

democrats, who saw for themselves a long and difficult fight still ahead (Patterson, 2000, pp: 435 – 436).

Thus, with my little help, Patterson noticed that cultural factors definitely played a role at the very start of the curious sequence of occurrences, which were immediately de-conceptualised as the “transition” without anyone really knowing from what to where. To have such an icon of the Western mass culture as Michelle Pfeifer – regardless of how insignificant or memorable Fred Schepisi’s movie *The Russia House* (1990) proved to be – portraying the role of a Russian girl, seriously helped to create an impression that these times around 1989 were about to bring very real changes. The fact that the movie in question was a typical cold war spy story would be in itself unimportant, except for the detail that the movie was shot in the Soviet Union. This “detail” marked a point in the implementation of *glasnost*, which had a crucial altering impact on the core ideology that supported the socialist system as a part of the world order of two confronted political-military-economic blocs. As it became visible much later, this has not been exactly a deliberate aim of Gorbachev and his supporters. But then again, it was not the first time that people were “making history” and later on found themselves *made* by history.

At the same time, a few other overlapping meanings can be ascertained from this case. In most socialist countries, Western products for the mass market of cultural goods such as genre films, fashionable transgressing clothing or rock music, were officially looked upon by the loyal intellectuals and party politicians as, at the very least, inappropriate or as products of bourgeois decadence.³ The socialist aesthetics within the framework of the ruling ideologies was indeed a bit curious. However, the topic of the aesthetics in the times of the softening of one Party regimes is not very interesting now since many past debates have already made clear everything about the contexts and the ideological signifiers of the Soviet aesthetics. However, the “socialist canons” could be understood as a symptom of the cultural profile of societies, which existed within the socialist states. The officially supported taste for artistic products varied significantly in different countries. In Yugoslavia, for example, all forms of modern art more or less flourished, except some very specific artistic movements and particu-

3 Such attitudes to mass culture in the Soviet Union were a basis for rather bizarre reports in the western press about the Soviet leader Leonid Brejnev’s taste for films of the Hollywood Western genre. Brejnev even collected such items as cowboy hats, Colt pistols and so on while general Soviet audiences were denied to watch the bulk of Hollywood and other Western audio-visual products.