

'Soviet Young Man:' The Personal Diaries and Paradoxical Identities of 'Youth' in Provincial Soviet Ukraine during Late Socialism, 1970-1980s

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Abstract: Using personal interviews and six diaries of contemporary male authors representing various social groups of urban residents in Soviet Ukraine (two from the cities, and four from towns), written in Russian and Ukrainian, from 1970 to the beginning of the 1980s, this article analyses archival documents and contemporary periodicals and explores the influences of the massive exposure to audio and visual cultural products from the "capitalist West" on the self-construction of identity of Soviet youth from provincial Ukrainian towns. This article seeks to study a concrete development of cultural *détente* from "the bottom up" perspective, avoiding the Moscow/Leningrad "elitist/conformist" emphasis of recent scholarship.

Key words: *détente*, diary, identity, Soviet Ukraine, youth, Westernization

During the period in the 1970s known as *détente*, when international tensions relaxed, the political and cultural centres of Soviet civilization such as Moscow and Leningrad opened to foreign guests from the "capitalist West," and at the same time the provincial Soviet towns became exposed to large volumes of audio and visual information from capitalist countries on Soviet radio, television and movie screens. On March 4, 1972, a communist leader from one industrial region of Soviet Ukraine complained to local Komsomol ideologists, "There is too much capitalist West on our Soviet television screens today... Television shows (*teleperedachi*) about American music and films, about western fashions, prevail on our central channel from Moscow. It looks like a kind of Americanization (*amerikanizatsiia kakaia-to*)! It confuses our Soviet youth who try to imitate these foreign images in their behavior, which is losing familiar features of the 'Soviet young man'... We need to stop it!"¹ Ten years later, in 1982, a local newspaper still complained about "Americanization on Soviet screens."²

According to my analysis of the section in the local newspapers with television programs from Kyiv, Cherkasy, Zaporizhia, Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk³ regions in Ukraine, the number of television shows, containing "material from the capitalist West," increased from 7-10 shows per week (10 percent of the broadcast time with prevailing material of the "informational programs" such as *Mezhdunarodnaia panorama*, and one "capitalist" film, like the French *Count of Monte Cristo*) in 1968, to 14-18 per week (20 percent of the time with "capitalist" music numbers during music shows like *Ogonek*, special shows about Angela Davis from the US, and two capitalist films like a BBC feature film and Italian television series) in 1972, and reaching a peak in 1978 with 24-27 shows per week (from 30 to 40 percent of the time with numerous popular music shows, like *Benefis*, and numerous

¹ Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Dnipropetrovskoi Oblasti, (hereafter - DADO) f. 22, op. 19, d. 2, ll. 135-145, especially 142-143. Compare with my interview with Igor T., KGB officer, Dnipropetrovsk, May 15, 1991, and Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyschchykh Organiv Vlady ta Upravlinnia Ukrainy (hereafter – TsDAVOVUU), f. 4915, op. 1, d. 3438, ll. 4-9.

² E. Iakovlev, "Navazhdenie (kinoobozrenie)," *Dneprovskaiia Pravda*, 1982, February 4, p. 3.

³ Dnipropetrovsk is written in the Ukrainian transliteration, except where it appeared as Dniepropetrovsk in the original publication.

US television series for children, like *Lassie*).⁴ As one sixteen-year rock music fan reacted to the cultural détente on television in late 1977, “it’s amazing to see what is going on - on our television: since 1975 we have watched an American movie about Lassie, various broadcasts about Soviet-American space flights of *Soyuz-Apollon* and scientific exchanges between us and Americans, then we have seen an English detective movie *The Moon Stone*, and finally, on Soviet television the official political show *Mezhdunarodnaia panorama* is introduced by the [unannounced] melody of *One of These Days* from Pink Floyd’s album *Meddle*.”⁵

During 1971 three films directed by leftist American filmmakers were awarded by Moscow International Festival - *Little Big Man*, *The Sandpit Generals*, *They Shoot Horses Don’t They* – and in a few years they were released for the ordinary Soviet viewers.⁶ Since this time *Soveksportfilm* had released on average four US films annually. Special film exchanges were organised with professional support of the Soviet film critics, some of them, like Vyacheslav Shestakov, became regular visitors in the US.⁷ In 1974 *Soveksportfilm* released six US films, and American and Soviet filmmakers began a collaborative project over a new film production *Blue Bird* starring Elizabeth Taylor.⁸ In 1977 *Soveksportfilm* released 63 films from socialist countries and 67 films from capitalist countries, including 12 American films, and from 1979 to 1982 it continued to release on average eight US movies annually.⁹ Even in 1984, during an anti-American ideological campaign in the Soviet Union the most popular foreign films among the Soviet public were still the American films such as *The Deep*, *The China Syndrome*, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, *Three Days of the Condor*, and *Tootsie*.¹⁰ Soviet officials noted that by the end of the 1970s, more than 90 percent of all songs in the Ukrainian city disco clubs and restaurants were of Western origin. According to six personal diaries of Ukrainian high school students (four from Dnipropetrovsk Region, and two from the Cherkasy Region), they listened to Western pop music almost every day. In 1966 almost 60 percent of all films shown in the Ukrainian cities were of foreign origin, 50 percent of them were films from the capitalist West. Ten years later, in 1975, almost 90 percent of the films were foreign films, and almost 80 percent were Western ones. In 1981 more than 95 percent of all films were of foreign origin, and 90 percent came from Western capitalist countries. According to the same six diaries of Ukrainian middle school students, during the normal school week in the 1970s each of them watched two or three films per week. During school breaks they watched usually six to seven films per week. After 1975 (with an addition of television films), an average Soviet child [between 12 and 16 years of age] watched at least twenty-six movies per

⁴ I used such local periodicals as *Ukrains'ka Pravda*, *Shevchenkiv krai*, *Vechernii Donetsk*, *Dnepr vechernii* etc.

⁵ School Summer Diary of Aleksandr Gusar, Pavlograd, Dnipropetrovsk Region, 1970-1977: November 8, 1977. The Soviet children watched on Soviet television not only the broadcast from America about the ice hockey matches between the Soviet and Canadian hockey teams, but also the American television series *Lassie* about the adventures of a collie dog, the British mystery film *The Moon Stone* based on Wilkie Collins’ detective novel and various BBC television mini-series like *David Copperfield* based on Charles Dickens’ novel. Meanwhile, the adult Soviet audiences fell in love with the BBC television series *The Forsyte Saga* based on John Galsworthy’s novel and other Western television movies, like an Italian film *The Life of Leonardo da Vinci* by Renato Castellani. According to the Soviet film critics, these movies were the most popular Western feature films, shown on the Soviet TV during the 1970s. See an article about the BBC adaptation of *David Copperfield* which was shown on the Soviet TV in Aleksandr Anikst, “Bez vdokhnovenia,” *Sovetskii ekran*, 1975, No. 24, p. 4. See also a negative review of the British TV film *The Moon Stone* based on Wilkie Collins’ detective novel which was shown on the Soviet TV as well in Aleksandr Anikst, “Kamen’ okazalsia ne dragotsennym,” *Sovetskii ekran*, 1975, No. 20, p. 4.

⁶ *Sovetskii ekran*, 1971, No. 17, 1-2.

