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**The Politics
of Space in Polish
Communist
Cinema**

It is a commonplace that the communist censors, especially during the Stalinist period, were preoccupied with the spoken word rather than images (see, for example, Zwierzchowski 2005: 15–43). This meant that certain ideas unwelcome by the authorities were easier to transmit through visual means, including the representation of space, than through dialogue or the construction of the narrative. This essay intends to discuss this subversive ‘politics of space’, related to different periods of Polish cinema. More precisely, I will refer to the politics of space in three different senses: firstly, the official politics of space in socialist Poland; secondly, the actual uses of space by Polish citizens; and thirdly, its cinematic representation.

It would be impossible to analyse in one article the representation of space in all Polish post-war films, even if we focused only on feature films. This essay is therefore a product of selection. I chose the films of three directors who created the most distinctive and persuasive portrayals of urban Poland: Stanisław Bareja, Krzysztof Kieślowski and Marek Kotowski. The bulk of my discussion will be devoted to Bareja. The first reason for this choice is that his films covered a substantial proportion of Polish post-war history: from the early 1960s to the late 1980s, paying particular attention to the uses of space in official and unofficial discourses. In post-communist Poland, he is regarded as the director who most accurately captured life in the Polish People’s Republic (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa, PRL), the ultimate director of this phenomenon (see Łuczak 2007). The second reason is the lack of familiarity of both Western and Eastern film scholars with his films or even his name, which is a consequence of such factors as his consistent use of the comedy genre, the alleged bad taste in which he indulged in his films, his lack of allegiance to any distinctive school of Polish cinema (although retrospectively he was linked to the Cinema of Moral Concern) and, perhaps most importantly, his blatant criticism of the politics of Polish state socialism. Bareja’s cinema is not lost but is certainly undiscovered.¹ This essay is meant to rectify this situation, if only in small measure. Bareja’s work deserves to be brought to the attention of international audiences, not only because he is

so important to Polish post-war cinema and culture at large, but also because his work perfectly lends itself to comparison with films from other ex-socialist countries. In particular, the problems and pathologies which he satirised in his films concerned people in the whole ex-Soviet bloc and, to varying degrees, were present in the cinemas of countries such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Soviet Union.

In contrast to Bareja, Krzysztof Kieślowski’s ‘politics of space’ is relatively well known and I have devoted part of my earlier essays to the politics of space exemplified by Marek Kotowski (see Mazierska 2004). I will refer to their work largely to illuminate the specificity of Bareja’s approach to ‘socialist space’ and his influence on younger film-makers.

SOCIALIST POLAND ACCORDING TO STANISŁAW BAREJA

Stanisław Bareja (1929–1987) was not the only Polish post-war director to use discourses on space to convey criticism of communism. Others include, to name just a few, Aleksander Ford, who directed *The Eighth Day of the Week* (*Ósmy dzień tygodnia*, 1958), Jerzy Ziarnik, the director of *The New One* (*Nowy*, 1969) and *The Troublesome Guest* (*Kłopotliwy gość*, 1971) and Leon Jeannot, who directed *The Man from M-3* (*Człowiek z M-3*, 1968). However, Bareja devoted more films to this issue than any other film-maker and mastered this kind of criticism in his numerous comedies. He was also very consistent in his choice of setting. Practically all his films were set and shot in Warsaw, where the problems affecting the whole country were most visible and the means to mask them most developed. Bareja’s principal methods were exaggeration, intensification and incongruous juxtaposition. He captured a common social phenomenon and replicated it in his films, expanding it to huge proportions; he also brought together many small annoying negative phenomena and juxtaposed ordinary elements or features in an unexpected way. Together, these techniques underscored the ‘absurd’

¹ In recent years the literature on Bareja has grown, but the bulk of publications are below academic standard.

permeating life in the PRL and, indeed, in the whole Soviet bloc. It is worth mentioning here that 'absurd' (Latin *absurdus*), which in common usage equals 'ridiculous', literally means 'out of harmony' (see Esslin 1968: 23). My argument is that this lack of harmony, especially the dissonance between socialist ideology and practice, was at the centre of Bareja's cinematic discourse.

