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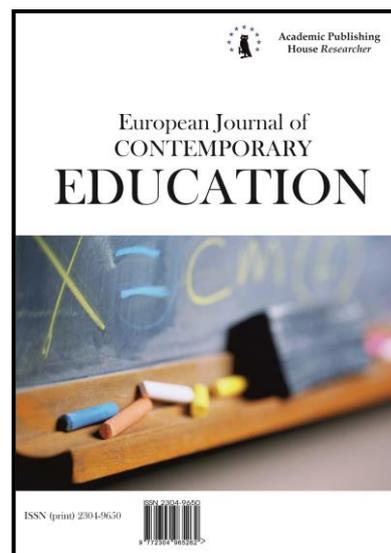
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Gender Analysis of the Development of School and University Theme in Soviet and Russian Audiovisual Media Texts

Anastasia Levitskaya ^{a,*}, Lyudmila Seliverstova ^a, Anvar Mamadaliev ^b

^a Taganrog Management and Economics Institute, Russian Federation

^b International Network Center for Fundamental and Applied Research, Russian Federation

Abstract

The article is written within the framework of a broader study investigating school and university representation in the Soviet/Russian and foreign audiovisual media texts. The research outlines that in Soviet cinema the image of the female teacher was transformed in the following sequence: a heroine-revolutionary; a heroine of hard work; an intellectual; an educator-innovator; a victim; a bureaucrat-administrator. In the Soviet audio-visual texts of the 1930s-1940s, the heroic image of a teacher-fighter for revolutionary ideals (*Alone*, 1931), which gradually softens, acquires the aspect of labor heroics (*The Village Teacher*, 1947). Teachers become good-looking, attractive (*The Village teacher*, *First-grader*). The cinema of the Stalin era is characterized by the image of the teacher as an indisputable perfection, the embodiment of tranquility and justice.

The theme of motherhood for female teachers in Soviet / Russian cinema is either not raised at all, or is sublimated into maternal care as a quality characteristic of a woman in general, revealing the essence of the heroine, but directed not at her own child, but at a pupil. Often screen teachers are childless women with a failed personal life, single mothers, or mothers who conceal their motherhood.

The image of the male teacher was transformed in the Soviet / Russian cinema in the following way: the ideological organizer of the labor commune; a teacher by vocation, an enthusiast; an intellectual-humanist; a loser who finds himself at school due to unfortunate circumstances; an idealist, an ascetic, a self-sacrificing teacher, first and foremost a professional in his field.

In Soviet cinema, for many years, the masculine image of a teacher-the creator of a new man worthy to live under Soviet power-was being formed. In perestroika and in the Russian periods,

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: a.levitskaya@tmei.ru (A. Levitskaya), l.seliverstova@tmei.ru (L. Seliverstova)

images of male teachers, who have not found another road in life, began to appear on the screen more often. For all that, it is with the male teacher that the theme of innovation in education is connected in feature and documentary films, although this aspect is rarely shown on the big screen.

Keywords: gender analysis, audiovisual text, school pupils, school, teacher, educator, cinema, masculinity, femininity.

1. Introduction

In August of 2017, the General Director of the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion (VCIOM) V. Fedorov stated that at the moment a clear demand for changes is being acknowledged in Russian society (Moskvin, 2017). Judging by the lyrics of the song *We are waiting for changes* by the late 80's and 90's cult rock band *Kino*, the need for changes is not exclusively a distinguishing feature of modern times. The anticipation of changes is inherent to a person both as a single individual throughout his life, and as a member of society which development is associated with continuous changes in its political, demographic, economic and cultural spheres. Social changes as a mirror are reflected in the educational environment, affect the main actors in the educational process: teachers and students. In this regard, it seems pertinent to trace the media transformation of the social roles of men and women engaged in education sphere.

2. Materials and methods

The object of the study is media images of men and women engaged in education. The subject of the study is the media representation of masculinity and femininity of male and female teachers.

