

800s

AGAIN!

edited by  
Aneta Jabłońska  
Mariusz Koryciński



*Jolanta Słodzian  
film club*



The Time Machine Series | Volume I:

# 80s AGAIN!

A MONOGRAPH ON THE 1980s

edited by: Aneta Jabłońska and Mariusz Koryciński

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**ABSTRACT** | In his article *Into the cinema? Yuppie nights, innocent noirball and new classicism* Mariusz Koryciński describes several movements in 1980s cinema that are similar, yet differently named by various scholars. He emphasizes that many productions which are included into those movements – like, for instance, *Into the Night* by John Landis and *After Hours* by Martin Scorsese – are similar not only in terms of their main character, a yuppie, but also in terms of their references to the history of cinema and a plot which takes place at night. In this context, the author refers to two Polish works: *Ćma (The Moth)* by Tomasz Zygałło and *Nocna korekta (Nighttime Proofing)*, an unfilmed novel by Jolanta Słobodzian and Marek Kreutz. Koryciński also wonders whether the movies that he describes reflect – as some commentators claim – the crises of the period in which they were made. For this purpose, he refers to productions from other decades of the 20th century (*La Strada*, *Ewa chce spać*, *La Notte*, *Eyes Wide Shut*), comparing their reception with the reception of the movements from the 1980s which he analyzes. Next, by referring to the crime novel *Drugie Dno (Hidden Meaning)* by Dominik Damian, he combines the basic motifs, proposing a new interpretation of cinema at that time in terms of the notion of film classicism.

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and important social issues.



Mariusz Koryciński

**Into the cinema? Yuppie nights, innocent  
noirball and new classicism**

*Translated by Agnieszka Piskorska*

*To Professor Elżbieta Przeździecka  
and Professor Wanda Pokrzywnicka*

American popular cinema of the 1980s had many faces. Adventure was provided by the episodes of *Star Wars* (1980–1983) and the three parts of *Indiana Jones* (1981–1989), directed by Steven Spielberg. Sports emotions were offered by the three acts of *Karate Kid* (1984–1989), and dancing could be admired in musicals, such as Adrian Lyne's *Flashdance* from 1983 and Herbert Ross' *Footloose* made a year later. The future provided the setting for James Cameron's *The Terminator* (1984) and four episodes of the original *Star Trek* series (1982–1989). The magical world of the past opened before the viewers' eyes in Ron Howard's *Willow* (1988) and in Rob Reiner's *The Princess Bride* (1987). Among horrors, very popular were slasher films, including four parts of *Halloween* (1981–1989), five parts of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984–1989), and as many as eight parts of *Friday the 13th* (1980–1989). Fans of superheroes could watch Superman's story continued (1980–1987), two pictures showing Conan the Barbarian's adventures (1982, 1984) as well as Tim Burton's *Batman* (1989). Laughter ruled everywhere, including *Beverly Hills Cop* (Martin Brest, 1984), the youth-addressed *The Breakfast Club* (John Hughes, 1985), and even *Ghostbusters* (Ivan Reitman, 1984–1989).

Despite the diversity among the above-mentioned and many other films, it is often difficult to classify them according to genre, which, paradoxically, is itself a common trait unifying most entertainment productions of the 1980s. This was observed in 1986 by the Polish film critic Jerzy Płażewski in his article "Nowa przygoda" – *i co dalej?*

(“*New Adventure*” and *What’s Next?*), in which three features of popular films were noted: “depoliticalisation, parodic character and technical perfection”,<sup>1</sup> with only the last of the three being valued positively. At the break of 1986 and 1987 “Sight & Sound” published the article *Out of the Blue*, whose author Terrence Rafferty points out that the *Star Wars* series set the pattern for mixing film genres.<sup>2</sup> For Płażewski too, Lucas, next to Spielberg, is a director who shaped the cinematography of the 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from discussing the main stream of cinematic productions of those times, the essay *Out of the Blue* mentions three less central movies from 1986: Jonathan Demme’s *Something Wild*, David Byrne’s *True Stories* and David Lynch’s *Blue Velvet*. Rafferty was not the only one to link Demme’s and Lynch’s films; a reviewer writing for “Variety” about *Something Wild* mentioned *After Hours* and *Blue Velvet*,<sup>4</sup> whereas a reviewer discussing *After Hours* in Polish newspaper “Echa dnia” referred to *Blue Velvet* and *Something Wild*.<sup>5</sup> Despite the passing of time, these productions, beside such pictures as Lawrence Kasdan’s *Body Heat* (1981), Brian De Palma’s *Body Double* (1984), John Landis’ *Into the Night* (1985), Susan Seidelman’s *Desperately Seeking Susan* (1985) and Adrian Lyne’s *Fatal Attraction* (1987) are still included in critical overviews for a number of reasons. Distinguishing and discussing their common features will throw some light both on the films made in that period and on their place in the history of cinema.

<sup>1</sup> J. Płażewski, „*Nowa Przygoda*” – *i co dalej?*, “Kino” 1986, No. 5, p. 37 [own translation]. Jerzy Płażewski (1924-2015) – Polish film critic and historian; author of the course book *Język filmu (Film Language)* and other publications.

<sup>2</sup> T. Rafferty, *Out of the Blue*, “Sight & Sound” 1986–1987, Vol. 56, No. 1, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> J. Płażewski, Op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Cart., [review] *Something Wild*, *Variety’s Film Reviews: 1985–1986*, Vol. 19, New Providence 1987 [no page numbers].

<sup>5</sup> T. Wiącek, [review] *Wielkowiejska dżungla*, “Echo Dnia” 1988, No. 192, p. 10.



### Minimally postmodern yuppie

...progressive in every inch of my own self ...\*

In his article *Rich and Strange: The Yuppie Horror Film* Barry Keith Grant links *After Hours* and *Something Wild* with *Desperately Seeking Susan*, *Fatal Attraction* and some other movies from the early 90s, referring to them as yuppie horror films.<sup>6</sup> This view is questioned by Leighton Grist, author of a monograph on Scorsese, who claims that Grant in fact mixes two separate trends: yuppie nightmare with yuppies in peril.<sup>7</sup> For Grist, it is the first trend where *After Hours* belongs, next to *Desperately Seeking Susan*, *Something Wild*, *Blue Velvet*, *Fatal Attraction* and Roman Polanski's *Frantic* (France and USA 1988).<sup>8</sup> Grist's considerations are taken up by Kelly Konda in an essay published on the web site *We Minored In Film*; keeping the term yuppie nightmare, the author connects *After Hours* with *Into the Night*<sup>9</sup> – a film not taken into account in the previous discussions.

Yuppie, the acronym for a Young Urban Professional is due to Dan Rottenberg, who – as reminded by Teddy Wayne in “The New York Times” article *Tell-Tale Signs of the Modern-Day Yuppie*<sup>10</sup> – was the first to use this term in the article *About That Urban Renaissance...* published by the magazine “Chicago”:

\* All the quotes under the titles of this chapter's sections come from Dominik Damian's novel *Drugie dno (Hidden Meaning)*, D. Damian, *Drugie dno*, Warsaw 1963, pp. 42, 155, 5, 189, 288, 7, 63 and 224.

<sup>6</sup> B. K. Grant, *Rich and Strange: The Yuppie Horror Film*, “Journal of Film and Video” 1996, Vol. 48, No. 1–2, p. 4. The movies from the 1990s discussed by Grant include *Poison Ivy* (directed by K. Shea, 1992) and *Single White Female* (directed by B. Schroeder, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> L. Grist, *Yuppies in Peril*, in: L. Grist, *The Films of Martin Scorsese, 1978–1999: Authorship and Context II*, Basingstoke 2013, p. 135.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 125.

<sup>9</sup> K. Konda, *Into the Night & After Hours: How BB King, John Landis and Martin Scorsese Fit Into the Yuppie Nightmare Cycle*, *We Minored in Film*, <https://weminoredinfilm.com/2015/05/15/into-the-night-after-hours-how-bb-king-john-landis-and-martin-scorsese-fit-into-the-yuppie-nightmare-cycle/> (access: 16.09.2016).

<sup>10</sup> T. Wayne, *Tell-Tale Signs of the Modern-Day Yuppie*, “The New York Times”, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/fashion/tell-tale-signs-of-the-modern-day-yuppie.html> (access: 16.09.2016).

“Yuppies” – young urban professionals rebelling against the stodgy suburban lifestyles of their parents. The Yuppies seek neither comfort nor security, but stimulation, and they can find that only in the densest sections of the city.<sup>11</sup>

Only three years later, however, a yuppie was no longer perceived as someone seeking stimulation but as a social climber. In 1983 a parody called *The Yuppie Handbook* by Marissia Piesman and Marilee Hartley is released, from which we learn that the young professionals' favourite words are “postmodernism” and “minimalism”,<sup>12</sup> that they value style more than comfort,<sup>13</sup> and that when they go to a restaurant, what they primarily want is “a piano player who specializes in *As Time Goes By*”.<sup>14</sup> Exaggeration can be seen in the very definition proposed by the authors, who claim that the yuppie “lives on aspirations of glory, prestige, recognition, fame, social status, power, money or any and all combinations of the above”.<sup>15</sup>

In Poland two articles on the yuppies appeared in the magazine “Res Publica” in 1987: *Czy już jesteś „yuppie”?* (*Have You Turned “Yuppie” Yet?*) by writer Grzegorz Musiał<sup>16</sup> oraz *Kim jest japiszon?* (*Who is the Yuppie?*) by sociologist Paweł Śpiewak.<sup>17</sup> The latter author takes the following perspective on local urban professionals: “They wanted to stand out from the crowd. They were influenced by intellectual trends that originated in New York and were alien to the Polish mundane reality: depth psychology, Asia, mysticism, Buddhism, they also discovered Jewish culture”.<sup>18</sup> Many years later, this essay was discussed by Olga Drenda, the author of *Duchologia polska (Polish Ghostology)*,<sup>19</sup>

<sup>11</sup> D. Rottenberg, *About That Urban Renaissance...*, “Chicago”, <http://www.chicago-mag.com/Chicago-Magazine/May-1980/Yuppie/> (access:16.09.2016).