For the purpose of chronology, it is worth dividing Bareja's films into two groups. In the first, made in the 1960s, when Władysław Gomułka was Party leader, Bareja countered the official social and cultural map of Poland by focusing on places and people whose existence was suppressed or marginalised in official discourses.² In *Marriage of Convenience* (*Matżeństwo z rozsądku*, 1966), which was made following narrative patterns of Polish pre-war comedy (see Wiśniewski 1973: 15), he showed, on the one hand, the Poland of small but very prosperous traders dealing in Western and Western-looking clothes at semi-legal markets and, on the other, the Poland of the remnants of the Polish aristocracy, living in large, although neglected villas, full of antique furniture. These two Polands were reluctantly tolerated by the authorities because they harked back to pre-war Poland and underscored what the Poland of 'small stabilisation'³ was lacking: style, elegance, fun and a healthy economy. At the same time, Bareja was reasonably positive in his depiction of the new socialist Poland (perhaps to avoid annoying the censors). This is conveyed in the very first scene of the film, when the camera pans over the roofs of the Old City of Warsaw (which, despite looking so different in its style from typical socialist architecture, was an achievement of post-war communist governments), accompanied by Agnieszka Osiecka's song, *Mr. Kwiatkowski, Mr. Kowalski* (*Panie Kwiatkowski, Panie Kowalski*). The viewpoint in this scene can be described as 'tourist', as it does not belong to an inhabitant of the town but to the film's author, who directs us, the audience (his 'tourists'), towards the most attractive parts of the town. Osiecka's song evades unequivocal interpretation. On the one hand, it celebrates the huge building programme that is taking place in post-war Poland of houses, schools and

hospitals, all for the benefit of 'ordinary people', the Kowalskis and the Kwiatkowskis. On the other hand, it can be read as ironic, as it makes the point that only in 'statistical terms' is life in Poland good; for individuals life is less rosy.

The narrative of *Marriage of Convenience* revolves around the relationship of Joanna, the pretty daughter of semi-legal rich traders from the Różycki bazaar (*ciuchy*), and her two suitors: the slacker aristocrat Edzio and the poor artist Andrzej, who together rent a loft in the Old City. Edzio, who makes Joanna's acquaintance first, asks Joanna's parents for her hand in marriage, but they reject him, claiming that the union would be disastrous for all concerned. In order to survive in the environment of state socialism, they should look for partners favoured by the new ideology, such as artists who hardly earn anything but are allowed to possess anything, unlike Joanna's parents who earn a lot but cannot reveal their income, because they would risk losing it. Thanks to Joanna's marrying Andrzej, her parents can launder their illegally earned money while assuring prosperity for their daughter and themselves. Luckily Joanna and Andrzej really do fall in love, and therefore their eventual marriage is not a marriage of convenience.

Because *Marriage of Convenience* casts as main characters artists, aristocrats and traders, it focuses on the spaces they appropriate. The aristocratic house where Edzio's aunt lives is almost a ruin; whatever one touches there crumbles to dust. The paintings decorating its walls, representing the grandiose past of Edzio's ancestors, underscore the absence of the aristocracy in contemporary Poland. Such a material decline also represents the metaphorical decline of this stratum of Polish society, which appears to be deserved, as Edzio and his aunt are snobbish, selfish and ultimately useless. The flat of Joanna's parents strikes one as provincial, with old-fashioned furniture, ornaments and a large photograph of the couple's wedding. Again, it appears to have little relevance to the Poland of the 1960s. Only the loft inhabited by Andrzej and Edzio looks stylish, largely because its lodgers have little furniture and Andrzej's paintings show what he sees from his window.

Although Bareja's choice of characters leaves him little scope to explore the lifestyles

and zones of the socialist mainstream, on several occasions they appear in the background. For example, at a certain stage Joanna and Andrzej visit the furniture shop Emilia, the best known furniture shop in socialist Warsaw and famous for long queues (immortalised in later films by Bareja), to choose furnishings for their new house. Although they should be living in an aristocratic mansion, they find themselves among the functional items designed for a miniature, one-bedroom or studio flat. Everything here is designed to fold and unfold, depending on the function it is meant to fulfil; for example, a desk can act as a bed. In his subsequent films, Bareja would mock this socialist functionality by showing that it does not function. Yet, in *Marriage of Convenience*, the socialist furniture still exudes some charm. In another, humorous scene, a dodgy businessman, nicknamed Engineer Kwilecki (played by Bogumił Kobiela, an actor who in the 1960s specialised in the roles of socialist 'survivors'), who operates totally in the private sector, steals some thread from a state factory to use in the production of textiles to be sold at *ciuchy*. In order to cover his illegal activities, he makes his flat look like a *skansen* of folk art, complete with a wooden cradle, in which he sits as if it were an armchair. This scene can be read as an introduction to the motifs of the appropriation of public property for private purposes and of covering illegal activities in the disguise of folk art. It is worth adding that, in his later film *Teddy Bear* (*Miś*, 1980), a pseudo-folk straw sculpture of a bear is used as a container for alcohol to be smuggled to London.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Bareja moved away from the 'remnants of pre-war Poland', to concentrate on people who constituted the stock of socialist society: the new intelligentsia, the working classes, and socialist managers. He focused on two interconnected issues: the unresolved accommodation crisis and the degradation of public space. It should be kept in mind here that the reduction of the level of private ownership of the means of production, brought about by socialism in virtually all countries of the Soviet bloc, led to the sharpening of the division between the public and the private domains of life. As Ladislav Holý observes in

