowing life of the people rooted in one place, the unity of the past, present and future; the tree as a symbol of life and the connection between the worlds of the lower and higher worlds; the house as a symbol of the repository of family traditions and ancestral bond.

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