⁷ A. Borodin, “My mozhem dat’ drug drugu mnogo tsennogo...,” *Sovetskii ekran*, 1971, No. 16, pp. 16-17. See especially the books: V. Shestakov, *Amerika v zerkale ekrana: Amerikanskoe kino 70-kh godov*, Moscow, 1977; I.E. Kokarev (ed.) *Na ekrane Amerika*, Moscow, 1978; A. S. Muliarchik and V. P. Shestakov (eds.) *Amerikanskaia khudozhestvennaia kul'tura v sotsial'no-politicheskom kontekste 70-kh godov 20 veka*, Moscow, 1982.

⁸ *Sovetskii ekran*, 1971, No. 24, p. 19; *Sovetskii ekran* 1972, No. 24, 17; *Sovetskii ekran* 1974, No. 24, 17; S.Chertok, “Skazka o schastie,” 1975, No. 13, pp. 10-13, about a shooting of US-Soviet film “Siniaia ptitsa” (*Blue Bird*) with a US actress Elizabeth Taylor.

⁹ *Sovetskii ekran*, 1977, No. 24, p.17; *Sovetskii ekran* 1979, No. 24, 15; *Sovetskii ekran* 1981, No. 24, p.15; *Sovetskii ekran* 1982, No. 22, p.15; *Iskusstvo kino*, 1980, No. 6, 192.

¹⁰ *Sovetskii ekran*, 1984, No. 24, pp. 17-18.

week during the summer breaks. And more than half of these films came directly from the capitalist West during the 1970s!¹¹

Using personal interviews and six diaries of contemporary male authors representing various social groups of urban residents in Soviet Ukraine (two from the cities, and four from towns), written in Russian and Ukrainian, from 1970 to the beginning of the 1980s, this article analyses archival documents and contemporary periodicals and explores the influences of the massive exposure to audio and visual cultural products from the “capitalist West” on the self-construction of identity of Soviet youth from provincial Ukrainian towns. This article seeks to study the concrete development of cultural détente from “the bottom up” perspective, avoiding the Moscow/Leningrad “elitist/conformist” emphasis of recent scholarship.¹²

The major goal of this research is to trace the construction of the notion of the “young man” (*molodoi chelovek*) in the available narratives of the personal diaries written by Soviet young people of different ages (from the adolescent stage of their life to the time of their college graduation) during the last decades of socialism in Soviet Ukraine. Analyzing the published “personal stories of the Soviet experience,” Irina Paperno noted that those memoirs always emphasise “the negotiation between the self and community,” and “define themselves as accounts of lives embedded in a social matrix.”¹³ In contrast to Irina Paperno, Jochen Hellbeck and other scholars who concentrated their research on the diaries and memoirs written before 1970, on the materials, whose authors were the mature adults and mainly Soviet intellectuals, I use the diaries written mostly by Soviet children of middle and high school age and by the very young people of college age. Moreover, in contrast to Paperno, I will demonstrate how these children’s diaries were directly “embedded in a social matrix” and served as their intimate reactions to and personal reflections on various developments in the outside world. As some scholars argue, “personal narrative analysis demonstrates that human agency and individual social action is best understood in connection with the construction of selfhood in and through historically specific social relationships and institutions. Second, these analyses emphasise the

¹¹ S.I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk, 1960-1985*, Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press and Washington, D.C., Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010, pp. 125-126; p. 166. See also my essays: S. I. Zhuk, “The ‘Closed’ Soviet Society and the West: Consumption of the Western Cultural Products, Youth and Identity in Soviet Ukraine during the 1970s,” *The Crisis of Socialist Modernity: The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the 1970s*, Edited by Marie-Janine Calic, Sabine Dabringhaus, Dietmar Neutatz and Julia Obertreis, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011, pp. 87-117, and S.I. Zhuk, ‘Zapad v sovetskom ‘zakrytom’ gorode: ‘chuzhoe’ kino, ideologiya i problemy kul’turnoi identichnosti na Ukraine v brezhnevskuiu epokhu (1864-1982 gody),’ *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 2009, No. 100 (6), pp. 548-565. About a notion of the “closed society” see in S. I. Zhuk, “Closing and Opening Soviet Society (Introduction to the Forum *Closed City, Closed Economy, Closed Society: The Utopian Normalization of Autarky*),” *Ab Imperio*, 2011, No. 2, pp.123-158. See about western films consumption in the summer school diary of Andrei Vadimov, June-August 1971, and compare with the entries from June-August 1975, 1976 and 1977; school diary of Aleksandr Gusar, May-30-June 7, and June 7-27, 1970, compare with the entries from June-August, 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1978.

¹²I refer especially to Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2005. Although recent cultural studies implicitly present a history of Westernization of Soviet popular culture, they missed a crucial moment in this Westernization – the détente of the 1970s, especially the period from 1972 to 1979. The majority of recent studies overlook or ignore the role of détente in the Westernization of Soviet media and Soviet youth culture. See, e.g., recent book about Soviet media without even mentioning the détente: K. Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War*, Ithaca, New York, and London, Cornell University Press, 2011, p.12. Compare with the first history of Russian comics books in José Alaniz, *Komiks: Comic Art in Russia*, Jackson, Mississippi, University of Mississippi Press, 2010.

¹³ Irina Paperno, *Stories from the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Dairies, Dreams*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2009, p. xiii. Compare with another study based on memoirs and diaries from the Stalin era: J. Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2006, especially pp. 3-13. See the general studies about writing a diary: P.J. Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1999, *ibid.*, *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative* Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2008; M. J. Maynes, J. L. Pierce, B. Laslett, *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2008. Compare with a recent discussion about a biography and historical narrative in: ‘AHR Roundtable: Historians and Biography,’ *The American Historical Review* (hereafter – AHR), June 2009, Vol. 114, No. 3, pp. 573-661, and recent studies based only on the oral histories of late socialism: *Russia’s Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk about Their Lives*, Translated and edited by D. J. Raleigh, Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 2006, and D. J. Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia’s Cold War Generation*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2011.

narrative dimensions of selfhood; that is, well-crafted personal narrative analyses not only reveal the dynamics of agency in practice but also can document its construction through culturally embedded narrative forms that, over an individual's life, impose their own logic and thus also shape both life stories and lives."¹⁴ Such a construction of the self is especially apparent in diary writing.

Diary writing became the model of construction of the Soviet self from early childhood during the period of late socialism. As an intellectual exercise, diary writing was introduced in secondary school by the Soviet curriculum. The model for this writing was based on the popular literature for children, which became obligatory reading by all students of the Soviet middle school (from the 5th to 7th grade). As early as the beginning of the 1950s, Soviet teachers at this school level started to recommend to their students to write their every-day diaries. Usually, every May before the school breaks the teachers of literature announced the list of books to be read during summer. At the same time they gave special instructions on how to write a diary, what kind of events the students were supposed to describe in their journals. During the 1960s and 1970s, Russian and Ukrainian language teachers encouraged their students to write personal diaries, especially during summer school breaks.¹⁵