As a method of research, qualitative gender analysis was used, in the course of which the roles, norms, values, character traits prescribed by the society to women and men engaged in education, through the socialization systems (including the media), division of labor, cultural values and symbols, including assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices against male and female educators. Researchers emphasize the relevance and importance of applying gender methodology for studying the transformation processes that directly affect the relationship of men and women in society, because "they provide an opportunity to analyze the component of social transformations associated with the change in cultural norms and relations between men and women that occurs at all levels of public system, having a profound impact on the course of the transformation process and the formation of its leading trends. Thus, the possibility of understanding and explaining the social transformations is enlarged, the theoretical and methodological potential of the Russian social sciences and humanities and its use is enriched" (Zdravomyslova, 2008: 5). The gender approach is used by specialists not so much as a specific research method, but rather as a "strategy, a set of techniques and procedures used ... to study the principles of organizing people's lives and activities" (Latina, 2011: 10).

The material of the study was provided by audiovisual media texts as evidence of events, social phenomena, and facts, and namely, Russian films on school and university theme from the post-revolutionary period to the present day, contemporary documentary films and TV shows.

3. Discussion

In modern science, social and cultural phenomena and processes are widely explored from a gender perspective. The development of gender studies is considered as "a condition for democratization and humanization of both society and the institution of science" (Latina, 2011). Foreign researchers, for instance, A. Blickhäuser and H. von Bargen, consider gender as an important criterion in solving economic, industrial, social, social and political problems, in the development of society as a whole and of an individual; as a structural category, which allows to differentiate society according to age, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation and way of life, physical abilities and their limitations, social status, value orientations, level of education, attitude to the institution of family and marriage, etc. To avoid discrimination in society and the privileged position of certain groups and individuals, the need to integrate gender diversity is emphasized (Blickhäuser, Bargen, 2015: 11-15).

Through the prism of the problems of gender, films and television series have been analyzed, namely, images of femininity and masculinity in works by female filmmakers (Sputnitskaya, 2016); masculinity of male staff in secondary schools (Suspitsina, 2002). Researchers have considered gender images transmitted by Disney animation as a factor in influencing the formation of

behavior and the adoption of gender culture by children and adolescents (Talanova, Shakirova, 2014); the image of a femme fatale in American noir movies and the notions of sexuality, the distribution of gender roles, the structure of the family, characteristic of the era of the 1940s and early 1950s (Novikova, 2015); women's images as a reflection of changes in the socio-political history of post-revolutionary Russia (Khloponina, 2017), in the Soviet films of the "thaw" period (Mishchenko, 2012), etc. Moreover, the representation of female images in visual media texts (Dashkova, 2013) has been analyzed.

As the main narrative motif in the cinema of post-revolutionary Russia, one can point out the woman's way from an old life to the new one, her transformation from a victim of the traditional social model into the heroine of modern times. O. Khloponina, analyzing the patterns of leading female types in the 1920s' films, describes the following: "The "heroic" type is the main one in films intended to reflect the changes in life, the new way of life and visualize the achievements and ideas of the new power, whereas the "mother's" type is not needed as an inherent value, but is intended to illustrate the difference between the position of a woman before and after the revolution ... The emphasis is on the ambivalence of the victim and the heroine ... every woman goes her own way, and her transformation occurs, though with the help of a representatives of the new collective, but is still connected with individual self-improvement" (Khloponina, 2017: 142-144). As a result of the analysis of the cinematic representation of female types in the 1930s, the author came to the conclusion that the heroic type of a woman was gradually softened and intellectualized. The markers of the new femininity were optimism, accuracy, cheerful nature, that was invariably accompanied by hard work, enthusiasm, strength, health and indispensable connection with the collective (Khloponina, 2012: 148).

Whereas in the post-war years the role of the heroines of hard work, science, sports, and arts was epically reflected in the Soviet cinema, in the early 1960s the transition to the image of individual, but quite ordinary, nice girls and women, was made. In the "thaw" period, as noted by T. Mishchenko, a special socio-cultural environment determining the private space, was a family. The interest in the woman's personality in Soviet cinema replaced typical images of pretty, cheerful women with female images of bright texture, originality, and complex spiritual world (Mishchenko, 2012: 136).

As can be seen from the above, experts have mainly considered female media images in the context of gender studies.