relation to Czechoslovakia, but in a way that is also valid in Poland, the boundary between the public and private permeated many more aspects of life than production and consumption: it affected morality, the value of time and property, modes of conduct, patterns of hospitality and socialising etc., and it was maintained and made manifest by its own appropriate symbolic devices (see Holý 1996: 19). Contrary to official ideology, which proclaimed the primacy of society over individuals and, consequently, the greater significance of public zones (for example, of factories, cooperative farms, offices or schools) over private ones, in reality the private zone proved more important to the citizens of Eastern Europe. Public property and public space were regarded as nobody's. People who worked there did not identify with it and, consequently, did not try to make it look or function better. It was neglected and impoverished, or used for private purposes. An extreme example of this attitude was stealing or exchanging public property for something which could be used for private purposes. Widespread pilfering of socialist property was greatly encouraged by the prevailing economic situation. Given the chronic shortage of building materials, tools and other goods, pilfering them from building sites and other places of work or buying them from those who had stolen them was the only solution for many people (Holý 1996: 24–25). The Czech proverb of the time: 'Anyone who does not steal is robbing his family' clearly endorsed this moral principle of unofficial privatisation. On the other hand, such practices slowed down economic development and negatively affected the quality of public enterprises, including the building of blocks of flats for the burgeoning population.

The accommodation crisis provides the main theme for two of Bareja's productions from

2 There are other reasons for dividing Bareja's work into two periods, such as the change of his scriptwriters, which account for the fact that his later films offer a more uncompromisingly critical vision of Poland.

3 The term was taken from the play by Tadeusz Różewicz, *Witnesses or Our Small Stabilisation* (*Świadkowie albo nasza mała stabilizacja*, 1962), but in due course was used to describe the whole decade of the 1960s when Władysław Gomułka was Party leader.

the 'decade of the propaganda of success', when Edward Gierek was Party leader: *Every Rose Has Its Fire* (*Nie ma róży bez ognia*, 1974) and *4 Alternatywy Street* (*Alternatywy 4*, 1981). In *Every Rose Has Its Fire*, a not so young professional couple, Janek and Wanda, live in cramped accommodation in one of the rooms in a large villa where most of the rooms are taken by state offices, where there is continuous noise. There is so little space in their room that they cannot even share a bed. Janek and Wanda are waiting for a cooperative flat, but are well aware that the queue is very long; it might take them ten years or more to reach this elusive goal. However, one day a miracle happens. A man who claims that he lived in the villa as a child, offers to trade them his newly acquired cooperative flat for their miniature room. Of course, they happily agree but their joy is short lived, as soon numerous problems arise and they find themselves in a worse situation than before. The flat that should be ready to move into proves uninhabitable. The doors have no handles and eventually fall off their hinges; the lock on their front door can be opened by a key that fits the front door of all other apartments; the bell does not work; the walls dividing rooms are so thin that they collapse; the sink is broken so that water once turned on cannot be stopped and floods the flat; the windows do not open and so on. As a Polish viewer might guess, and as is confirmed by an employee of the cooperative's administration, the vast majority of defects are due to the builders' conscious strategy. They create flaws so that they can be paid twice: first by the cooperative hiring them to build the block, and then by the private inhabitants for correcting the defects which they purposefully created. The cooperative, whose prescribed role is to ensure that their members receive their flats in good shape, in reality facilitates the builders' second, private income (and most likely their own extra income) by putting them in contact with the inhabitants. We witness this in a scene where the administrator tells Janek when various workmen will come to fix the defects. The cooperative itself, as with so many institutions in the socialist world which nominally were common property, does not live up to its name. It is not really a cooperative, but a strictly hierarchical

organisation where ordinary members can say nothing and the bosses have great power, behaving as owners.