The common practice in a majority of Ukrainian urban schools was the recommendation to just write "a summer diary of the adventures." Sometimes teachers required their students to write these diaries as a method of collecting the necessary material for the first literary composition with a title "How I spent my summer break" during the first classes in the fall. Teachers recommended using as a model for a student's diary the cultural practices which were described in the popular novels written by a famous Soviet writer Nikolai Nosov.¹⁶ As one eleven-year-old student from a small town in Soviet Ukraine noted in May of 1970, "I used Tatiana Petrovna's suggestions about Nosov's books. So I started with re-reading his stories about "Vesiolaiia semeika," "Dnevnik Koli Sinitsyna" and of course, I began his new book about the adventures of Vitya Maleiev, which our teacher strongly recommended to read. Now I use all these Nosov's stories as a model (*obrazets*) for my own diary writing." At least three other student's diaries from the 1970s mentioned a model role for writing the personal journal provided by Nosov's characters such as Kolia Sinitsyn and Vitya Maleiev.¹⁷ Later on some of these middle school students ignored Nosov's "patterns" and emphasised other influences on their writing style. As one of them wrote in 1971, "why should we imitate those childish stories by Nosov in our diary writing? I will learn how to write a personal journal using some ideas from my favorite *Quadroon* novel by Mayne Reid or other adventure stories."¹⁸

For many Soviet students it became an important part of their everyday life to write about the events of their life. The writing helped them not only to articulate their thoughts and make notes about the remarkable events in their life (especially during their summer breaks), but also to construct their own intellectual self. And in this process the authors of these diaries followed to some extent the traditional topics that their teachers recommended. With time some of these topics disappeared from the diaries, but many of them were still present in implicit or explicit forms in their narratives. All these topics reflect interesting moments in the construction of the Soviet self in the writings by these Soviet students. As some scholars argue, their personal narratives in so-called "summer diaries" became "documents of social action and self-construction."¹⁹ I will focus on the most popular topics from those

¹⁴ M. J. Maynes, J. L. Pierce, B. Laslett, *Telling Stories*, op cit, p. 2.

¹⁵ See about this in my article and the recent book: S. I. Zhuk, "Book Consumption and Reading Practices in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk during the Brezhnev Era," *Ab Imperio*, 2009, No. 3, pp. 207-243; S. I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2010. See especially pp.109-123.

¹⁶ N. Nosov, *Vitya Maleiev v shkole i doma* in N. Nosov, *Sobranie sochinenii v 3 tomakh*, Vol. 1, Moscow, Detskaia literatura, 1968, pp 489-661. See about Nosov's books for children in C. Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991*, New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 2007, p. 127.

¹⁷ School diary of Aleksandr Gusar, May 20, 1970. Gusar referred to other famous stories by Nosov. All these stories were presented as the special diaries of Soviet middle school students, written in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

¹⁸ School diary of Oleg Grin, Vatutino, Cherkassy Region, June 12, 1971. He referred to a famous adventure novel by Mayne Reid, which was tremendously popular among Soviet kids. See about this popularity in S. I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City*, op cit., pp. 109-123, and S. I. Zhuk, "Book Consumption," op cit., pp. 207-243.

¹⁹ M.J. Maynes, J. L. Pierce, B. Laslett, *Telling Stories*, op cit., pp. 4-5.

diaries, which are related to the self-construction of the Soviet young man and various identities formed by this construction: Soviet patriotism vs. capitalist world, cultural consumption and creating a modern style ("to be modern and become a harmonious man"), reactions to the détente of the 1970s, cultural fixation on western popular culture and commercialization of youth culture.

The first topic, which prevailed in all student diaries from the early stage of the Soviet middle school (5-7 grades) through the years in high school (8-10 grades) and the first college years, is an emphasis on the authors' Soviet patriotism and rejection of negative aspects of capitalism. For these authors a Soviet child is a patriot of his socialist "motherland." Despite the growing influence of western cultural products, which became available during the détente in the 1970s, and the beginnings of cultural fixation over such products like movies, popular music and fashion in the last years in high school and the first years in college, the self-construction of the young man in the diaries is still based on the dichotomy of "Soviet patriot vs. western capitalism."²⁰

The most popular Soviet film for children during the late 1960s and early 1970s was Yevgenii Sherstobitov's film *Aqualangi na dne*, which was released in 1965. The story of a brave Soviet boy, who tried to help the Soviet border guards to catch a foreign spy in a small Soviet resort town on the Black Sea coast, inspired millions of Soviet children. As one of them noted in his diary after watching this film the second time, in July of 1971, "I want to be like Roman Marchenko, to help to arrest a spy who was an enemy of my country."²¹ Many years later the author of that diary still recalled how influential these patriotic Soviet images were for a construction of his own self. At the same time the images of the films from the "capitalist West" (which were made mostly by the leftist, anti-capitalist inclined film directors like Stanley Kramer or Sydney Pollack) helped the authors of "summer diaries" to justify their construction of the Soviet self. The first, the most popular American comedy film which opened the Brezhnev era in Soviet Ukraine and became the new film sensation, was a Stanley Kramer film of 1963, *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*. It was released in the Soviet Union in late 1965, and was shown in eastern Ukraine for the first time in full theaters with all tickets sold out during January-February of 1966.²² According to the Soviet film magazine statistics, this film became one of the most popular foreign films that were shown in the Soviet Union in 1966.²³

Stanley Kramer's hilarious comedy tells the story of a search for buried treasure by at least a dozen people, all played by well-known entertainers of their day. After a car accident, a group of complete strangers (including Milton Berle, Jonathan Winters, Sid Caesar, Phil Silvers, and others) witness how a dying driver (Jimmy Durante) identified the location of hidden money. This story of buried treasure triggered a conflict-ridden hunt, watched over carefully by a suspicious cop (Spencer Tracy). This treasure hunt involves more and more people and creates various humorous situations. As an eleven-year-old Aleksandr Gusar summarised in his summer diary on May 31, 1970, "my Mom and I watched a very funny, two-parts (*dvukh-seriinyi*) American film in color about a search for money which was buried under the trees, a combination of which looked like the English letter 'W.' The main characters were chasing each other for more than two hours; then they found the money and lost everything at the end."²⁴

Another young moviegoer, fourteen-year-old Vladimir Solodovnik, during the first show of the American comedy in March of 1966, also noted that this film was funny and dynamic. However, at the same time he felt very uncomfortable about the main story of the film, a search for money. "It looks

²⁰ According to the sociologist Thomas Cushman, the limited sources of foreign cultural practices always produce "an intense idealization" of the early available forms of such practices in the societies with strong ideological control and limitations. In the Soviet closed society the literature, music and films of "an important, but limited range," Cushman explained, "was seized upon early on and became the central objects" upon which subsequent cultural practice was based. See T. Cushman, *Notes from Underground: Rock Music Counterculture in Russia*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 43.

²¹ Summer diary of Vasilii Leshchinskii, Cherkassy Region, Vatutino, July 2, 1971. See a very critical review of this film in M. Chernenko, "Snimaetsia kino," *Sovetskii ekran*, No. 11, 1966, p. 5, and *Novyny kinoekranu*, No. 6., 1966.

²² See *Dneprovskaia Pravda*, January 1 and January 12, February 16, 1966.

²³ *Sovetskii ekran* 1967, No. 10, pp. 1-2.