4. Results

Following A. Fedorov (Fedorov, 2017) we have conditionally divided the films of Soviet and post-Soviet cinematography on the school and university theme as follows:

- films of the post-revolutionary period (1919-1931);
- films of the Stalin era and early post-Stalin years (1932-1955);
- films of the "thaw" period (1956-1968);
- films of the "stagnation" period (1969-1984);
- films of "perestroika" (1985-1991);
- films of the Russian period (1992-2016).

The analysis of the representation of male and female teachers in audiovisual texts was guided by the following criteria:

- the main problem in the solution of which, the teacher is involved as a media text character in a certain historical period;
- the social status of the teacher (position in society as a whole, among colleagues, among students);
- class affiliation;
- equality of rights between men and women;
- age, appearance, character traits and behavior of the teacher;
- level of material well-being of the teacher;
- life priorities (attitude towards family, work, children);
- models of privacy regulation;
- participation in decision-making.

Few of the Soviet silent films somewhat connected to educational venue have survived. Dramas *Road to Life* (1931) directed by N. Ekk and *Alone* (1931) directed by L. Trauberg and

G. Kozintsev served the material for our analysis. The first film demonstrates a solution to the problem of children's homelessness, the second deals with illiteracy of the population, especially in remote rural areas of the country. *Road to Life* accentuates male images, while the female ones are underrepresented. None of the supporting female characters has a name. There are no leading female characters at all.

The protagonist of the film is the commune leader Nikolai Sergeev wearing the military uniform of the time. He cannot be called a teacher in the conventional sense of the word, since he does not teach literacy, he teaches how to live off the fruits of one's labour. His goal is "to melt street orphans into the workers of the world construction". He enjoys authority among the children, his relationship with them is built on trust, he lets his pupils make decisions independently, mindfully. He seems to be on equal terms with them – he eats at the same table, however, in the frame he is visually a head taller than the boys, that takes the issue about his status off the table. It's a boys-only commune. The question of the way to deal with homeless girls orphans is unanswered in the film, which is understandable: building a railway, driving a locomotive is the lot of men. The only female character – a homeless girl with a bright defiant make-up and a set of typical health problems of children from the street, defines her status as a "street-walker".

In the Soviet era, gender differences between men and women according to the ideology of the state were unified, which manifested itself both at the level of verbal and non-verbal communication. "Do you think, comrade, that these children should be isolated?" – a male member of the committee on orphans refers to his female colleague. Expressing approval, the man slaps his colleague hard on the back, in response, she breaks into a smile. In a friendly manner, with a dry handshake, young people who are in love are saying goodbye in the drama *Alone*.

In the drama *Alone* the main character is almost a girl, a recent graduate of a Leningrad pedagogical undergraduate school who dreams of getting married and having a house with beautiful furniture, is assigned to work in a distant Altai village. According to the ideology of the young Soviet country, "lovers of comfort are enemies of Soviet power". The message of the film is to show how a teaching profession turns an immature young girl prone to philistinism into a dedicated teacher who heroically defends the ideals of Soviet power in the fight against the kulaks (wealthy peasants). The teacher in the film is neither a woman, nor a mother, but foremost, a builder of the Soviet socialist future, the new "good life". The film characters live not in the present, but in the future: a keynote of the whole film is "what a good life it will be!"

One of the indicators of good life of the Stalin era was the introduction of universal secondary education in the countryside, which became one of the main directives of the third five-year plan for 1938-1942. The main expectations regarding the behavior of men and women teachers of this period will be considered using the example of the films *The Teacher* (1939), directed by S. Gerasimov and *The Village Teacher* (1947) by M. Donskoy. In both films, the protagonists are teachers. The teacher by vocation Stepan Lautin is a calm, balanced and modest man. He intentionally returns from the capital to his native village in order to teach, but he encounters misunderstanding of his fellow villagers: "He who's not healthy enough, or doesn't have the skills, can start teaching" – grandfather Semyon comments the Lautin's intention to stay. According to stereotypes of rural residents, a man in the countryside should be a worker, not a thinker. The status of a rural woman, changed due to Soviet power, is represented by Stepanida, an uneducated, semi-literate woman, whom the authors of the film demonstrate as a remnant of the past and emphasize the change in her outlook. Stepanida joins the women's working brigade, who in St. Peter's day, when Christians are not supposed to work, founds the school building. Teacher Lautin is an authority among children and youth. However, at first he has to prove his worth to his elder fellow villagers, and first of all his own father, who does not appreciate the sincere desire to be useful and do good in his home village. He perceives the son's return home from the capital as a failure, disappointment, and is ashamed of it.