<sup>12</sup> M. Piesman, M. Hartley, *The Yuppie Handbook. The State-of-the Art Manual for Young Urban Professionals*, New York 1984, pp. 22–23.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54. *As Time Goes By* – a song composed by Herman Hupfeld in 1931, used in the film *Casablanca* (directed by Michael Curtiz, 1942).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> G. Musiał, *Czy już jesteś „yuppie”?*, “Res Publica” 1987, No. 6, pp. 105–108.

<sup>17</sup> P. Śpiewak, *Kim jest japiszon?*, “Res Publica” 1987, No. 6, pp. 109–112.

<sup>18</sup> P. Śpiewak, W. Świetlik, *Paweł Śpiewak*, “Playboy” 2010, No. 4, p. 44 [own translation].

<sup>19</sup> O. Drenda, *Duchologia polska. Rzeczy i ludzie w latach transformacji*, Kraków 2016, pp. 55 and 85.



who stated in an interview that the yuppie image portrayed by Śpiewak resembled “present-day dreams of slow life – hand-made stuff, walking barefoot, dinners with friends, culinary experiments, but no money or perspectives; plenty of practical and logistic problems instead”.<sup>20</sup>

The picture emerging from the above-mentioned examples is that of a person, regardless where they live, who either wants to achieve more than he/she has, or has reached the desired social status. His/her aspirations are unfortunately limited to expanding or maintaining a social and financial position – even if they appear to concern spiritual matters. The yuppie is thus shallow, focusing only on the superficial things others can see. But what happened to the yuppie then, in the 1980s, that deserved to be called “a nightmare” or “horror”?

### Innocent noirball

*You're a film-maker and artist,  
and you were so easy to take in*

The films discussed by Grant, Grist and Konda, as well as by reviewers assessing them when they were released or later, are not always linked because of a yuppie character. As Noel Murray points out, “Not every protagonist who headed into the night in the ‘80s was a yuppie. Some were just losers, like Craig Wasson in *Body Double*”.<sup>21</sup> Writing on *Into the Night*, Dave Kehr links Landis’ film with *After Hours* and *Something Wild*<sup>22</sup>, without referring to the yuppie either. What unites the movies under discussion, apart from a certain type of protagonist, not necessarily a yuppie, is a starting point for a plot and its subsequent development. In Murray’s parlance, this involves “one anxious character (or group of characters) embarking on an illicit

<sup>20</sup> O. Drenda, A. Gruszczyński, *Opowiem wam o duchach transformacji*, gazeta.pl, <http://wyborcza.pl/magazyn/1,124059,20259722,olga-drenda-opowiem-wam-o-duchach-transformacji.html> (access: 16.09.2016) [own translation].

<sup>21</sup> N. Murray, *Back Into The Night: How Superbad Recalls The Restless Soul Of '80s American Movies*, A.V. Club, <http://www.avclub.com/article/back-into-the-night-how-superbad-recalls-the-restless-1798212316> (access: 16.09.2016).

<sup>22</sup> D. Kehr, *Into the Night*, in: *John Landis*, edited by G. D’Agnolo Vallan, Milwaukie 2008, p. 308.

adventure”.<sup>23</sup> For Konda, the films portray “a white yuppie being pulled into a world unknown to them, usually a white male by a mysterious white female”.<sup>24</sup> This type of schema has its sources in classical Hollywood cinema: film noir, screwball comedy and innocent-on-the-run thrillers.

As Grist puts it “The yuppie nightmare cycle combines elements from two apparently contrasting genres: screwball comedy and film noir”.<sup>25</sup> The film noir canon includes Billy Wilder’s *Double Indemnity* from 1944, considered the most typical representative of the genre by British Film Institute<sup>26</sup>, and the screwball canon can be exemplified by Howard Hawks’ *Bringing Up Baby* from 1938.<sup>27</sup>

The cycle, however – Grist goes on to say – retrospectively clarifies their similarities. Both genres represent male characters who are drawn into chaotic and illogical realm by transgressive female figures: the screwball heroine and the *femme fatale*. [...] Both screwball comedy and film noir are marked by complex, convoluted plots.<sup>28</sup>

In his book *The Suspense Thriller* on films inspired by Hitchcock, Charles Derry juxtaposes *Into the Night* and *After Hours* in the context of the innocent-on-the-run style, “organized around an innocent victim’s coincidental entry into the midst of global intrigue”.<sup>29</sup> Kehr too observes the influence of the Master of Suspense on Landis’ film: “The screenplay, by Ron Koslow, borrows perhaps the most benign of Hitchcock’s favourite story structures: the couple film, in which romantic pair is brought together by shared adventure (*Rich and Strange*,

<sup>23</sup> N. Murray, Op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> K. Konda, Op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> L. Grist, Op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>26</sup> A. Frost, M. Patrick, *Infographic: What makes a film noir?*, bfi.org.uk, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/features/infographic-what-makes-film-noir> (access: 16.09.2016).

<sup>27</sup> W. D. Gehring, *Screwball Comedy: Defining a Film Genre*, Muncie 1983, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> L. Grist, Op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> Ch. Derry, *The Innocent-on-the-Run Thriller*, in: Ibid, *The Suspense Thriller. Films in the Shadow of Alfred Hitchcock*, Jefferson and London 1988, p. 270.



*The 39 Steps, Saboteur, North by Northwest*)<sup>30</sup> As was noted above, the title *Rich and Strange* was incorporated into the title of Grant's essay on the yuppie horror.

The most typical hero of the yuppie nightmare or horror genre thus appears to be a man living an ordinary life, although often only seemingly, who may be longing for a change or feel bored. The factor responsible for pulling him out of his stable world is a woman. She may destroy the man, or incite him to become active. At the beginning of *Fatal Attraction* there is nothing to suggest that Alex, with whom Dan is flirting, is obsessed with him. Audrey in *Something Wild* is not sincere with Paul either, wearing a black wig and introducing herself as Lulu. Similarly, Ned in *Body Heat* does not suspect that he is being manipulated by his lover Matty. A woman could likewise be a victim, e.g. the yuppie Margaret in David Mamet's *House of Games* (1987) or Alva in Robert Bierman's *Vampire's Kiss* (1988).

The image of independent and resourceful heroines, emerging from many films, might be seen as a reflection of the hard-fought and increasingly strong position of women in the 1980s culture and society. Female directors that debuted at the time include Barbra Streisand (*Yentl*, 1983), Amy Heckerling (*Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, 1982), Susan Seidelman (*Desperately Seeking Susan*) and Penny Marshall (*Jumpin' Jack Flash*, 1986). Madonna started her musical career, whereas Cyndi Lauper, Whitney Houston and Belinda Carlisle began to appear as solo artists. Alice Walker received the Pulitzer Prize for her epistolary novel *The Color Purple* in 1983, in 1985 the designer Donna Karan launched her fashion company, and in 1986 Oprah Winfrey started her television show. American housewives could learn household tricks from Martha Stewart, style from Princess Diana, and irony from Ann Magnuson, a performer from New York suburban night clubs.<sup>31</sup>

The above-mentioned wig and fake name used by Audrey are reminiscent of the heroine played by Louise Brooks in Georg Wilhelm Pabst's *Pandora's Box* (Germany 1929).<sup>32</sup> This connection gives rise

<sup>30</sup> D. Kehr, Op. cit. p. 310.

<sup>31</sup> M. Dowd, *Youth-Art-Hype: A Different Bohemia*, in: *The Times of the Eighties. The Culture, Politics, and Personalities that Shaped the Decade*, edited by W. Grimes, New York 2013, p. 197.

<sup>32</sup> M. McCarthy, *Surface Sheen and Charged Bodies. Louise Brooks in "Pandora's*

to the idea that some of the films under discussion show how artificial the fictional universe is, which is inevitably linked to the very essence of the cinema. One of the scenes in *Into the Night* shows Ed Okin in a film studio, where he mistakes fake props for real objects. The hero of *Body Double* is not aware that sometimes he watches a neighbour and sometimes her double. Artificiality need not be confined to films, it may as well apply to art as such. In *After Hours* Paul visits an artist's studio, and she changes him into a papier-mâché sculpture, in *Blue Velvet* Ben lip-syncs to Roy Orbison's *In Dreams*, which is discussed by David Van Leer in *The Queening of America* as an example of "gay camp",<sup>33</sup> and Clifford, the hero of Jerry Kramer's *Modern Girls* (1986) dresses as the singer Bruno X. Sometimes the kitsch-like artificiality brings out the tragedy of the hero's position: when Peter from *Vampire's Kiss* cannot afford a vampire's glass teeth, he buys the cheapest plastic fangs.

### Saturday Night Horror

*On Saturday evenings I was always  
overwhelmed by anxiety*

In the 1980s many Americans sat in front of their TV sets at night to watch satirical programmes about the society they were part of, such as *Saturday Night Live* aired from 1975 on. In one of the sketches called *White Like Me* from 1984, when an Afro-American got off a bus, other passengers started to party. Sitcoms like *Married... with Children* (1987–1997) were also becoming increasingly popular. Others enjoyed the entertainment offered by night clubs, as evidenced in Floyd Mutrux's *The Hollywood Knights* (1980), *Modern Girls*, *Vampire's Kiss* and two 1988 pictures: Greg Beeman's *License to Drive* and Tom E. Eberhardt's *The Night Before*. The night became synonymous with

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*Box*" (1929), in: *Weimar Cinema: An Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era*, edited by N. Isenberg, New York and Chichester 2009, p. 233.