²⁴ School diary of Aleksandr Gusar, Dnipropetrovsk region, Pavlograd, May 31, 1970.

like everybody (in the film) was driven crazy by this search,” Solodovnik wrote, “the capitalist West is mad about money.” He concluded this entry with a remarkable phrase: “So our propaganda was correct, in America human greed and lust for money is the most important driving force. Even the American film makers such as Stanley Kramer demonstrated this in their movies.”²⁵ Such ambiguous feelings about themes in Kramer’s film were present in another twelve-year-old boy’s writing. Andrei Vadimov noted, “It is funny to watch this hunt for money, but it’s good to know that we live in a normal country, safe and comfortable, without this American madness about money.”²⁶ Many Soviet filmgoers were shocked by the realistic portrayal of human greed in Kramer’s film. In Kramer’s comedy America looked “like an abnormal dysfunctional country” compared to the normality and stability of the Soviet Union.²⁷ The American comedy about “a mad hunt for money” played the role of the “negative other” from the West in the imagining of “normal” Soviet identity by young filmgoers during the beginning of the Brezhnev era.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s Soviet college students watched new American films like *The Sandpit Generals*, *They Shoot Horses Don’t They*, *The New Centurions*, *Bless the Beasts and Children*, *The Domino Principle*, *Oklahoma Crude*, *Alice Doesn’t Live Here Anymore*, *Tootsie*, and *Three Days of the Condor* which presented mainly the leftist criticism of the American realities, contributing to the construction of a positive identity of the Soviet self. One college student, who loved American rock and roll and western films, noted after watching in one week of August of 1982 such different American films as *The Domino Principle*, *Oklahoma Crude*, *Alice Doesn’t Live Here Anymore* and *Three Days of the Condor*, “we perhaps have not enough products in our food stores and fewer cars on our roads, but our youth has a much brighter future than those Americans.”²⁸ As Aleksandr Gusar commented in his diary after watching the American film, a police drama *New Centurions*, “it is good to live in the West when you have money and power, but it is very dangerous to live there if you are just an ordinary poor man. I would rather stay in my own country.”²⁹ Two anti-CIA thrillers - *Three Days of the Condor* by Sydney Pollack (1975) and *The Domino Principle* by Stanley Kramer (1977) - especially influenced the negative perception of America and of “Western imperialism” among Soviet college students. As some college students from eastern Ukraine explained in their writing, “The military industrial complex and the intelligence agencies rule the West. After watching Pollack’s and Kramer’s films, we understand that the capitalist West has no future.”³⁰ And

²⁵ School diary of Vladimir Solodovnik, Dnipropetrovsk region, Sinelnikovo, March 7, 1966.

²⁶ School diary of Andrei Vadimov, Dnipropetrovsk, July 5, 1969.

²⁷ Author interview of Vitalii Pidgaetskii at the Department of History, Dnipropetrovsk University, February 10, 1996.

²⁸ School summer diary of Oleg Grin, Kyiv, August 29, 1982.

²⁹ See the school diary of Aleksandr Gusar, July 5, 1975. *New Centurions*, originally released in US in 1972, became very popular film in 1974-75 in the Soviet Union. See *Sovetskii ekran*, 1975, No. 10, p. 6. See how local periodicals described the American films, especially in E. Iakovlev, “Navazhdenie (kinoobozrenie),” *Dneprovskaiia Pravda*, 1982, February 4, p. 3.

³⁰ School diary of Andrei Vadimov, Dnipropetrovsk, December 5, 1978. *Three Days of the Condor* was a 1975 US political thriller movie directed by Sydney Pollack and starring Robert Redford, Faye Dunaway and Max von Sydow. The screenplay by Lorenzo Semple Jr. and David Rayfiel was adapted from the novel *Six Days of Condor* by James Grady. Set mainly in New York City and Washington D.C., this movie was about a bookish CIA researcher who discovers all his co-workers dead, and must outwit those responsible until he figures out whom he can really trust. The film addresses the perceived moral ambiguity of the actions of elements within the United States government during the early 1970s. Another film, *The Domino Principle* was a 1977 US thriller film starring Gene Hackman, Candice Bergen, Mickey Rooney and Richard Widmark directed by Stanley Kramer. In this film Roy Tucker, serving time for the murder of his wife's first husband, is approached in prison by a man named Tagge on behalf of a mysterious organization with an offer: in exchange for helping him escape and start a new life, Tucker must work for the organization for a few weeks. Following his escape with cellmate Spiventa —whom the organization immediately kills—Tucker flies to Costa Rica where he is reunited with his wife Ellie. After a few idyllic days, the organization returns them to Los Angeles. There the details of his mission slowly unfold. He realizes he is expected to assassinate someone and refuses. The organization retaliates by kidnapping his wife. The next morning Tucker fires on his target from a helicopter, but the copter is hit by return fire and crashes. Tucker escapes, takes another hostage, demanding a plane and the return of his wife. At the airstrip, Tucker tells Tagge that he deliberately fired short. Tagge reveals that he had two other shooters in place, including Tucker's supposedly murdered cellmate Spiventa, and that Tagge's group has been manipulating Tucker for over a decade. Aboard the plane with Ellie, Tucker spots someone planting a toolbox in the back of Tagge's car. Unable to get the pilot to abort take-off, Tucker watches helplessly as Tagge is blown up with his car. The couple returns to Costa Rica where Tucker sees his new life dismantled as quickly as it was assembled: his false passport destroyed, his money taken and Ellie killed. Spiventa and the other agent arrive to kill Tucker but he gets the drop on them and dumps

another young author who watched these two American films after Anderson's *O Lucky Man!* film in 1979, and who was the most enthusiastic rock music fan, noted "the capitalist society has some potential for modern development, but it is suppressed by the CIA and the military machine. That is why rock music was born- to challenge and criticise the politics of the West!!! And all these films, like rock music, criticise the politics of the capitalists."³¹ As some of these authors later acknowledged, during the détente "Westernization" of the imagination of young Soviet consumers had certain ideological limits, and overall, it had an obviously very strong anti-capitalist bias.³²

Another important topic of self-construction, which is present in all personal narratives in student diaries, is the goal of the authors "to become harmonious men (*stanovitsia garmonicheskii-razvitoi lichnost'iu*)" - to be modern and stylish. According to a fourteen-year old boy from a small Ukrainian town, he would devote the entire summer school break, like Leonardo da Vinci, to "harmonious education" (*garmonicheskomu svoemu razvitiuu*) of himself, developing his physical abilities in sports games like volleyball, swimming every day, reading a list of the "important" books, listening to Mozart concerts and the Beatles albums and playing guitar (at least two hours per day).³³ This goal involved certain aspects of cultural consumption directly connected to the products of western mass culture such as jeans, "beat (rock) music" etc. Paradoxically, these elements of western popular culture became connected to old notions about the major goal of Marxist education in Soviet schools – to "construct harmonious personality." As one fifteen-year old student argued in 1971, "our teachers told us that socialism is avant-garde of our modern civilization, so it means that everything modern, positive and humane should be incorporated in our culture. Therefore progressive music of the Beatles with their anti-capitalist songs like *Eleanor Rigby* or *Lady Madonna* should be part of our socialist culture as well. The socialist young man should be developed in harmony – you need to know physics, history, literature and contemporary music, not only Mozart, but the Beatles and Rolling Stones, etc."³⁴ But these ideas were against the official ideological perception of western popular culture.