Similarly to Lautin, the main character of the film *The Village Teacher* (1947), a graduate of the privileged boarding school for girls in the capital, Varvara Vasilevna, guided by noble intentions, takes up teaching in a distant Siberian village. In the film, the teacher is feminine, refined (in contrast to the village women she is "urban, does not wear valenki (felt boots)", very sincere, seemingly soft, but strong-willed and high-toned (there's an ideal discipline in her classroom)).

However, nothing human is alien to her. She is the same comrade, only a woman. She is a loving, caring, faithful, patient, affectionate wife. If her husband, Commissar Martynov, had not passed away too early, she, for sure, would have become a wonderful mother. She takes mothering care of her pupils. For example, Voronov is like a son to her: she sees him off to university, then – to the front and after the war, she is the one who's waiting for him. Her life is aimed at serving the Motherland, not armed with a gun, but by educating and upbringing children.

The ideological component of the film is vivid in the scene when Martynov (the red commissar from the gentry by birth) tells her: "You will be Lenin's favorite soldier". The words *favourite* and *soldier*, in our opinion, do not combine well, however they accentuate the fact that if you want to become a soldier, gender is not taken into account.

At the beginning of the film, an idealist Varvara Vasilievna believes that "a time will come" when a peasant's son will be able to study on an equal basis with the children from the privileged class (compare with the phrase "a new good life will come" from the film *Alone*), but unlike *Alone*, in this movie this time does come. In *The Teacher* and *The Village Teacher* besides the process of professional development, the result of his/her work is demonstrated – career growth as recognition of distinguished service to society. Thus, the village teacher is awarded the Order of Lenin and finds her echo in the pupils – Dunya Ostrogova, who becomes a teacher, and other schoolgirls who dream of becoming a teacher like Varvara Vasilievna. Stepan Ivanovich Lautin makes it from a teacher to the school headmaster, and then a candidate for deputy of the Supreme Council.

I.V. Stalin's death in 1953 entailed changes in the life of society, the most significant of which fall to the period of the "thaw" after N.S. Khrushchev's exposure of "Stalin's personality cult" at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956.

Within the "thaw" period, we analyze the school theme on the example of the films *The Spring in Zarechnaya Street* (1956) directed by F. Mironer and M. Khutsiev and *We'll Live till Monday* (1968) by S. Rostotsky. Unlike previously reviewed, these films primarily deal with human relations and secondarily, with people of a certain profession, translators of a certain ideology.

The female protagonist in *The Spring in Zarechnaya Street* is Tatyana Sergeevna Levchenko, a graduate of the Pedagogical Institute, an intellectual (Rakhmaninov's music, a portrait of Blok and a pile of books are the most valuable objects in her rented apartment); she teaches the Russian language and literature at school for working youth. Emphatically invulnerable, she adheres to an authoritarian style of behavior, keeps a distance with students who are sometimes older than her.

This female image in many respects echoes the image of the protagonist *We'll Live Till Monday* Ilya Melnikov, a history teacher. Having quit work on his Ph.D. thesis, he plays "Lonely Wanderer" by E.Grieg on the piano, is intolerant (makes sharp remarks to a colleague who makes mistakes in speech), sometimes is even arrogant; strict and respected both by students and colleagues; lives with his mother, and even at home, like a hermit crab, only seldom comes out of the shell. However, behind outward rigor and irony Melnikov tries to hide the acute inner conflict that he is experiencing. In addition, he is in love with his former student and current colleague Natasha Gorelova, but hesitates to open his feelings to her.