<sup>33</sup> D. Van Leer, *The Queening of America. Gay Writers of Straight Fiction*, in: *The Queening of America. Gay Culture in Straight Society*, edited by D. Van Leer, New York and London 1995, p. 63.



breaking away from the problems of everyday life, being a substitute for holidays. Writing about the films “escaping into the night”, Noel Murray stated “Sometimes they happen over a whole summer, in the blazing light of day”.<sup>34</sup>

The time after twilight may be also associated with crime, and because of that “in the Western world, the night has indeed drawn special attention on the part of lawmakers, since it was recognized as a setting to which the rules provided for daytime did not apply”.<sup>35</sup> Ed, the hero of *Into the Night*, meets Iranian secret police SAVAK agents and Walter Hill’s *The Warriors* (1979) tells a story of rivalry between city gangs. The night can be also thought of as a setting for activities of people and groups transgressing societal norms, such as subcultures or sexual minorities (Paul in *After Hours* visits a bar, where he meets a homosexual couple). The night is sometimes used as a means of intensifying the impact of some events: in *License to Drive* Les is driving a car, even though he failed his driving licence test, the heroes of Michael Nankin and David Wechter’s *Midnight Madness* (1980) are treasure-hunting, whereas the couple from Steve De Jarnatt’s *Miracle Mile* (1988) meet up for a date, and their encounter turns into a struggle to survive the impending within hours doom.

The action of *The Hollywood Knights* takes place during the night preceding Halloween. The night, whether Halloween or not, is the time suitable for horror tales. In many of the 1980s horrors, the plot is set mainly after twilight, e.g. in Tom DeSimone’s *Hell Night* (1981), Tom Holland’s *Fright Night* (1985) or Fred Dekker’s *Night of the Creeps* (1986). According to Grant, “the yuppie horror employs – but modifies – codes and conventions of the classic horror film”.<sup>36</sup> Grant points to a number of characteristic elements of the genre he is discussing, such as making a yuppie apartment an equivalent of old dark house<sup>37</sup> and the presence of human monsters, such as Alex from *Fatal Attraction*.

<sup>34</sup> N. Murray, Op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> J. Galinier, A. M. Becquelin, G. Bordin et.al., *Anthropology of the Night: Cross-Disciplinary Investigations*, “Current Anthropology” 2010, Vol. 51, No. 6, p. 833.

<sup>36</sup> B. K. Grant, Op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 6. Among film plots taking place in mysterious houses are James Whale’s *The Old Dark House* from 1932 and its remake from 1963 under the same title, directed by William Castle.

tion or Ray from *Something Wild*, who “seem implausibly unstoppable like their supernatural counterparts Jason, Michael Myers and Freddy Krueger”.<sup>38</sup>

Although Grist considers the horror element marginal in the films discussed by Grant,<sup>39</sup> combining various genres can be interpreted as part of a wider strategy, namely, that of shifting the film universe towards unreality. This conception has received various treatments: for Aleksander Ledóchowski *After Hours* was a kind of “trip or hallucination journey cinema”,<sup>40</sup> hallucinations were mentioned also by Pauline Kael in her review of *Blue Velvet*; <sup>41</sup> Sergio from *Tipping My Fedora* defined the mood of *Into the Night* as an “increasingly surreal tone”,<sup>42</sup> and the critic writing for “Ekran” on *Frantic* said “Polanski’s Paris is as if unreal, deprived of its charm”.<sup>43</sup> When watching *The Miracle Mile*, the reviewer for “The Monthly Film Bulletin” kept wondering if the film plot would turn out to be the main protagonist’s dream.<sup>44</sup> Making things unreal by turning something ordinary into something strange and unusual can be thought of as typical of dreams.

### It feels sleepy and a bit unreal

*She started the swindle.  
She started selling dreams*

Putting American films aside for a while, let us turn to two Polish productions. One of them is Tomasz Zygadło’s<sup>45</sup> *Ćma* (aka *The Moth*)

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 7. The protagonists come from the series *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, respectively.

<sup>39</sup> L. Grist, *Op. cit.*, pp. 134–136.

<sup>40</sup> A. Ledóchowski, [review] *Po godzinach*, “Film” 1990, No. 52, p. 15 [own translation].

<sup>41</sup> P. Kael, [review] *Blue Velvet*, „The New Yorker”, <http://www.newyorker.com/goings-on-about-town/movies/blue-velvet> (access: 18.09.2016).

<sup>42</sup> Sergio, *Into the Night (1985) – Tuesday’s Overlooked Film*, *Tipping My Fedora*, <https://bloodymurder.wordpress.com/2015/06/02/into-the-night-1985-tues-days-overlooked-film/> (access: 18.09.2016).

<sup>43</sup> J. Skwara, [review] *Amerykanin w Paryżu*, “Ekran” 1989, No. 33, p. 6 [own translation].

<sup>44</sup> P. Strick, *Miracle Mile*, [review] “Monthly Film Bulletin”, February 1991, p. 52.

<sup>45</sup> Tomasz Zygadło (1947-2011) – Polish film, television and theatre director; began

from 1980 and the other is a film novella which was never actually filmed, titled *Nocna korekta* (*Night Time Proofing*) by Jolanta Słobodzian<sup>46</sup> and Marek Kreutz. Handed in to the film production company “Rondo” in 1984, it was meant to be a two-part television film directed by Słobodzian. The ending of the novella is an adaptation of Edward Stachura’s<sup>47</sup> short story *Pokocham ją siłą woli* (*I Shall Fall in Love With Her by My Will*),<sup>48</sup> whereas the preceding events are inspired by other elements of the story. Additionally, the viewpoint changes from a male perspective to a female one.<sup>49</sup>

*The Moth* is classified as a representative of the cinema of moral unrest, a Polish cinematic movement developing in the period 1976–1981.<sup>50</sup> Rafał Mielczarek in his article *Rzeczywistość w fazie liminalnej* (*Reality in the Liminal Phase*) points out that using meaningless rituals and empty slogans, the communist system created the world of propaganda, functioning outside the real life. Because of that, filmmakers often chose provincial settings for their plots, believing that they would be truer to life than centres of communist power.<sup>51</sup> According to critic Krzysztof Mętrak, the plots often focused on “manipulating an individual [...], the character of human relationships and social bonds, as well as dubious consequences of social promotion.”<sup>52</sup> Mariola Jankun-Dopartowa, author of the essay *Fałszywa inicjacja bohatera* (*The Hero’s False Initiation*),<sup>53</sup>

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his career as a documentary maker; often preoccupied with the problem of human identity.

<sup>46</sup> Jolanta Słobodzian (1942-1999) – Polish director, mostly known as an activist of Film Society and coorganiser of Star Festival in Międzyzdroje. See M. Koryciński, *Rosebud given to Jolanta Słobodzian*, this volume.

<sup>47</sup> Edward Stachura (1937-1979) – Polish poet, writer and translator; dealt with the problem of a human being torn apart between the ordinary course of life and a need to rebel against conventions.

<sup>48</sup> E. Stachura, *Pokocham ją siłą woli*, in: *Ibid*, *Się*, Zakrzewo 2010, pp. 176–188.

<sup>49</sup> J. Słobodzian, M. Kreutz, *Nocna korekta* (manuscript signed 2260 stored in FilMOTEKA Narodowa library).

<sup>50</sup> M. Kornatowska, *Nurt moralnego niepokoju*, in: *Ibid*, *Wodzireje i amatorzy*, Warszawa 1990, p. 174.

<sup>51</sup> K. Mętrak, *Kino „moralnego niepokoju”*, in: *Ibid*, *Po seansie*, Warszawa 1988, p. 87.

<sup>52</sup> R. Mielczarek, *Rzeczywistość w fazie liminalnej. „Kino moralnego niepokoju” jako forma międzypokoleniowego dramatu społecznego*, “Folia Sociologica” 2008, No. 33, pp. 229–233 [own translation].

<sup>53</sup> M. Jankun-Dopartowa, *Fałszywa inicjacja bohatera. Młode kino lat siedemdziesiątych wobec założeń programowych Młodej Kultury*, in: *Człowiek z ekranu*.

wrote “The hero of this cinema is a human being who opened his eyes. He realised that a true social initiation is still ahead of him”.<sup>54</sup> Representatives of this trend include Andrzej Wajda’s *Człowiek z marmuru* (aka *Man of Marble*) and Krzysztof Zanussi’s *Barwy ochronne* (aka *Camouflage*) from 1976 as well as Feliks Falk’s *Wodzirej* (aka *Top Dog*; 1977), Agnieszka Holland’s *Aktorzy prowincjonalni* (aka *Provincial Actors*; 1978) and Krzysztof Kieślowski’s *Amator* (aka *Camera Buff*; 1979).<sup>55</sup>

Zygadło’s movie is a story of Jan, a radio presenter, who hosts a nighttime program *Radiotelefon* (*Call the Radio*), in which callers confess their problems. At some point Jan says that he feels like “a trash bin into which everyone can throw anything and just walk on”, whereas he is the one left with other people’s pain. His professional crisis coincides with convoluted relationships in his private life, which he is splitting between his wife, ex-wife and a lover.

We meet Ola, the main protagonist of *Nocna korekta*, when she is discharged from the hospital after an unsuccessful suicide attempt. Suffering from insomnia, she gets a job as a proof-reader, taking it over from Anna, who quit due to a mysterious disease. During her first night at work she meets a journalist, whose advances she will soon reject, not being able to have a relationship with someone she does not love.

As evident, work is, at least to some extent, a source of problems for Jan, but for Ola it turns out to be a remedy for insomnia, most probably resulting from the problems that perplexed her before. Leaving the differences between the sources of the protagonists’ problems aside, their life routines get reversed; the night becoming the time when they are professionally active. This reversal is reflected, to varying degrees, in the form of both films.