In January of 1969, the first secretary of the regional committee of the CPSU in a big industrial city in eastern Ukraine, explained to Komsomol activists that the main essence of socialist cultural consumption was the ability of young Soviet consumers to give a "correct class evaluation of the pieces of bourgeois arts and music and avoid non-critical attitudes toward a eulogy of the capitalist way of life." He emphasised that a Marxist ideological approach would help young consumers to make good cultural consumption choices. In contrast to the degenerate Western culture, the Soviet ideologist noted, Komsomol members had to promote the best forms of their own socialist national culture. They should use the most progressive patterns of their Ukrainian culture in the struggle against Western influences.³⁵

According to the official statistics, in 1965, 90 percent of all music material produced in eastern Ukraine included popular songs by Soviet composers, while fewer than 10 percent had recordings of Western songs. In 1970, however, more than 90 percent of this music material had "Western beat music," mainly songs by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. In April of that year, Zinaida Soumina, an official in the city of Dnipropetrovsk's administrative apparatus, complained about this phenomenon. "We are not against consumption," she claimed. "But this should be a *cultured* consumption. Take a look at our city offices of music recording and what our youth is consuming there as "music." They are recording the tapes with songs of Vysotsky [10 percent], music by the Beatles (*bitlov*) [90 percent]. Where is the real cultural consumption here? You can't see that our young people are recording classical music by Tchaikovsky or Glinka. They still prefer the dances with their boogie-woogie to the

their bodies in the ocean. The film closes with a resolute Tucker vowing not to give in, unaware he is in the cross hairs of yet another assassin. [This full description of the movie is available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Domino_Principle>.

³¹ Summer school diary of Vasili Leshchinskii, Vatutino, Cherkasy Region, August 22, 1979.

³² See especially my interviews with Vadimov, Gusar and Suvorov.

³³ Citation from school diary of Oleg Grin, Vatutino, Cherkassy Region, May 30, 1971, page 3; see also the diaries of Leshchinskii, May 28, 1972, and diary of Aleksandr Gusar, Pavlograd, Dniepropetrovsk Region, May 30, 1970.

³⁴ Summer diary of Vasili Leshchinskii, Cherkassy Region, Vatutino, May 28, 1971.

³⁵ DADO, f.22, op. 15, d. 252, l. 62.

concerts of classical music. They still wait for the fresh music records from the West to appear on the city black market. In search of recordings of their Western idols, young people forget their national roots, their own national culture.”³⁶

In 1971, nine out of ten of the most popular songs belonged to the “beat music” category and only one of them was Vladimir Vysotsky’s song.³⁷ These figures reflected the major situation on the music market in other Ukrainian cities, especially in Odesa, Kyiv and in Cherkasy regions. By the middle of the 1970s, rock music became the most popular form of cultural consumption in Soviet Ukraine.³⁸

Another very important item from personal narratives of Soviet students was their (de) construction of their national identity. The main result of the mass consumption of Western music and films was the Russification of Ukrainian youth culture in Soviet Ukraine. To some extent, it was related to the origins and sources of information about new music and films which the local youth consumed. During the 1970s, all the official Soviet recordings of Western music were released on the state-owned label *Melodia* with comments in Russian only. All the best radio and television shows about rock music and western films were of foreign or Russian origin.³⁹ Young consumers of Western popular music from eastern Ukraine also relied on Russian periodicals because the Ukrainian editions were more cautious and conservative than the Moscow central ones. The Ukrainian Komsomol magazine *Ranok* always published awkwardly written articles with incompetent criticism of the developments in the Western youth culture. Sometimes local readers were appalled by the ignorance and incompetence of Kyiv journalists. “I am tired of reading this mixture of lies and fantasy in *Ranok*,” wrote one young enthusiast of rock music, “these guys from Kyiv invented that American hippies were a satanic sect with a mixture of palmistry, astrology and black magic, and that hippies were looking for a virgin girl for their devilish black mass ritual and couldn’t find such girls among themselves. I would rather read a boring Feofanov book about rock music than Kyiv magazines.” Because of this disappointment he stopped reading the Ukrainian youth periodicals as early as 1974, and read only *Rovesnik*.⁴⁰ Many Ukrainian rock fans preferred *Rovesnik* as well. As a result, the most popular youth magazine among the local rock music fans was the Russian language journal *Rovesnik*.

The Russian language became the major language of local rock bands. From the mid-seventies, the repertoire of student concerts changed dramatically. In fact, the Russian language ousted the Ukrainian one in the major concerts organised in major cities of eastern Ukraine during the 1970s. In June 1982, during the traditional music festival “The Student Spring” in Dnipropetrovsk, all college rock bands performed songs in Russian. Even the Ukrainian folk rock band *Dniepriane* performed fewer songs in Ukrainian than usual. One journalist complained about the lack of national Ukrainian songs in the repertoire of student bands in comparison to previous music festivals during the 1970s.⁴¹

³⁶ DADO, f. 416, op. 2, d. 1565, ll. 306-307.

³⁷ Author interview of Mikhail Suvorov, Dnipropetrovsk, June 1, 1991. See an interview of Natalia Vasilenko, Dnipropetrovsk, July 19, 2007. See also an interview of Evgen D. Prudchenko, the Central Library of Dnipropetrovsk Region, July 18, 2007 and an interview of Galina V. Smolenskaia, the Central Library of Dnipropetrovsk Region, July 18, 2007.

³⁸ Author’s interview with Eduard Svichar in Vatutino, Cherkassy region, Ukraine, June 8, 2004. See also a good article about the black market in Odessa in: V. Tarniv’skyi, “Tse tam, de tovkuchka,” *Molod’ Ukrainy*, 1967, May 16, p. 2.

³⁹ Mentioned by Mikhail Suvorov. Author interview with Mikhail Suvorov, June 1, 1991; my interview with Andrei Vadimov, Dnipropetrovsk, July 20-21, 2003; DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 25-28. Author interview with Igor T., KGB officer, Dnipropetrovsk, May 15, 1991. See about radio stations *Maiak* and *Yunost* in Aleksandr Sherel’, *Audiokul’tura XX veka: Istoriia, esteticheskie zakonomernosti, osobennosti vliiania na auditoriu. Ocherki*, Moscow, Progress-Traditsia, 2004, pp. 90-94. See also entries in: School diary of A. Gusar, May-August, 1972; May-August 1973; May-August 1974; and the school diary of V. Solodovnik, June 12, 1970; July-August 1971; July –August 1972.

⁴⁰ School diary of A. Gusar, June 1, 1974. Gusar mentioned an article by Mykola Solomatin, “Zhertvy chornoi magii,” *Ranok*, 1974, January, No. 1, 18-19, and a book devoted to a history of the Western pop music by Moscow journalist Oleg Feofanov, *Tigr v gitare*, Moscow, Detskaia literatura, 1969. See also other publications of *Ranok*: A. Povnytsia, “Tvoi dity, Brytanie,” *Ranok*, 1970, No. 6, June, p. 17; 1971, No. 4, pp. 8-9; Valerii Voronin, “Amerykans’ki zustrichi,” *Ranok*, 1975, No. 9, pp. 17-18.

⁴¹ L. Vdovina, “Khto vidkrye molodi talanty?” *Prapor iunosti*, May 25, 1982, p. 4. See also the official reports about the concerts organised by the trade unions and Komsomol in: DADO, f. 22, op. 26 (1979), ll. 1-160; f. 1860, op. 1, d. 2427, ll. 1-26; and publications about a domination of the Russian language in pop culture in “Nebo muzyky,” *Prapor iunosti*, June 1, 1982, p.3, and *ibid.*, June 3, 1982, and many other issues of this periodical for 1982.