In *The Spring in Zarechnaya Street* the inner feelings of the female protagonist are also demonstrated in relation to her status of a teacher that does not allow her to think of her grown up students as representatives of the opposite sex (Tatyana Sergeevna is emphatically strict with a steel factory worker in love with her), yet the film's authors create the picture of a woman capable to love and to be loved.

S. Rostotsky's film exemplifies the signs of the "thaw" period when it became possible to write and speak about happiness, about simple everyday feelings: "We were not given such topics, we wrote most often about typical representatives", the young English teacher comments on the essay assignment for high school students. In the Soviet school, the theme of family and motherhood was not common to discuss. The teacher of the Russian language and literature Svetlana Mikhailovna is a prude. In her opinion, schoolchildren must not speculate on simple women's happiness, and to dream of "being the mother of two boys and two girls" (the 16-year-old schoolgirl writes about it) is shameful. Svetlana Mikhailovna categorically condemns this "soul striptease", especially as "boys are present in class". Although in a private conversation with her colleague, Svetlana Mikhailovna bitterly admits that she lacks happiness, simple, feminine, with a baby, because "teachers have a problem with that".

As D. Bykov argues, this screenplay identifies that we did live until Monday which came after the Soviet Sunday, after the Soviet thaw, and a sad, gloomy Monday arrived (Bykov, 2015) – the period of the so-called stagnation.

Yet, it is difficult to agree with the totality of D. Bykov's conclusions by looking at the flamboyant comedy by A. Korenev *Big Break* (1972), where there is no trace of sadness.

The main character of *Big Break* Nestor Petrovich Severov is an arrogant, haughty young man, "a step away from the Ph.D. title", is preparing for postgraduate program. "I was watching you and decided that you deserve me," Severov tells the girl he liked. Knocked off his own pedestal (i.e. having failed the entry exams for postgraduate study), he voluntarily exiles himself to school for working youth, clearly realizing that "pedagogy is his calling". In the very first lesson, awkward, "small one, unattractive", he removes the mask of "superintelligent masculinity," behind which there is a sad, love-lorn young man. The school faculty is exclusively female. Among the supporting characters there is Svetlana Afanasyevna, a teacher of the Russian language and literature, an attractive blonde with a childlike face, forced to hide her happy marriage with a same-age student, thus in a way, at a new time loop and in a comic genre, reinforcing the Soviet media stereotype of the 1930s- 1940s, that a teacher is a woman above marriage, the school is her home, and the pupils are her family.

Nevertheless, the teacher's need to realize her gender – to be a mother, to care for a child – is quite visible in the Soviet cinema of the 1970s. So, the female protagonist of the film *Other People's Letters* (1975), Vera Ivanovna, realizing that both she and her boyfriend are "some kind of single, nonpaired people", and therefore, there is no hope for creating a family, gives a home for a schoolgirl, who is growing up without mother. Vera Ivanovna is having an affair with a man, and a part of their personal correspondence falls into the hands of her foster daughter/pupil Zina, who is rude, sometimes cruel, no one has explained to her that reading someone else's letters is bad. The girl is indulgent to her benefactress: "she lives in a different dimension, and does not know life at all," Zina says.

The theme of what's right and wrong is continued in the film by D. Asanova *The Key That Shouldn't Be Handed On* (1976), which depicts the image of an innovator teacher and education difficulties associated with a non-standard approach to the system. A young teacher of literature Marina Maksimovna, a talented teacher who encourages the desire of schoolchildren to reflect on acute topics, express and defend their opinion, the one who enjoys respect and authority among schoolchildren, suddenly finds herself in an ethically sensitive situation ... As a matter of fact, like Vera Ivanovna from *Other People's Letters*, Marina Maximovna is not married, so her gender role as well fits into the media stereotype of a "lonely female teacher" who has entirely devoted herself to work.