Zygadło’s film was made in black and white. For historian Tadeusz Lubelski this move enhanced the meaning of the title by alluding to the obsolete sense of the Polish word for “moth” denoting “darkness”. He notes that “[...] the night life of Jan’s interlocutors took place

*Z antropologii postaci filmowej*, edited by M. Jankun-Dopartowa and M. Przyłipiak, Kraków 1996, pp. 89–121.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, *Aktorzy w teatrze życia codziennego*, in: Ibid, *Gorzkie kino Agnieszki Holland*, Gdańsk 2000, p. 115 [own translation].

<sup>55</sup> M. Kornatowska, Op. cit., p. 174–175.



in the sphere of unofficial matters, involving fuzzy criteria, covert actions”.<sup>56</sup> Darkness, both as the time-space where the plot unveils and as an element of the film poetics, brings about associations with noir. Jan smokes a lot, and the light getting into the studio through the window blinds forms parallel straps on the wall. Despite those associations, the creators of the film did not mention any sources of inspiration, claiming that a black and white picture, being more technically difficult than a colour one, is but a challenge to them.<sup>57</sup>

“All kinds of things can happen...”<sup>58</sup> – Ola is warned by her boss on her first day at work. The offices where the proof-readers work at night neighbour on a printing house, the realm of male workers. That is why the noise made by machines, resembling chirping crickets, mixes with the sound of reading out loud, and shouting mixes with quiet sobbing. “It feels sleepy and a bit unreal”,<sup>59</sup> as Słobodzian and Kreutz capture the atmosphere of the place. In one of the scenes the journalist and Ola found themselves in a restaurant; at a certain point their conversation is interrupted by a flying headless chicken. The surreal character of the situation is underscored by fact that the menu includes a dish called “poule à la Buñuel”.<sup>60</sup> In *The Moth*, there is a recurring scene showing Jan’s dream or vision, in which he sees the smoke-filled and unnaturally lit radio studio, with a non-existent in reality door frame in the middle.

One of the returning threads in *Nocna korekta* is the motif of game or pretence: the heroin watches a Lotto advertisement, plays cards with her ex-husband, and when in hotel, she pays attention to wigs and false moustache of the hotel employees. She dismisses the journalist’s advances by saying “[...] you failed to learn your role properly”.<sup>61</sup> Zygadło presents a scene in which a psychotherapist advises Jan to distance

<sup>56</sup> T. Lubelski, *Epoka moralnego niepokoju*, in: Ibid, *Historia Kina Polskiego. Twórcy, filmy, konteksty*, Katowice 2009, pp. 399–400 [own translation].

<sup>57</sup> I. Łepkowska, *Światło. O realizacji filmu Ćma Tomasza Zygadły*, “Film. Magazyn ilustrowany” 1979, No. 47, p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> J. Słobodzian, Marek Kreutz, Op. cit., p. 7 [own translation].

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 8 [own translation].

<sup>60</sup> Luis Buñuel (1900-1983) – Spanish director associated with surrealism. Author of a short movie *Un chien andalou* (aka *An Andalusian Dog*; France 1929), made in collaboration with Salvadore Dalí. Poule – hen/chicken in French.

<sup>61</sup> J. Słobodzian, M. Kreutz, Op. cit., p. 11 [own translation].

himself from his job because “an actor crying with his true tears on the stage is not a professional”. Both these utterances may suggest that human relations consist in acting out roles, like in the theatre. In *Nocna korekta* this applies to female-male relations, whereas in *The Moth* to professional life, but there are other ways of interpreting these films as well.

When Ola discovers that Anna is dead, the music of *Petrushka* is being played from a record. Igor Stravinsky's ballet, telling a story of a puppet, which is brought to life and falls in love with another puppet during the carnival, corresponds to problems experienced both by Anna and by Ola. The former wanted to open up in front of another human being, but all she noticed in herself was emptiness and because of that she feared that no one would love her. The latter was constantly tormented by the question about the force that keeps people alive. Not being able to find the force in herself, she could not solve her problems.

In this way the themes of life, death and complicated relationships bring the unfinished Słobodzian-Kreutz project close to the cinema of moral unrest. It should also be noted that the critic Janusz Skwara sees it as “the cinema of existential unrest”.<sup>62</sup> Both *Nocna korekta* and *The Moth* show similarities to the American productions discussed above, even though in theory their creators were separated by geographical, cultural and historical distance.

Keeping in mind that the political systems of the United States and the then communist Poland were completely different, it is worthwhile to consider common points in those films, proving universality of the cinema of moral unrest and the yuppie films. After all, both trends showed human beings in their professional environments and put emphasis on the gap between broadly conceived falsity and what seems to be true. They also included a message that a once achieved status may not last long and that an unexpected social initiation can occur at any moment.

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<sup>62</sup> J. Skwara, *Kino moralnego niepokoju?*, “Argumenty” 1980, No. 42, pp. 8–9 [own translation].

### A marginalised human

*You had absurdity in you since you were born*

*The Moth* and *Nocna korekta* include scenes in which all the major protagonists meet. In the Słobodzian-Kreutz script it happens during a dream-like sequence in a hotel garden. In Zygadło's movie it is the final scene showing a meal, which can be interpreted in the following way: Jan has returned from a resort, where he distanced himself from his everyday problems and, most probably, regained decorum in his professional and private life. At this point, two crucial questions arise about the films under discussion: what is the significance of the events shown on the screen for their heroes? Do the adventures they experience affect their personalities, lives, relationships with others? As Dave Kehr notes:

In both Scorsese and Demme films, the heroes are lured into their predicament by the promise of sex. They are being punished (...) for committing the sin of lust (...) But Landis's Ed Okin is being neither punished nor tested; the world that opens up for him is (...) a landscape of fantasy and escape.<sup>63</sup>

The paths that the film protagonists travel influence them in various ways, then, even though there may be one common schema in them. To explain this issue, it is worthwhile to refer to the ideas of Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner. The former described the rites of passage from one state to another and distinguished three phases that constitute such rites: separation, transition and incorporation.<sup>64</sup> Following van Gennep, Turner points out that individuals who find themselves in the liminal phase, i.e. after separation but before incorporation, are suspended between the states, which is often manifested as darkness, bisexuality or physical remoteness. It is at this stage that *communitas* is created, i.e. "society as an unstructured [...] community", all subject

<sup>63</sup> D. Kehr, *Op. cit.*, p. 308.

<sup>64</sup> A. Van Gennep, *Classification of Rites*, in: *Ibid*, *The Rites of Passage*, London and Henley 2004, p. 11.

to the same laws of liminality.<sup>65</sup> After passing this stage, individuals reincorporated into a society can function in it thanks to abilities acquired in the liminal phase or resulting from the change they underwent in that phase.

The heroes of the films analysed in this chapter take part in events uprooting them from their stable lives – either because they want to, like Jeffrey in *Blue Velvet*, or because they are more or less forced to, like Ed in *Into the Night* or Richard in *Frantic*. Sometimes they get disconnected from their previous lives symbolically, by being taken away an object linking them with the past: Ed has to part with his car; Paul in *After Hours* loses money; Charlie in *Something Wild* is tied to a bed by Lulu and loses independence. Dorothy puts lipstick on Jeffrey's lips, symbolically taking away his masculinity, and Richard has to face the kidnapping of his wife.

In the course of subsequent events, the heroes have to overcome obstacles jointly with another character: Ed with Diana, Charlie with Audrey, Jeffrey with Sandy, Richard with Michelle, and Chris with her charges. The heroes can break the law (Charlie, for instance, leaves a restaurant without paying the bill), act at night time (as Ed and Diana or Chris with her charges), or do something that was not part of their previous life, for example Ed carries out negotiations with the boss of the Iranian mafia, Charlie fights against the diabolical Ray, Jeffrey and Richard turn detectives, Chris sings a blues song in front of an audience. As they struggle to overcome the obstacles together, they form a bond based on common experience.

When they succeed in pursuing their aims, their lives change (Paul discovers dormant wildness in himself; Ed will probably leave his unfaithful wife and stay with Diana), or ways of looking at their lives change (Paul will probably come to terms with his job). Sometimes they go back to their previous states, which have been upset in various ways – Richard finds his wife, and Dorothy his son. The ending of one cycle and beginning of another is often marked in the storyline: Ed watches an ad of a car dealer Cal Worthington be-

<sup>65</sup> V. Turner, *Liminality and Communitas*, in: *Ibid*, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*, Ithaca, New York 1991, pp. 94-97.



fore embarking on his adventure and when it is over. A restaurant is a place of the first and the last of Charlie and Lulu's encounters, Jake in *Body Double* imagines an alternative life when lying in a coffin on a film set, *Frantic* starts and ends with a long shot of the camera on a motorway, and *Vampire's Kiss* is similarly framed between the shots of Manhattan view at twilight.

Juxtaposing *Nocna korekta* and *The Moth* with American films draws attention both to differences and similarities between them. Such elements as opposition of light and darkness, truth and artificiality, or mixing conventions may not appear in each of the productions analysed, or at least not always be equally vivid. In the majority of movies scrutinised by Grant, Grist, Konda and Murray, and also in *The Moth* they play a similar role: they are factors facilitating initiation, just like Turner's liminality phase. Because of that, all these pictures can be subsumed under one term: films-on-initiation.

*Nocna korekta* cannot be interpreted according to Turner's model because Ola does not undergo metamorphosis. All that Słobodzian and Kreutz are after is a gradual unveiling of the heroine's identity. The visual and factual elements connected with darkness and pretence are employed to make this intention clear. They are put to different use, then, than in the American productions discussed so far.