During the 1980s more local college rock bands switched from Ukrainian language to Russian.⁴² Local Komsomol periodicals also emphasised that in the early 1980s disco clubs stopped playing Ukrainian music.⁴³

Some Ukrainian speaking enthusiasts of rock music by the end of the 1970s began speaking Russian and replaced their native language with Russian. Aleksandr Gusar, who was a native Ukrainian speaker switched from Ukrainian to Russian during the summer of 1976. During 1971-75 he wrote his diary exclusively in Ukrainian. As Gusar explained in his journal in August 1976, the language of the young rocker should be English, or Russian rather than Ukrainian. That is why he switched to Russian.⁴⁴ At the same time his own construction of his national identity was developing all the time. As a sixteen-year-old high school student, who was always more interested in science (especially chemistry) than in the humanities, he was thrilled by reading Ukrainian historical books like Ivan Bilyk's novel *Mech Areia* and decided to read all the books about Ukrainian history, including those about Kievan princes Sviatoslav and Volodymyr and about the legendary Zaporizhian Cossacks. In his summer diary, in June of 1975 he wrote:

My father criticises me for reading in Ukrainian and reminds me that for my career and studies at Dnipropetrovsk University I will need a good knowledge of Russian. But I can't stop reading Bilyk's novel. My friend, whose mother is a librarian, gave me this copy in the Ukrainian language. He told me that this book was forbidden and removed by the authorities from circulation. However, I am so impressed with what I had read in Bilyk's novel. It turned out that the Huns leader from the fourth century AD, great Attila who controlled the entire Eurasia, was our Ukrainian ancestor, prince Hatyla. It is unbelievable! We were a great and ancient nation even before Kievan Rus! And now we, Ukrainians, are transformed into a nation of stupid and timid peasants.⁴⁵

This entry from his school diary is a good illustration of the role of Ukrainian historical novels in identity formation in the Dnipropetrovsk region. Gusar, who idealised the Western rock music and whose native language was Ukrainian, under influence from his parents switched to writing in Russian from Ukrainian in his diary in 1975. The same year, he still continued reading his favorite Ukrainian books, and in his diary he expressed an obvious pride for the past achievements of the Ukrainian nation.

On the one hand, Aleksandr followed a typical road of Russification. He entered Dnipropetrovsk University where the language of instruction was Russian and he switched to Russian to communicate with his classmates. As Kenneth Farmer noted, "Official Soviet policies in the Ukraine have tended to reinforce the prestige of Russian over Ukrainian, and to encourage the adoption of Russian by Ukrainians seeking upward mobility."⁴⁶ Eventually, Gusar adopted the Russian language. He also publicly criticised the stupidity and incompetence of Ukrainian intellectuals and Soviet conservatism of the local Ukrainian *apparatchiks*, whom he felt personified all the reactionary moments of Soviet reality. On the other hand, Gusar wanted to know more about the historical past of his nation. He read Ukrainian historical novels and idealised the glorious past of Ukraine which he contrasted with backward, anti-Western elements in contemporary Soviet Ukrainian culture.⁴⁷

⁴² V. Sotnikova, "Eti alye 'Maki'," *Dnepr vechernii*, 1983, January 13, p. 4; L. Tsaregorodtseva, "Na stsene – 'Vodograi'," *Dnepr vechernii*, 1983, January 17, p. 4.

⁴³ I refer also to my conversation with Natalia Ambrosimova, a journalist from a Komsomol newspaper *Prapor iunosti*, Dnipropetrovsk, May 12, 1991. See also T. Vin'kova, "Profesionaly chy dyletanty," *Prapor iunosti*, 1983, June 13, p. 4.

⁴⁴ See the school diary of Aleksandr Gusar, May-August, 1976; see especially an entry on August 29, 1976.

⁴⁵ School diary of Aleksandr Gusar, June 21, 1975. See also about popularity of Bilyk's book in Oles Buzyna, *Tainaia istoria Ukrainy-Rusi: Vtoroe izdanie*, Kyiv, "Dovira", 2007, pp. 32-35.

⁴⁶ K. C. Farmer, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the Post-Stalin Era: Myth, Symbols and Ideology in Soviet Nationalities Policy*, The Hague, Boston, London, 1980, p. 132.

⁴⁷ Author's conversation with Professor Yurii Mytsyk, May 12, 1991, Dnipropetrovsk. He expressed similar feelings.

Many contemporaries of this mass Russification noted a significant social factor that contributed to this development: the influx of young migrants from local Ukrainian villages to the city. A majority of all *PTU* and college students came from Ukrainian peasant families. During the years of their studies they were adjusting to the new urban conditions of life, and they began consuming the popular music of the city *en masse*.⁴⁸ As one contemporary explained, these young Ukrainian peasants experienced the shock of encountering a new lifestyle. They were losing their old peasant identity, cultural preferences and stereotypes. In a Russified Ukrainian city like Dnipropetrovsk many of these migrants adopted the new style of behavior that they had experienced in vocational school and college dormitories.⁴⁹ To some extent, they replaced elements of their Ukrainian peasant identities with new elements of urban popular youth culture, including not only the “obligatory” American jeans and long hair, but also dancing to new music, especially hard rock and disco. Many police officers and Communist ideologists expressed their concerns about this transformation.⁵⁰ During police interrogations *PTU* students who were arrested for different crimes during the late 1960s and 70s blatantly denied their Ukrainian identity. In conversation with the police officers these students, former Ukrainian peasant children, stressed that they “were not bumpkins (*byki*, or *baklany*) from the village.” They explained to the police that they wore Western dress and listened to Western rock music because they wanted to look “cool” (*firmenno*) and “stylish” (*modno*).⁵¹

As contemporaries noted, “*PTU* and college students, former Ukrainian peasant children, became the victims of the Soviet cultural unification during mature socialism.” This cultural unification or homogenization, according to some scholars, affected Ukrainian children in big industrial cities like Dnipropetrovsk. When these children left their villages for the cities and tried to adjust to urban life style, they became completely immersed in the cultural homogenization of the big industrial Soviet city.⁵² Many of them lost the major features of their Ukrainian identity. They tried to speak Russian instead of Ukrainian, they wore new, fashionable Western dress; they listened and danced to the new, fashionable music; and they stopped reading Ukrainian literature. Urban Soviet mass culture – influenced by Western pop culture – filled a vacuum in the development of Ukrainian peasants who moved to the cities. Soviet cultural homogenization that involved millions of young migrants from villages to the cities laid the foundation for the consumption of Western mass culture during late socialism. Paradoxically, this process included mass consumption of the cultural products that had previously been rejected as dangerous tools of imperialist propaganda, such as American rock and roll or disco clubs.⁵³

⁴⁸ See also about ethno-demographic developments in the big industrial cities of Ukraine in: B. Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth Century Ukraine*, London, Macmillan, 1985, pp. 171-258; Wsevolod Isajiw, ‘Urban Migration and Social Change in Contemporary Soviet Ukraine,’ *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, March 1980, pp. 56-66.

⁴⁹ See about a typical situation in *PTU* dorms in M. Karpov, “Vechir u gurtozhytku,” *Prapor iunosti*, 1982, August 24, p. 3.

⁵⁰ See my interview of Professor Yurii Mytsyk, Dnipropetrovsk University, January 15, 1992, and my interview of Vitalii Pidgaetskii at the Department of History, Dnipropetrovsk University, February 10, 1996. See also numerous complaints about a loss of Ukrainian identity on the dance floor in DADO, f. 17, op. 8, d. 44, ll. 1-3, 175-176; f. 416, op. 2, d. 1353, ll. 23-26, 40-49; d. 1991, ll. 4-7, 14-23. Some experts connected a loss of identity to the rise of crime among the local youth. See: DADO, f. 416, op. 2, d. 1694, ll. 6-14; f. 18, op. 60, d. 28, ll. 74-76, 79.