During the period of "perestroika", the themes of school and university were covered mainly in dramas (*Fun of the Young*, 1987, *The Doll*, 1988, *Temptation*, 1987, etc.). The plots were often built on the struggle of the opposites: the teacher and the student. The film's authors placed honesty, intelligence, and absolute social insecurity of the teacher (regardless of gender) in the scales against adolescent cynicism, impudence, impunity, and non-recognition of authority. Thus, in the film *Fun of the Young* (1987), Anton Gorshkov, an elderly, lonely, seemingly untended, strict, sometimes rude P.E. teacher nicknamed as "Pot", has to resist the group of the technical college students who decided to discredit the teacher who "crossed the line" (i.e. gave unsatisfactory marks). The situation, conceived as a game, got out of hand and ended with the beating of a teacher, who was forced to leave the city, and impunity of teenagers. Teachers have appeared as victims in other perestroika films (*Dear Elena Sergeevna*, 1988, *Homo Novus*, 1990). Yet, again, one can see an obvious gender coloring of a teacher as a victim: it were female teachers who became the targets of school pupils' atrocity.

In the film *The Doll* (1988), the teacher of mathematics Elena Mikhailovna (beautiful, very feminine in contrast to other teachers, for example, the head teacher – a burly, heavy woman in an unisex brown suit) confronts Tanya Serebryakova, an ex-athlete, cynical, sometimes cruel and at the same time deeply unhappy teenage girl. The 9th graders love their class teacher, however, they do not recognize her as absolute authority. The reason for this is her liberal approach to the students (this liberalism allows her to even afford an affair with one of her senior pupils). In accordance with the ideological orientation of perestroika to democracy, Elena Mikhailovna puts to the vote the question of her being a class supervisor. A noteworthy fact, testifying to the

expansion of the boundaries permitted in the school environment, is the very situation of the schoolstudents' discussion in the presence of the teacher whether she is worthy of being a class teacher.

Once again, as in *Other People's Letters, The Key That Shouldn't Be Handed On* and *Dear Elena Sergeevna*, a teacher from *The Doll* is a lonely, single woman deprived of male support.

The school theme is widely and multifaceted presented in the feature films of the Russian period. In the drama *Everybody Dies But Me* (2008), school is like prison: the teacher is searching school children at the entrance to the school disco, etc. The gender roles of high school female students are aimed at actively searching for a sexual object and aggressively competing, including physical violence.

Light is the Night (2004) introduces the female image of the principal of the boarding school for the deaf-blind. She is a coldish, dry, sometimes tough teacher, suffering from (as in many films of the Soviet period) loneliness and covert pain. Impeccable at work, she is capable of sacrificial love in life. Outwardly almost not expressing her feelings, she can be both passionate and "bitchy" (Matizen, 2004).

The drama *Uchilka/The Teacher* (2015) by A. Petrukhin, only features female school faculty: the school headmistress Agnes Andreevna Veverova is a young, good-looking, elegant woman whose handbook is a calculator; her secretary Liya Pavlovna, an elderly, tastelessly dressed woman (as her boss remarks, "how can you dress like that, children are looking at you!"), and the leading character Alla Nikolaevna, a history teacher for over forty years, restrained, intelligent, a middle-aged lady, a typical "blue stocking". Driven crazy by offensive behaviour, cynicism and indifference of students, Alla Nikolaevna takes a gun in her hands in order to handle her pedagogical task: "to lead the pupils of the 11th class to the path of truth and reason, so that they do not dishonor their country and themselves". Yet again on the screen there is an image of a lonely woman, deprived of a warm family hearth, a teacher who, in fact, unlike her "perestroika" colleagues, is able to stand up for herself...

The melodrama *The Village Teacher* (2009) features the image of the functionary school principal. Agrippina Sidorenko is an attractive, well-to-do woman, a conservative, cynical leader with a formal approach to work, who prefers to get rid of the problem rather than solve it, but is forced to reckon with Tikhonov, a young history teacher – an idealist who believes in the miracle of pedagogical art and "is ready to fight for the children and their souls". Having failed to fit into the system of an elite lyceum in Moscow, a handsome, intellectual, single Lev Tikhonov moves to a remote village with the romantic name Razdolye to be able to teach history in a new way, to involve schoolchildren in an interactive learning process. Actually, he is one of the few images of positive male teachers in contemporary Russian cinema.