To describe the schema underlying the cinema of moral unrest, Jankun-Dopartowa reaches for *Morphology of the Folktale* by Vladimir Propp. The analogy used by the author makes it possible to find some counterparts for the American trends in their native environment. It could be the coming-of-age genre, in which, as explained by Don Lort in the book *Coming of Age*, "a child or a teenager reaches a critical turning or event that results in a loss of childhood innocence".<sup>66</sup>

Films representing this genre show, as pointed out by Parley Ann Boswell and Paul Loukides in *Reel Rituals*, rites of passage that the youth undergo.<sup>67</sup> In the 1980s the coming-of-age films included John Hughes' *Sixteen Candles* (1984), Rob Reiner's *Stand by Me* (1986) and Peter

<sup>66</sup> D. Lort, *Coming of Age: Movie & Video Guide*, Laguna Hills 1997, p. 7.

<sup>67</sup> P. A. Boswell, Paul Loukides, *The Ritual Occasions of Childhood*, in: *Reel Rituals: Ritual Occasions from Baptisms to Funerals in Hollywood Films, 1945–1995*, edited by P. A. Boswell and P. Loukides, Bowling Green 1999, pp. 25–42.

Weir's *Dead Poets Society* (1989).<sup>68</sup> Their predecessors were *Les Quatre Cents Coups* (aka *The 400 Blows*; France 1959) by François Truffaut, Mike Nichols' *The Graduate* (1967), Peter Bogdanovich's *The Last Picture Show* (1971)<sup>69</sup> and George Lucas' *American Graffiti* (1973), the action of which takes place within one night.<sup>70</sup>

The question is, however, if the endings of all the yuppie initiation movies should be interpreted literally. Perhaps Paul in *After Hours* gives in, when he returns to work? Let us recall the finale of *The Moth*: is Jan truly healed when he leaves the resort and does Ed in *Into the Night* recover from insomnia thanks to his adventure? "The hero was pulled to the zone of the light, got normal" these words by Tadeusz Lubelski could adequately refer to the ending of *After Hours*, even though they were written about Zygadło's film. For this author, the ending of *The Moth* was however ironic and alluded to Federico Fellini's *8½* (Italy 1963).<sup>71</sup>

The opening credits of *Blue Velvet* are shown against the background of idyllic views of a small town, only to plunge between grass leaves later and see lurking worms. In the closing scene, a mockingbird – a symbol of love, according to Sandy – is holding a worm in its beak. An optimistic interpretation could be that here is love that conquers evil lurking under a colourful surface of the reality. The critic Piotr Maksymczak, however, spots ironic notes: in Lynch films good feeds on evil.<sup>72</sup> Similarly metaphorical, although overtly pessimistic, is the message of *Miracle Mile*. De Jarnatt's hero visits an exhibition of extinct species, and in the final scene dies in the very same museum, thereby – in the context of the nuclear disaster – himself becoming a representative of an extinct species.

<sup>68</sup> R. Uytendewilligen, *The 25 Best Coming-of-Age Movies of The 1980s, Tastes of Cinema*, <http://www.tasteofcinema.com/2016/the-25-best-coming-of-age-movies-of-the-1980s/> (access: 25.09.2016).

<sup>69</sup> T. Aquino, J. Wood, M. Barone et al., *The Best Coming-of-Age Movies of All Time*, <http://www.complex.com/pop-culture/2013/08/best-coming-of-age-movies-of-all-time/> (access: 20.09.2016).

<sup>70</sup> D. Lort, *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>71</sup> T. Lubelski, *Op. cit.*, p. 400.

<sup>72</sup> P. Maksymczak, [review] *Droga przez piekło*, "Gazeta Lubuska" 1987, No. 305, p. 4.

### Ewa walks at night with her eyes wide shut

*Have you received your fee  
for "Eva doesn't want to sleep"?*

Notwithstanding the reservations and doubts signalled above, the films under analysis were often interpreted by critics and commentators in a similar way. *The Moth* inspired the following comments: "[...] in the present-day world [...] true bonds between people give way to cascades of meaningless words"<sup>73</sup> ("Gazeta Wyborcza"); "it is a film about loneliness most painfully experienced by a person living in a block of flats, about the threat of isolation"<sup>74</sup> ("Życie Warszawy"). Rafał Marszałek compared Zygadło's film with the 1933 novel *Miss Lonelyhearts* by Nathanael West, mentioning "the era of a crisis of values".<sup>75</sup> For Grist, the yuppie nightmare trend "suggests the presence of tensions beneath the confident, public, ardently patriarchal façade of mid 1980s USA".<sup>76</sup> "The dilemma between stabilisation and anarchy is visible [...] in the social life of the USA",<sup>77</sup> maintained Tadeusz Wiącek in response to *Something Wild*. Magdalena Lengren in her essay for "Kultura" characterised the hero of *After Hours* in the following manner: "Just like it is for all of us, his life is illusory, untrue, liquid, nameless, fragmentary, banal, and common, as if it was taking place on television and in newspapers".<sup>78</sup>

Comparing the Scorsese picture with *Into the Night*, Charles Derry notes that "both films clearly reflect the sensibilities of the Reagan era within a culture of narcissism", and the Landis movie "refuses to explore the moral implications of the actions of its characters and instead seems

<sup>73</sup> W. Świeżyński, [review] *Ćma*, "Gazeta Telewizyjna" No. 73, supplement to "Gazeta Wyborcza" 26 March 1999, p. 4 [own translation].

<sup>74</sup> M. Dipont, [review] *Wentyl bezpieczeństwa*, "Życie Warszawy" 1980, No. 248, p. 7 [own translation].

<sup>75</sup> R. Marszałek, [review] *Usługi dla ludności: naprawa serc*, "Zwierciadło" 1980, No. 46, p. 14 [own translation].

<sup>76</sup> L. Grist, Op. cit., p. 125–126.

<sup>77</sup> T. Wiącek, [review] *Dzika namiętność*, "Echo Dnia" 1988, No. 108, p. 10 [own translation].

<sup>78</sup> M. Lengren, [review] *Między życiem a fikcją*, "Kultura" 1987, No. 47, p. 12 [own translation].

to celebrate and support whatever yuppies do to get ahead, providing that those yuppies are intelligent and attractive".<sup>79</sup>

Reading selected interpretations of the movies, one could think that the 1980s were distinguished from the other decades by the presence of a crisis, or that they were a culmination of a long-lasting crisis. On the other hand, authors working in the 1980s were not essentially different from their predecessors as far as a pessimistic attitude towards their own epoch is concerned. What is more, such an attitude was often manifested in reviews of films resembling those of the 1980s.

In 1923 a German drama *Die Straße* (aka *The Street*) was made by Karl Grune. It tells a story of a man who, instead of having dinner with his wife, leaves home and loiters in the city at night. A few years later, in 1929, a Polish film *9:25. Przygoda jednej nocy* (*9:25. One Night Adventure*) is released. This film, by Ryszard Biske and Adam Augustynowicz has not survived until today, but its plot is known: a young girl leaves her family and travels with man unknown to her.<sup>80</sup> In the second half of 1950s, Tadeusz Chmielewski makes the comedy *Ewa chce spać* (aka *Eva Wants to Sleep*). The heroine, coming too late to be let into a students hostel, is looking for a place to sleep. The beginning of the 1960s sees the seventh full feature film by Michelangelo Antonioni, called *La notte* (aka *The Night*; Italy 1961), and by the end of the 20th century Stanley Kubrick's last picture *Eyes Wide Shut* is released (USA, UK 1999). In these productions both directors focus on family problems, showing small fragments of family lives, spanning a day and a night in Antonioni's film and two days and two nights in Kubrick's film.

Siegfried Kracauer observes that a change took place in the society of Weimar Republic, where Grune's picture was made. The change could be measured by the metamorphosis of the cinema itself: Robert Wiene's *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (aka *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*; Germany 1920) was supposed to incite an individual to rebel, whereas *The Street* presented an individual who was punished for having a desire to experience adventures.<sup>81</sup> The reflection, presented in the book *From*

<sup>79</sup> Ch. Derry, Op. cit., p. 316–317.

<sup>80</sup> W. Banaszkiwicz, W. Witczak, *Historia filmu polskiego*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1989, p. 232.

<sup>81</sup> S. Kracauer, *From Rebellion to Submission*, in: *From Caligari to Hitler. A Psycho-*



*Caligari to Hitler*, indicates that for Kracauer such films as Grune's *The Street* paved the way to Nazism in Germany. The ending of *The Street* was similar to that of 9:25. *Przygoda jednej nocy* (assessed favourably by writer Maria Jehanne Wielopolska but called "gloomy bunk"<sup>82</sup> by writer Antoni Słonimski): the movie's heroine returns to her husband in a miserable condition.<sup>83</sup>

After WWII, Germany became divided and Poland, relocated to new state borders, found itself in the communist camp. The censorship got slightly loosened after 1956, when Chmielewski produced his comedy *Eva Wants to Sleep*, which, even though it contains elements of surrealism and burlesque,<sup>84</sup> was usually interpreted in the context of the communist system. As Zbigniew Pitera wrote in "Film", it is a "deeply Polish movie, firmly rooted in our world, and its departure point is realistic".<sup>85</sup> When *Eyes Wide Shut* premiered, more than fifty years had passed since WWII, and in fact Kubrick reached for a much earlier source – he adapted Arthur Schnitzler's *Dream Story*, which "dealt with problems of the waning Austro-Hungarian Empire", as Tomasz Raczek put it.<sup>86</sup> Some of these problems remained valid for critic Jan Olszewski, who was alarmed after seeing the movie: "Watch out! – there are women full of sexual desires who can't have them satisfied in socially acceptable conditions".<sup>87</sup> For Antonioni, Hermann Broch's observations, whose book *Sleepwalkers* is discussed by the heroes of *La notte*, must have been likewise current. According to philologist Jakub Lichański, this novel indicates that "our world has become totally dissolved, it fell apart and became [...] a dream, in which we wander".<sup>88</sup> This perspective can be useful for interpreting not only

*logical History of the German Film*, Princeton 1966, pp. 118-128.