⁵¹ DADO, f. 19, op. 53, d. 109, ll. 28-31, 38, 39, 40, 41, 46. See also statistics for 1980-84 in DADO, f. p-18, op. 60, d. 28, l. 79. Compare with post-Soviet identification of the Russian youth in: Hilary Pilkington et. al., *Looking West?*, 180.

⁵² Author interview of Professor Yuri Mytsyk, January 15, 1992, Dnipropetrovsk. See also about the homogenization as a part of the Soviet cultural project in: Stephen Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras*, New York, St. Martin's, 2000, pp. 22-23. Compare with the roots of this project in the Stalin era: Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2000. See an effect of the urban Soviet culture of the big industrial cities on the new workers, migrants from the villages and small towns in: M. D. Afanasiev, *Za knigoi. Mesto chtenia v zhizni sovetskogo rabochego*, Moscow, Kniga, 1987, especially pp.36-43.

⁵³ As Hilary Pilkington noted, Soviet ideologists were against mass consumption of Western pop music. They claimed that Western pop music was “primarily designed to help destroy rationality as well as the ability to appreciate ‘real’ culture, by inculcating blind consumerism, and it encouraged social passivity through a process of gradual stupefaction (*effekt ogluplenia*).” Western rock music, especially, was “condemned for its anti-Soviet nature; it was declared to constitute psychological warfare against the Soviet Union that had been targeted specifically at youth since they were a psychologically and emotionally susceptible section of the population.” H. Pilkington, ‘The Future is Ours’: Youth Culture in Russia, 1953 to the Present,’ in C. Kelly and D. Shepherd (eds.), *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 374.

Sometimes the official Russification co-existed with sporadic explosions of interest in Ukrainian national roots, which was provoked by trips abroad. Parents of young Vladimir Solodovnik from a small town in eastern Ukraine, who traveled to Canada as tourists during the spring of 1978, had a similar reaction after their trip abroad and meeting Canadian Ukrainians. As he noted in his diary, “My parents just returned from their tourist trip abroad yesterday. They brought for me great stuff – a pair of jeans, Pink Floyd’s album *Animals* and some souvenirs. They were shocked to find out how nice and kind were Ukrainians in Canada. As I understood from their conversation, their tourist group supervisor (*starshii grupy*) tried to stop these contacts with Canadians. But the impact [of these meetings with Ukrainian Canadians] is obvious. My old people (*stariki*) suddenly resumed speaking Ukrainian at home. They put the large Taras Shevchenko and Lesia Ukrainka pictures in our living room! Now I am shocked! They are now *Ukrainized (ukrainizirovani)*!”⁵⁴

But overall, consumption of the products of western mass culture during the 1970s led to Russification as the main trend in the cultural development of eastern Ukraine.⁵⁵ As Solodovnik wrote in 1976, “What is going on with our television? A few years ago a Moscow TV channel presented rock music as ‘the sound of capitalist degeneration and of cultural crisis.’ Now they include western rock [music] in every show. So everybody loves watching Moscow television rather than our boring Ukrainian channels with our peasant Ukrainian language. Now even my Ukrainian patriotic parents prefer “Muscovite” (*moskal’skie*) channels rather than Kyiv television. It looks like Moscow television now promotes our own Soviet Westernization (*vesternizatsiia*) in the Russian language!!! A year ago (1975), in *Benefis* with Larisa Golubkina they permitted Soviet musicians to cover ‘Ms Vanderbilt’ by McCartney and the Wings. This year in one show *Volshebnyi fonar’* I noticed at least four Russian covers of arias from rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*, including my favorite ‘King Herod’s Song’, two covers of the Beatles songs like ‘Octopus’s Garden’ and ‘Let It Be’ [*Budet Tak!*], one with Sweet ‘Funny, Funny’ and Russian covers of music from American films like *The Godfather*, *Love Story* and *My Fair Lady*.”⁵⁶ Next year another student from another small Soviet town noted, “It is amazing how this international détente has changed our television, cinema and, especially, our perception of popular music even here in our provincial town. On a channel of the Central television, our family watched recently the concerts of western music featuring ABBA and Smokey. It is impossible to imagine this even five years ago, when we had only Tatraskii’s radio show about western music and some parodies of western beat music in cartoon films such as *Bremenskie muzykanty*. And that’s it. In 1972, I could buy here in the *kiosk* only small [pirate] records by *Melodia* (label) of the old Beatles or Deep Purple songs. If I needed to buy a real album of western rock group, I had to go to Kyiv’s black market. But today, here, in our **provincial small town** (!!!), I bought an officially licensed *Melodia* disc of *Band on the Run* by McCartney at the same *kiosk*, and without going to Kyiv I bought (without any problem) an audiotape with recordings of my favorite disc *Wish You Were Here* by Pink Floyd from the same vendor at the same *kiosk* [*iz pod prilavka*] for only 10 rubles!!! In our small town this entire week we had the shows of only foreign movies. I myself watched two American films, one Italian, and one French film this week. My mom watched tonight the television shows and films only from the capitalist West. She was so frustrated by this ‘**capitalist invasion**’ in our culture that she called this situation ‘**the détente’s new cultural revolution**.’”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Diary of Vladimir Solodovnik, Sinel’nikovo, Dnipropetrovsk Region, 1966-1978, note from May 12, 1978.

⁵⁵ See: R. S. Clem, “The Integration of Ukrainians into Modernized Society in the Ukrainian SSR,” *The Soviet West. Interplay between Nationality and Social Organization*, R. S. Clem (ed.), New York, Praeger Publishers, 1975, pp. 60-70; L. I. Poliakov, “Zminy v etnonatsional’nomu skladi naselennia pivdnia Ukrainy v 60-80-ti roky XX st.,” *Pivdenna Ukraina XX stolittia: Zapiski nauково-doslidnoi laboratorii istorii Pivdennoi Ukrainy Zaporiz’kogo Derzhavnogo Universytetu*, Ed. by A. V. Boiko, Zaporizhzhia, 1998, pp. 227-237. See also a good analysis of these trends in English: Bohdan Krawchenko, “Ethno-Demographic Trends in Ukraine in the 1970s,” *Ukraine after Shelest*, 101-119. See also: Goskomstat USSR. Dnepropetrovskoe oblastnoe upravlenie statistiki, *Naselenie Dnepropetrovskoi oblasti po dannym Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1989 goda*, Dnepropetrovsk, 1991, pp. 100; 102; 106 and 116.

⁵⁶ School diary of Vladimir Solodovnik, Sinel’nikovo, Dnipropetrovsk Region, December 7, 1976. He used both Russian and Ukrainian language in his writing.

⁵⁷ School diary of Oleg Grin, Vatutino, Cherkasy Region, January 16, 1977.