The positive male image of the innovator is also relevant for modern documentary films. Hence, the television series *Looking for a Teacher* (2012) presents unique author's schools successfully practicing from the 1980s up to present: S. Kazarnovsky's "Class Center", E. Yamburg's School, St. Alexis Desert of Father Peter (Vasilenko), Lyceum "Tekos" of M. Shchetinin, school-laboratory of V. Garmash, V. Shatalov's school. The leaders of these educational institutions are male teachers, as a rule, with extensive working experience, academic degrees, humanists and enthusiasts of their occupation of "making a difference in the world".

Judging by the documentary *A Lifelong Lesson* (2016), produced by the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia, a modern successful teacher should be active, enthusiastic, eager not only to teach, but also to learn, "to absorb what motivates his/her pupils", to love children and the teaching profession. This is what one of the main film characters is like, the winner of the competition "Teacher of the Year 2010" I. Khusainov, working at school is a way of life for him.

5. Conclusions

To conclude, in the Soviet cinema the image of the female teacher was transformed in the following sequence: the heroine-revolutionary (*Alone*, 1931), the heroine of labor (*The Village Teacher*, 1947), the intellectual (*Spring in Zarechnaya Street*, 1956), the innovator (*The Key That Shouldn't Be Handed On*, 1976), the victim (*Dear Elena Sergeevna*, 1988, *Homo Novus*, 1990, etc.), the bureaucrat-administrator (*Light in the Night*, 2004; *The Village Teacher*, 2009; *Uchilka/The Teacher*, 2015).

In the Soviet audio-visual texts of the 1930s-1940s, the heroic image of a teacher-fighter for revolutionary ideals (*Alone*, 1931) dominates, later on it gradually softens, acquires the aspect of labor heroics (*The Village Teacher*, 1947). Female teachers become good-looking, attractive (*The Village Teacher, First-grader*). Cinema of the Stalin era is characterized by the image of the woman teacher as an indisputable perfection, the embodiment of tranquility and justice.

The theme of motherhood for female teachers in Soviet / Russian cinema is either not raised at all, or is sublimated into maternal care as a quality characteristic of a woman in general, revealing the essence of the heroine, directed not at her own child but at her pupils (*The Village Teacher*). Often, teachers are childless women with a failed personal life (*We'll Live Till Monday, Other People's Letters*), single mothers (*The Key That Shouldn't Be Handed On*, 1976, *Homo Novus*, 1990), or mothers concealing their motherhood (*Light is the Night*, 2004).

The image of the male teacher was transformed in Soviet / Russian cinema in the following way: the ideological organizer of the labor commune (*Road to Life*, 1931); a teacher by vocation, an enthusiast (*The Teacher*, 1939); an intellectual-humanist (*We'll Live till Monday*, 1968, *Big Break*, 1972; *Diary of the Headmaster*, 1975); a loser under circumstances (*Fun of the Young*, 1987; *The Geographer Drank His Globe Away*, 2013); an idealist, an ascetic, a self-sacrificing teacher, first and foremost a professional (*Light is the Night*, 2004, *The Village Teacher*, 2009).

Soviet film industry was shaping a masculine image of a teacher for many years – the teacher as the creator of a new man worthy of living under Soviet rule (Sergeev in the film *Road to Life*, 1931; Sorokin in *The Republic of ShKID*, 1966). In "perestroika" and modern Russian period, images of male educators, who failed to find another application in life, that is, random people, not professionals (for example, Sluzhkin in *Geographer Drank His Globe Away*, 2013) began to appear more and more often on the screen.

For all that, it is with the male teacher that the theme of innovation is connected in feature and documentary films. Talented teacher Melnikov (*We'll Live till Monday*, 1968), a historian with a non-trivial approach to the presentation of material in the Soviet school of the 1970s was doomed to isolation. Around him is only "a narrow circle of initiates, because he is no longer given a good school on a large scale. He is still such a wandering twinkle in an absolute swamp" (Bykov, 2015). After half a century, little has changed. The images of modern teachers-innovators in Russian cinema are a rare exception to the rules (Tikhonov in the film *The Village Teacher*, 2009, headteachers in *Looking for a Teacher*) nevertheless they are in demand in society.

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