<sup>82</sup> A. Słonimski, 1929, in: Ibid, *Romans z X Muzyką. Teksty filmowe z lat 1917–1976*, Warszawa 2007, p. 175 [own translation].

<sup>83</sup> W. Banaszekiewicz, W. Witczak, Op. cit.

<sup>84</sup> T. Chmielewski, P. Śmiałowski, *Jak rozpiętałem polską komedię filmową. Tadeusz Chmielewski w rozmowie z Piotrem Śmiałowskim*, Warszawa 2012, p. 77.

<sup>85</sup> Z. Pitera, [review] *Ewa chce spać*, "Film. Magazyn Ilustrowany" 1964, No. 25, p. 7 [own translation].

<sup>86</sup> Z. Kałużynski, T. Raczek, *Zeppelin z prezerwatywy*, "Wprost" 1999, No. 51, p. 110 [own translation].

<sup>87</sup> J. Olszewski, *Od snów do czynów*, "Film" 1999, No. 11, p. 40 [own translation].

<sup>88</sup> *Lunatycy Hermanna Brocha, cycle Finezje literackie*, part 2, in: *Ninateka*, <http://ninateka.pl/audio/finezje-literackie-1998-lunatycy-hermanna-brocha-odc-2> (access:

Antonioni's work but also some reviewers' and directors' views on the present-day culture.

The films under analysis are linked not only by hermeneutic similarities but also by resemblance in form. Apart from the night, their common denominator is also city space. The city can be unreal, as in the Chmielewski film, in which a policeman plays hopscotch, or neorealist, as Antonioni's Milan full of poor alleys. Sometimes a city becomes a horror scene: when Grune's protagonist passes a woman in a street, her face looks like a skull for a moment. The men in *The Street* and in *Eyes Wide Shut* lead similar, monotonous lives, interrupted for a while by unexpected adventures. Both are rather disappointed and encouraged to return to their respective families. The gap between expectations and reality, or perhaps between the subjective perception of reality and its objective state is underscored by Kubrick, who first imposes a crime-story staffage on his movie, only to undermine the sense of this plot towards the end of the movie. Chmielewski, too, distances himself from the fictional world, showing the crew filming *Eva Wants to Sleep*. A similar move was applied later on by Peter Bogdanovich in the comedy *What's Up, Doc?* (1972): when the couple of the main protagonists meet on a plane, a Bugs Bunny cartoon is being played for the passengers, Bugs' favourite saying being the title of the Bogdanovich movie.

Schnitzler's novella and Broch's novel send us back in time to the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and to the beginning of the 20th century. To understand the century marked by two world wars, it is worthwhile to go back to the previous one. In the 19th century art, growing popularity of nocturnes can be observed, i.e. romantic paintings showing the twilight or night. The interest in darkness is naturally much older and can be traced back to Baroque painters, such as Georges de la Tour,<sup>89</sup> or Renaissance ones, as Giovanni Savoldo,<sup>90</sup> the only difference being that the candles lighting bedrooms were replaced by lamps and street

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18.09.2016) [own translation].

<sup>89</sup> See J. Thuillier, *The Advent of the Night Pictures*, in: Ibid, *Georges de La Tour*, Paris 2003, p. 115–119.

<sup>90</sup> See M. Gregori, *Caravaggio and Lombardy: A Critical Account of the Artist's Formation*, in: *Painters of Reality: The Legacy of Leonardo and Caravaggio in Lombardy* (exhibition catalogue), edited by A. Bayer, New Haven and London 2006, p. 36.

lights in the 19th century, as is well evidenced by nocturnes painted in Munich and Paris by Aleksander Gierymski.<sup>91</sup> Historian and writer Tadeusz Cegielski in his monograph *Detektyw w Krainie Cudów* (*A Detective in Wonderland*) describes details of the then metropolises, where crime flourished next to factories and offices, and an individual could vanish in the crowd overflowing the streets.<sup>92</sup> The author mentions the fashionable lifestyle of those times, characterising the flâneur. “He was more than an idler and a dandy”, says Cegielski, “he was also a loiterer”,<sup>93</sup> for whom “night time walk in the city is [...] a method for familiarising himself not so much with the place but with people who live there and with their matters which are invisible during the day”.<sup>94</sup>

The heroes of the 1980s seem to bear affinity to the flâneur: *Modern Girls* seeking night time adventures, as well as Paul, Ed, Jake, Richard or Chris exploring the dangers of cities and small towns. The development of phenomena on a massive scale that took place in the 19th century is a clue not only to the themes dealt with in the 1980s films but also to the sources of their possible interpretations.

### The crisis of the category of crisis

*Don't you know that in 1929 the world crisis began,  
and unemployment, and the growing wave?...*

In 1963, as part of the popular Dachshund series<sup>95</sup> published by Czytelnik Press, a novel titled *Drugie dno* (*Hidden Meaning*) came out. The story presented by Dominik Damian focuses on a few days from

<sup>91</sup> See E. Clegg, *Miasto nocą. Aleksander Gierymski w Monachium i Paryżu*, in: *Aleksander Gierymski 1850–1901* (exhibition catalogue), edited by Z. Jurkowlanec, M. Porajska-Hałka and M. Jurkiewicz, Warszawa 2014, pp. 32–37. Aleksander Gierymski (1850–1901) – Polish realist painter; one of his best known pictures is *Pomarańczarka* (aka *Jewess with Oranges*) from 1880/81.

<sup>92</sup> T. Cegielski, „Człowiek tłumy” i nocni spektatorzy, in: *Ibid*, *Detektyw w Krainie Cudów. Powieść kryminalna i narodziny nowoczesności 1841–1941*, Warszawa 2015, pp. 122–123.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, p. 125 [own translation].

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, p. 124 [own translation].

<sup>95</sup> The Dachshund series included mostly crime stories. Other Polish publishing houses offered alternative thematic series, e.g. Wydawnictwo Śląsk published horror stories as the Gold Horse Shoe series.

the life of Melchior Faust, a film set designer, born on Halloween in 1929. Becoming a grass widower for a weekend, he decides to eat out, even though he is afraid of Saturday nights.

After he returns home from his night adventure, he cannot find the money he was paid for his latest movie *Ewa nie chce spać* (*Eva Does Not Want to Sleep*),<sup>96</sup> finding a dead woman body in his bathtub instead. From then on, many unexpected things happen: the corpse disappears from the bathroom and the hero meets a matrimonial deceiver, allegedly selling dreams. Most people he meets are members of Secret Organisation of Nonsensers. The hallmark of nonsensers is the way they communicate: mysterious and possibly hiding covert meanings. As it turns out soon, Melchior was put to test in order to bring out his absurdity. He is not however acquitted from the murder charges since he is to become the organisation's emissary in penitentiary institutions all over the country.

The figure of Dominik Damian himself bears an element of hidden meaning, since no such writer existed. It was a pen name of Adam Bahdaj, an author of popular books for children, e.g. *Podróż za jeden uśmiech* (*Trip for One Smile*) and *Wakacje z duchami* (*Holiday with Ghosts*), filmed for television by Stanisław Jędryka.<sup>97</sup> The crime story discussed above, which should be in fact dubbed an anti-crime story, has a common trait with his young adult fiction, namely, the protagonists speech: in the case of *Wakacje z duchami* stylised for the Warsaw working class dialect, and in the case of *Drugie dno* resembling the style of Gombrowicz<sup>98</sup> or Witkacy<sup>99</sup>. The title of the novel may symbolise the hopelessness of looking for hidden meanings in art because there may not be any. One of the threads in the plot presents a story

<sup>96</sup> Note that this title alludes to the previously mentioned Tadeusz Chmielewski film.

<sup>97</sup> The TV series mentioned are: *Wakacje z duchami* (Poland 1971) and *Podróż za jeden uśmiech* (Poland 1972) and the full feature film is *Podróż za jeden uśmiech* (Poland 1972).

<sup>98</sup> Witold Gombrowicz (1904-1969) – Polish writer and playwright, used varied linguistic means of stylisation, such as dialects and jargons; his best known novels include *Ferdydurke* and *Cosmos*.

<sup>99</sup> Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, pseudonym Witkacy (1885-1939) – Polish writer, playwright, photographer and painter linked to catastrophism. One of his best known novels is *Farewell to Autumn*. Employed neologisms and pseudoacademic register in his fiction. See also A. Jabłońska, this volume.

of an empty piano, possibly alluding to John Cage's "composition" 4'33'.<sup>100</sup> If this interpretation is accepted, Damian's method can be seen as surrealism, manifested in unusual associations, e.g. an empty piano like empty art. Many years later a similar joke appeared in the Słobodzian and Kreutz novella: The Little Dead Man Bar offers "pettitoes à la Gustaw Holoubek",<sup>101</sup> eaten by Melchior with a glass of vodka.