As one contemporary summarised the situation in the Soviet media during the 1970s, “It was a real **Western cultural invasion** in the Soviet Union. Since 1975 the Soviet audiences had been exposed to the massive attacks of images and sounds from the capitalist West on television, in the movies, on radio, on music records, and of course on a dance floor. Paradoxically, everybody here [in Ukraine] who loved western music and films and considered himself a ‘modern young man’ began mentally to associate and identify himself with ‘progressive and westernised’ Moscow and Russian language as a language of modernity (*iazuk sovremennosti*), rather than with conservative and backward Kyiv and their stupid policy of Soviet Ukrainian anti-western patriotism.”⁵⁸ The search for the authentic West deeply impacted the process of identity formation of the young Soviet consumers of Western cultural products. In Soviet Ukraine, these consumers tried to identify themselves only with the West or its legitimate substitutes, which by the end of the 1970s lost any connections with Soviet Ukrainian culture. In the imagination of these consumers, official Soviet Ukrainian culture represented all the most conservative, backward and anti-Western elements in their life. “Only idiots and peasants listen to Ukrainian Estrada, the normal *razvitye* (smart, intelligent) people listen to real rock music from the real West,” wrote Andrei Vadimov, a future activist of the discotheque movement, in September 1976. The same year Aleksandr Gusar, a future organiser of a dorm disco club at Dnipropetrovsk University, noted in his high school journal, “You must be stupid enough to say that Ukrainian Estrada songs are better than Western rock music. Ukrainian music exists only for bumpkins. All intelligent youth listens now to classic rock from the West. [sic]”⁵⁹

By accepting the real West as a part of their identity, these young rock music fans and discotheque activists rejected the official Soviet version of their own ethnic identity. Eventually this process of identification with the real West leveled national cultural differences among the active consumers of the Western mass culture and contributed to what some scholars called a homogenization of Soviet culture; that meant a mass Russification of the youth cultures in Eastern Ukraine during the 1970s.⁶⁰ The personal diaries reflect an appearance of the new model of construction of the young man during the beginning of the 1980s. Growing up, the authors, now college students, began distancing themselves from their idealistic perceptions of Soviet patriotism and incorporating more idealization of the products of western popular culture in their narrative and describing their commercial activities in an unusual, cynical way. At the same time, their narratives demonstrate a presence of the traditional discourse of the young Soviet men, Komsomol activists, who tried to adjust to the new realities of Soviet life. As one, now a sophomore college student from eastern Ukraine, who was actively involved in black market activities, and who was recently married, noted in 1982, “What is bad to wish to live better and comfortable life under socialism? Is it against the teachings of Karl Marx? I am making money by trading music; therefore I add something to our family budget, because my salary is not enough for my family.”⁶¹ In December of 1978, another college student, who became the most prominent disc jockey in a big Ukrainian industrial city, wrote in his personal diary, “I am twenty years old. Sixty years ago people of my age made the Revolution in my country. Meanwhile, our Komsomol bosses criticize me for my being **too young** to organise the central city disco club and have all financial responsibilities!” Ten years later, in November of 1989, the same author, who now graduated from his college and who became a successful organiser of Komosmol business in the same city, still complained in his diary, “This **young jerk** (*pridurok*), a regional Komsomol secretary, who is **much**

⁵⁸ Interview with Mikhail Suvorov, Dnipropetrovsk, June 1, 1991.

⁵⁹ Quotations are from a school diary of Andrei Vadimov, September 10, 1976, Dnipropetrovsk, and school diary of Aleksandr Gusar, October 21, 1976, Dnipropetrovsk. See also a school diary of Vladimir Solodovnik, June 12, 1972. Compare with the entries from school diary of Mikhail Suvorov, February 12, 1977.

⁶⁰ S. Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution*, pp.22-23. See about the homogenization of Soviet Culture during the Stalin’s time in Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature*, J.M. Savage (trans), Stanford, Ca., Stanford University Press, 1997 and during the Brezhnev era in N. E. Dobrynina, *Cherty dukhovnoi obshchnosti. Russkaia khudozhestvennaia literatura v chtenii mnogonatsional'nogo sovetskogo chitatelia*, Moscow, Kniga, 1983), esp. pp. 51-69. See also about a concept of “Soviet people” in Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia*, 7, 43, 92. See about the Soviet evaluation of the homogenization of the youth culture through cultural consumption in Sergei I. Plaksii, *Tvoi molodoi sovremennik: Problemy sovershenstvovaniia obraza zhizni rabochei molodiozhi v zerkale sotsiologii*, Moscow, “Molodaia gvardia,” 1982, esp. pp. 146-160.

⁶¹ Summer school diary of Mikhail Suvorov, Dnipropetrovsk, May 28, 1982.

younger than me, tries to teach me that I am **too young** to handle video salons in this district!!!”⁶² Other personal diaries of Soviet young men who lived during late socialism show also how their authors interiorised the Soviet ideological clichés, which they use constantly in their narratives for an explanation of their commercial activities.

Personal narrative analysis of the diary writing by young people from Soviet Ukraine demonstrates how the authors of these diaries constructed their own intellectual model of the Soviet young man, reflecting outside influences and their own intellectual adjustment to these changing influences. It is true that my analysis of these diaries shows “their rootedness in specific, and generally very limited social milieus and phases of the life cycle as well as the changing conventions that affected what they expected to reveal and conceal.”⁶³ But at the same time these diaries give us a unique opportunity to see personal perceptions of the reality in writing and their evolution during the period of late socialism.

The diaries of Soviet young men from “provincial” Ukraine are a good illustration of the obvious limits of Westernization during the cultural détente of the 1970s in Soviet society. Despite the discursive attempts in the diary narrative of these authors to distance themselves from the Soviet cultural forms (especially in their consumption of popular culture) and embrace the forms of Western mass culture, the diaries are a proof of the domination of various elements of the Soviet ideological discourse in their self-construction of identity. The entire point of reference, the system of moral values used in such constructions derived from and was adjusted to Soviet ideological discourse, which was based on the popular notions of Soviet socialist modernity (*sovremennosti*). Even the choice of language, preference of Russian over Ukrainian for a native Ukrainian speaker, was influenced by these notions of Soviet modernity. Paradoxically, as my analysis of the diaries illustrates, Westernization of Soviet popular culture during détente led to cultural Russification of youth culture in non-Russian (in my case Ukrainian) “provincial” society. Moreover, my analysis challenges the ideas of recent literature about Soviet youth culture during late socialism. According to these ideas, after Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization, communist ideology in Soviet society underwent a so-called *performative shift*, when Stalin’s authoritative discourse lost its importance and became mere ritual for many Soviet people, who tried to exist *vnye* – outside – this communist ideological discourse since the 1950s.⁶⁴ The narratives of the personal diaries, written during the 1970s and 80s, demonstrate that Soviet young people still shared the same communist ideological discourse, interiorised it, imagined and perceived the outside world through the communist ideological “discursive lenses” and constructed their own identity, using the same communist ideological discursive elements.

⁶² Summer school diary of Andrei Vadimov, Dnipropetrovsk, December 5, 1978; and his diary, November 17, 1989.

⁶³ M. J. Maynes, J. L. Pierce, B. Laslett, *Telling Stories*, op cit, p. 92.

⁶⁴ A. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, op cit, p. 32, 36-76. This thesis had already been criticised and analyzed by Sheila Fitzpatrick in *London Review of Books*, Vol. 28, No. 10, 2006, pp.18-20, and by K. Platt and B. Nathans in *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 2010, No. 101, 167-184 (in Russian), and in K. Platt and B. Nathans, ‘Socialist in Form, Inderminate in Content: The Ins and Outs of Late Soviet Culture,’ *Ab Imperio*, No. 2, 2011, pp. 301-323 (in English). See also how the Soviet youth became obsessed with the Western (especially American) cultural products even before Khrushchev, during the 1940s, before Yurchak’s “*performative shift*, when Stalin’s authoritative discourse lost its importance and became mere rituals for many Soviet people” in my recent article: S. I. Zhuk, ‘Inventing America on the Borders of Socialist Imagination: Movies and Music from the USA and the Origins of American Studies in the USSR,’ *REGION: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2013, pp.249-288.