Describing a meeting with friends, the main protagonist says: "At Karina Midajska's place, the society was in-tel-lec-tu-al [...]. Even the sighs were intellectual".<sup>102</sup> He refers to a famous composer in the following way: "I was facing such a spiritual man, that he did not fit into the three dimensions".<sup>103</sup> The "society's" favourite film is *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (aka *Last Year in Marienbad*; France, Italy 1961) by Alain Resnais, the film which "brutally treads in muddy shoes into the very heart of the human soul",<sup>104</sup> and their favourite expression is "kind of". This brings to mind the figure of Barbara Wolańska, one of the protagonists of the film dilogy *Kogel-mogel* (aka *Hotch-Potch*) by Roman Załuski<sup>105</sup> made at the end of the 1980s. Wolańska uses the particle "kind of" in unsuitable contexts, which results in a comical effect. For example, when visiting some friends' house for the first time, she exclaims to her husband "Roman, this place is kind of luxurious!".<sup>106</sup>

The intellectuals portrayed in *Drugie dno* are not significantly different from the yuppies as depicted in Śpiewak and Musiał's papers or in Piesman and Hartley's book. Their common trait is, in Śpiewak's parlance, being easily influenced by "intellectual fashions".<sup>107</sup> Such fashions

<sup>100</sup> 4'33" is a piece by American progressive composer John Cage written in 1952, consisting only of pauses. No instrument is used to play the piece, making silence and accidental noises made in the concert hall music.

<sup>101</sup> D. Damian, Op. cit., p. 124 [own translation]. Gustaw Holoubek (1923-2008) – Polish theatre and film actor, working with Polish top film directors Wojciech Jerzy Has in *Manuskrypt znaleziony w Saragossie* (aka *The Saragossa Manuscript*; Poland 1965) and Tadeusz Konwicki in *Jak daleko stąd, jak blisko* (aka *How Far Away, How Near*; Poland 1972).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p. 44 [own translation].

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p. 200 [own translation].

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, p. 45 [own translation].

<sup>105</sup> The films are *Kogel-mogel* (Poland 1988) and *Galimatias, czyli kogel-mogel II* (aka *Topsy Turvy, or Hotch-Potch II*; Poland 1989).

<sup>106</sup> The quote comes from *Galimatias, czyli kogel-mogel II*.

<sup>107</sup> P. Śpiewak, W. Świetlik, Op. cit., [own translation].



include obsession with crisis: seeing the signs of downfall in civilisation and its products, including art. As Leszek Kopciuch points out in his book *Kryzysy, kreatywność i wartości* (*Crises, Creativity and Values*), “it is in the 20th century [...] that the pessimistic belief became prevalent that Western culture is in the state of crisis”.<sup>108</sup> One of the reasons why culture may be diagnosed with crisis is prejudice against its mass character. It should be noted that the above-cited fragments of the review of *The Moth* were concerned not with the communist context, which prevailed still in the 1950s when *Eva Wants to Sleep* was made, but rather with the supranational problems that were of interest to Grist, Wiącek, Lengren and Derry, and that included stabilisation, affluence or mass media.

Poet and translator Stanisław Barańczak in his essay *Słowo–perswazja–kultura masowa* (*Word–Persuasion–Mass Culture*) claims that the critique of mass culture espoused by Nietzsche, Ruskin, Ortega y Gasset, Spengler, MacDonald and Hauser could be dubbed “aristocratic” because it assumes that high culture patterns are deteriorated by mass culture.<sup>109</sup> The echoes of this critique are present in Musiał’s essay *Czy już jesteś „yuppie”?*, when he writes that young professionals are “all made of Form, by Form and for Form [...]”. They were loved by Gombrowicz, himself a yuppie in the pre-war Warsaw [...]. He predicted (as did Ortega y Gasset before) the hopeless dwarfing of forms”.<sup>110</sup>

Despite the similarities between *Drugie dno* and the essay *Kim jest japiszon?*, it is easy to spot a fundamental difference between them: Śpiewak’s diagnosis is much milder than that of Damian. It is not surprising, as the former confessed “I am the yuppie”<sup>111</sup> after some years, paraphrasing a saying attributed to Flaubert. Kevin L. Ferguson (*The*

<sup>108</sup> L. Kopciuch, *Kryzys a „dehumanizacja”*, in: *Ibid, Kryzysy, kreatywność i wartości*, Lublin 2015, p. 89 [own translation].

<sup>109</sup> S. Barańczak, *Słowo–perswazja–kultura masowa*, “*Twórczość*” 1975, No. 7, pp. 44–45 [own translation].

<sup>110</sup> G. Musiał, *Op. cit.*, p. 108 [own translation]. Gombrowicz’s form can be understood as a set of human physical and mental features (gestures, facial expressions, language, posture, etc.) as well as consciously or unconsciously assumed social roles, habits and conventions; this concept is connected to human relations (e.g. form as an attitude towards others) and to the perception of the world by individuals (form as a simplifying or subjectifying interpretation of some phenomena).

<sup>111</sup> P. Śpiewak, W. Świetlik, *Op. cit.*, p. 41 [own translation].

*Yuppies and the Yuckies*) cites Jane Feuer, who locates the authors of *The Yuppie Handbook* among “yuppies who knew they were yuppies, were unable to admit it, and instead ridiculed other yuppies for their shared values”.<sup>112</sup> Similar observations are put forward about the cinema: William J. Palmer in his book *The Films of the Eighties* cites Tony Hoffman, for whom Spielberg and Lucas are yuppies owing their recognition to high profits earned by their movies.<sup>113</sup>

In the light of these considerations, attention should be drawn to the following facts: Musiał’s and Śpiewak’s essays are variations on the themes included in *The Yuppie Handbook* (with Musiał citing the handbook directly). In his definition of the yuppie, Grant refers to the one proposed by Piesman and Hartley.<sup>114</sup> It turns out, then, that some of the researchers and commentators writing on the yuppies, hold an exaggerated image of this figure, which they have modelled on the satirical book.

Much as Feuer’s ideas can be interpreted as merely shedding doubt on the intentions of those who parodied yuppies, John Hammond in his article *Yuppies* goes far beyond that, pondering whether the films on young urban professionals showed an existing social group, or they were but a product of skilful marketing.<sup>115</sup> If we assume that the yuppies did not exist at all, at least the kind of yuppies known from the television or cinema, we can feel like Ed, the *Into the Night* protagonist. When he is visiting a film studio, he leans against a wall, which turns out to be a prop and yields under the weight of his body. A metaphorical reading of this scene could be that the hero transferred his life experience to the universe of the cinema, thinking that the laws of the former apply to the latter, since the cinema is often the reflection of real life. In other words, the cinema lulled and deceived Okin, endorsing the structured model of society to which Ed belonged be-

<sup>112</sup> K. L. Ferguson, *The Yuppies and the Yuckies: Anxieties of Affluence*, in: *Ibid*, *Eighties People: New Lives in the American Imagination*, Basingstoke, New York 2016, p. 86.

<sup>113</sup> W. J. Palmer, *The Yuppie Texts*, in: *Ibid*, *The Films of the Eighties. A Social History*, Carbondale and Edwardsville 1995, p. 281.

<sup>114</sup> B. K. Grant, *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> See J. L. Hammond, *Yuppies*, “Public Opinion Quarterly” 1986, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 487–501.

fore he started his adventure. The yuppie movies likewise lulled their viewers, making them believe in the authenticity of the screen heroes.

It is however possible to come up with a different interpretation of this scene: by promoting self-consciousness, art teaches how to develop distance to oneself and educates all those who treat it as a carrier of objective truth, encouraging them to form independent opinions. Such independent or critical opinions could be held, for example, on some reviews and analyses of the cinema. This interpretation is supported by the ending of *Drugie dno*, suggesting that all the events may be Melchior's dream, or of *Body Double*, in which the crime story plot turns out to be Jake's vision, or finally, by the closing scenes of *Eyes Wide Shut*, which have been discussed above. In the 1980s there are many productions beguiling the viewer by the seemingly objective vision of reality, only to undermine its status later on, even though not always suggesting that what we have seen was a dream. This can be observed in Jim Henson's *Labyrinth* (USA, UK 1986), Wolfgang Petersen's *The NeverEnding Story* (USA, Germany 1984) and in Masami Hata and William T. Hurtz's *Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland* (Japan, USA 1989). A somewhat different perspective is taken in the series *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, in which dreams constitute an alternative matrix-like reality.

Let us return at this junction to the observations put forward by Ledóchowski, Kael and Sergio, who discerned elements of hallucinations and surrealism in the Scorsese, Landis and Lynch films. In 1924 André Breton wrote in the first *Surrealist Manifesto* "We are still living under the reign of logic".<sup>116</sup> The same year saw the origins of another manifesto called *Poetism* by Karel Teige, who claimed that "We are hungry for individual freedom", adding „A man who has lived as a working citizen wants to live as a human being".<sup>117</sup> If we assume, then, that the lives of Ed, Paul, Jeffrey and William followed the rules of logic, their adventures, deprived of such rules, or governed by a dream-like logic,

<sup>116</sup> A. Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism*, in: *Ibid, Manifestoes of Surrealism*, Ann Arbor 1972, p. 9.

<sup>117</sup> K. Teige, *Karel Teige's Poetism (1924)*, *Modernist Architecture*, <https://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/21/karel-teige's-'poetism'-1924/> (access: 10.08.2016).

can be seen as expression of the heroes' hidden or muffled desires. The protagonists depicted in Damian's novel as well as in the films by De Palma, Kubrick, Henson, Petersen, Hata and Hurtz, even though they made imaginary or dreamt-up mistakes, they could also learn from them and turn an unreal and therefore safe adventure into a lesson on how to avoid these mistakes in the future.

Aren't viewers immersed in the darkness of a movie theatre in a similar position?

### **Closing remarks: new classicism or the cinema is a dream**

*I'm fed up with Butor, Ionesco, Beckett, Pinter,  
the subconscious, psychoanalysis, hidden meanings...*

In 1993 Jacques Derrida published the book *Spectres of Marx*, in which he presented the concept of hauntology. Ten years later Mark Fisher applied this category to music,<sup>118</sup> and Olga Drenda, first in her blog, and then in *Duchologia polska* used it to describe the political transformation in Poland. In 2008 the book *Remix* was released in free access, whose author Lawrence Lessig describes the remix culture, i.e. using existing forms in order to create new, independent works. In 2011 the book *Retromania* by Simon Reynolds was published, with a significant subtitle *Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past*. A common denominator of the above-mentioned theories is the belief, to which they subscribe to various degrees, that the past exerts enormous influence on the present time.

American popular cinema of the 1980s offered entertainment based to a large extent on the forms that had been around for some time and which were wrongly assumed to be outdated. The noir trend was reflected not only in *Into the Night* or *Blue Velvet*, but also in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (Hong Kong, USA, UK 1982),<sup>119</sup> William

<sup>118</sup> M. Fisher, *The Metaphysics of Crackle: Afrofuturism and Hauntology*, "Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture" 2013, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 42–55.

<sup>119</sup> S. Doll, G. Faller, *Blade Runner and Genre: Film Noir and Science Fiction*, "Literature Film Quarterly" 1986, Vol. 14, Issue 2, pp. 89–100.

Friedkin's *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985)<sup>120</sup> and Alan Parker's *Harry Angel* (Canada, USA, UK 1987),<sup>121</sup> referred to as neo-noir. Screwball comedy inspired not only the directors of *After Hours* or *Something Wild*, but also, e.g. Jay Sandrich and Garry Marshall, the directors of comedies starring Goldie Hawn – *Seems Like Old Times* (1980)<sup>122</sup> and *Overboard* (1987),<sup>123</sup> respectively. Reminiscent of Hitchcock were *Frantic*<sup>124</sup> and *Body Double*<sup>125</sup>, as well as Jonathann Demme's *Last Embrace* made at the end of the 1970s,<sup>126</sup> Paul Verhoeven's *The 4-th Man* (The Netherlands 1983),<sup>127</sup> Sidney Poitier's *Hanky Panky* (1982), Richard Franklin's *Cloak & Dagger* (1984) and Penny Marshall's *Jumpin' Jack Flash*<sup>128</sup>.

Making use of the existing trends and mixing them within one work is not however a distinctive feature of the 1980s cinematography since similar tendencies occurred earlier, the only exception being that they were confined to particular directors. Karl Grune combined realism with expressionism in the 1920s,<sup>129</sup> Tadeusz Chmielewski drew on René Clair and Jacques Tati in the 1950s,<sup>130</sup> and in the beginning of the 1970s Peter Bogdanovich paid homage to screwball comedy with his *What's*

<sup>120</sup> E. Gallafent, *Worlds Without Consequence: Two Versions of Film Noir in the 1980s*, in: *Neo-noir*, edited by M. Bould, K. Glitre, G. Tuck, London and New York 2009, pp. 75–89.

<sup>121</sup> J. J. Abrams, *Space, Time, and Subjectivity in Neo-Noir Cinema*, in: *The Philosophy of Neo-Noir*, edited by M. T. Conard, Lexington 2007, p. 11.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> [Author's name not given] *Overboard* [review], in: "Variety", <http://variety.com/1986/film/reviews/overboard-1200427160/> (access: 18.09.2016).

<sup>124</sup> J. Maslin, *Film: "Frantic", From Polanski*, "The New York Times", <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=940DE6DA173AF935A15751C0A96E948260> (access: 19.09.2016).

<sup>125</sup> Ch. Dumas, *How to Operate the Hitchcock Machine*, in: *Ibid, Un-American Psycho: Brian De Palma and the Political Invisible*, Bristol and Chicago 2012, pp. 60–64.

<sup>126</sup> M. Sragow, *Jonathan Demme: on the Line*, in: *Jonathan Demme: interviews*, edited by R. E. Kapsis, Jackson 2009, p. 21.

<sup>127</sup> D. Keeseey, *Paul Verhoeven*, Köln, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Paris, Tokyo 2005, p. 82.

<sup>128</sup> Ch. Derry, *Op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>129</sup> S. Kracauer, *Op. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>130</sup> T. Chmielewski, P. Śmiałowski, *Op. cit.*, p. 68–69. René Clair (1898-1981) – French director employing burlesque and surrealism, his films include *Sous les toits de Paris* (aka *Under the Roofs of Paris*; France 1930). Jacques Tati (1907-1982) – French actor and comedy director, known for *Les Vacances de M. Hulot* (aka *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday*; France 1953).



*Up, Doc?*. Let us also mention films alluding to 1980s productions and having a plot that takes place within one night: Shawn Levy's *Date Night* (2010), Michael Dowse's *Take Me Home Tonight* (2011) or Greg Mottola's *Superbad* (2007), which inspired Noel Murray to write his essay about films escaping "into the night".<sup>131</sup>

The distinctness of the 1980s cinema then, relies on the magnitude and popularity of the strategy involving new applications of old trends, enjoyed both among directors and producers as creators exploring this strategy, and among viewers as its recipients. Because of that, the strategy was noted by Płażewski and by Rafferty, who, to varying degrees, evaluated it negatively. The term that should be used to describe it fairly is cinematic classicism.

The term can be understood in two ways. In a narrow sense it will denote drawing on the classical cinema, whereas in a broader sense it refers to the extant genres, poetics or even specific films, regardless of the time when they were created. It never means copying the patterns but their continuous modifications, as evidenced by the mechanisms frequently employed in 1980s: setting the plot in the contemporary times with simultaneous drawing on the poetics and genres associated with other epochs.

Classicism makes us aware of the fact that art can be constructed out of what is individual – part of one's own experience and what is collective – part of other artists' experience. The present time meets universality. If the timeless form (not to be confused with a form detached from time) accommodates current problems, then these problems expressed in and through this form are not in fact confined to "here" and "now". As Musiał put it, "Yuppism is as old as civilisation and big cities; the Roman baths were nothing else than yuppie meeting places".<sup>132</sup> For Beata Świerczewska, author of *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości, czyli pieszo po miejskim bruku* (*Seeking Identity, or Walking on City Pavements*) also the flâneur "as a personification of specific features has existed since forever".<sup>133</sup>

<sup>131</sup> N. Murray, Op. cit.

<sup>132</sup> G. Musiał, Op. cit., p. 108 [own translation].

<sup>133</sup> B. Świerczewska, *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości, czyli pieszo po miejskim bruku. Flâneur oraz idea flânerie na przestrzeni dziejów – zarys problematyki*, Opole

When the directors of films classified as the yuppie initiation trend wanted to depict vices of contemporary people, they made use of genres associated with heroes uprooted from the regular rhythm of life and then entering an unknown world. And this world was typically an opposite of everyday life and orderliness. Through exploring the opposite state, we can notice the true nature of the object we are negating. The structure looks into the antistructure, and the human belonging to both of them is given a chance to be transformed. In this way, the yuppie lifestyle, often founded on mistaken desires, is reflected in the world revealing its illusory and provisional character.

That is why many of the 1980's films partly reflected contemporary human beings, and partly presented their caricature. The term "caricature" does not have to be negatively connoted, it is after all typical of art to sharpen the real or fictional elements, which makes it similar to dreams. It is important, though, to make cautious interpretations. When writer and publicist Stefan Kisielewski was reviewing *Eva Wants to Sleep*, he noted: "If we assume that every work of art [...] automatically reflects reality [...], what kind of conclusion can we then derive from such French films as *The Red Inn* or *Rififi*? Surely that France is a country of murderers and sadists".<sup>134</sup> The cinema may be a mirror of reality, though often a cracked one. The distortion alleviates it into art, whereas ignoring its duality impoverishes its significance.

In the first part of Robert Zemeckis' *Back to the Future* (1985), Marty McFly travelled in time to the 1950s, when directors shaping the cinema of the 1970s and 80s were born or educated – Lucas, Demme, Spielberg, Landis and Zemeckis. Perhaps the reason why they mixed genres was that they rebelled against the aristocratic purity of some directors or commentators opposing syncretism, drawing from the world of imagination, pulp fiction and comics? What helped these directors achieve success was money – not thought of as something

2014, p. 21 [own translation].

<sup>134</sup> S. Kisielewski, *Remanenty kanikularne (III)*, "Tygodnik Powszechny" 1959, No. 28, p. 8 [own translation]. Kisielewski refers to the comedy *Lauberger rouge* (aka *The Red Inn*) directed by Claude Autant-Lara (France 1951) and the crime film *Rififi* (France, Italy 1955) directed by Jules Dassin. The former, based on a novella by Honoré de Balzac, is a story about serial killers, the latter, based on a novel by Auguste Le Breton, tells about the life of gangsters.

commendable in the yuppie context – or, more precisely, capitalism. In the 1980s, phenomena that originated in the preceding decades, such as blockbusters,<sup>135</sup> merchandising<sup>136</sup> and video industry<sup>137</sup> are on the rise. In a way, it is thanks to capitalism that some artistic strategies became close to millions of viewers all over the world. Of course, though, not all films that were made at that time can be considered classicistic.

After all, the cinema of the 1980s had many faces.

*Yuppies were not the only ones to come full circle; it also happened to me when I was looking for the text of Nocna korekta. I started at the FilMOTEKA Narodowa library, then I set off on a journey, which ultimately brought me to the library again. I would like to express my thanks to those that I met on the way: Anna Kowalczyk and Paulina Plata, Katarzyna Surmiak-Domańska, Professor Piotr Zwierzchowski as well as Adam Wyżyński and Krzysztof Berłowski of the FN library.*

<sup>135</sup> R. Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema. Second Edition*, Malden, Oxford, Carlton 2003, pp. 160–161.

<sup>136</sup> M. Adamczak, *Model hollywoodzki – funkcjonowanie*, in: *Ibid, Globalne Hollywood, filmowa Europa i polskie kino po 1989 roku. Przeobrażenia kultury audiowizualnej przelomu stuleci*, Gdańsk 2010, pp. 65–68.

<sup>137</sup> R. Maltby, *Video and New Markets*, in: *Ibid, Op. cit.*, pp. 191–205.

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