The second, and ultimately more serious, problem that Janek and Wanda encounter on their road to their dream flat is their forced co-habitation with Wanda's ex-husband Jerzy and all the people whom he brings to their new home, as well as those whom they bring upon themselves in their amateurish attempt to get rid of Jerzy and his entourage. Jerzy uses the socialist policies on space as a way to earn his living. His trick consists of arranging for people from the provinces to be registered in Warsaw—for a fee, of course. It must be mentioned that, for most of the communist period, without such registration it was impossible to find any official employment in Warsaw, buy property or even rent a flat. The policy of registration was a way to control internal migration of Poles, especially to limit the influx of provincials to places where there was already a shortage of accommodation, such as Warsaw. One could not simply register in Warsaw as one wished, but had to find somebody already registered there to register the new person as staying with him. Finding such a person was not easy, as registering somebody, particularly on a permanent basis, granted him or her the right to stay practically till the end of their lives, or at least till the registered person ceased to be in regular contact. Jerzy exploits this rule to his maximum advantage by remaining registered with Wanda despite having divorced her many years before. This means that wherever Wanda moves, Jerzy has the right to move in with her. Being himself permanently registered in Warsaw, he can register in Janek and Wanda's flat his new wife whom he married fictitiously, the child he adopted, also fictitiously, the child's mother and, in due course, the child's other relatives. All these people gradually invade Janek and Wanda's space, making their life even more miserable than it was previously.

The policy of registration, of which Jerzy takes advantage, can be regarded as a typical way of dealing with a social problem by the socialist authorities. Instead of tackling its root cause, which in this case is a shortage of accommodation, by building more houses, it

defuses it by creating a bureaucratic obstacle that prevents a large number of citizens from even mentioning this problem. In this way, the propaganda of success can be perpetuated, despite the lack of real success. As the case of Wanda, Janek and Jerzy demonstrates, such a bureaucracy disadvantages honest citizens and benefits those who are dishonest and sly.

The situation of Janek and Wanda, as Rafał Marszałek observes, brings back memories of the time after the war, when Warsaw had been destroyed and people were crammed into the few remaining houses. At the time, as *Treasure* (*Skarb*, 1948) by Leonard Buczkowski shows, such overcrowding was met with patience, understanding, and even acceptance. However, the almost thirty years which had passed since the war, eroded this patience and made people feel desperate (Marszałek 2006: 53–55). The ultimate sign of the end of their patience is Janek's final act of rage, in which he destroys everything in 'his' flat and ends up in a psychiatric ward. Similarly, Jerzy recalls the memory of a 'Warsaw fixer', able to find solutions even in the most difficult circumstances, a type familiar from pre-war cinema, where the type was immortalised by Adolf Dymsza. However, Jerzy, as played deadpan by Jerzy Dobrowolski, comes across as a more sinister type than the characters personified by Adolf Dymsza, because he has no scruples and acts only for his own advantage. Basically, he is a crook who thrives on socialist absurdities and human misery.

The issues of acquiring a cooperative flat and living in a newly built housing estate are also the subject of *4 Alternatywy Street*, which is set in the district of Natolin. As in *Every Rose Has Its Fire*, the cooperative employees do not serve the inhabitants but, rather, treat them as unpleasant intruders. Moreover, its chairman uses his power to 'give' the flats away as a means of amassing consumer goods, as we see in an episode when the high ranking Party official, Comrade Winnicki, tells the chairman that he needs a three-or-four-bedroom flat to solve a family problem resulting from his wife acquiring a lover. The chairman explains that he is sympathetic to Winnicki's plight, but it is not easy to solve, as there is another prominent person 'from television circles' who is also exerting

pressure on him. For Winnicki, this is a signal to outdo his competitor by offering the chairman two coupons towards a Fiat, one for the chairman and one for his son. This exchange is an example of extreme, albeit informal and illegal, privatisation of public property, including public space: the cooperative chairman gives something to the Party official which is not really his but which he only administers, in order to receive something from his customer which does not belong to the customer. As we can see, only people occupying positions of power could engage in this kind of non-monetary exchange. Ordinary people had to wait for their flats in endless queues, bringing useless documents such as references from their places of work or from social services, confirming their difficult situation⁴ and only being able to afford such small gifts as bottles of foreign alcohol. The chairman has a large cupboard full of these gifts; they meaningfully occupy the space where the files of the cooperative members should be kept.

Because of the multitude of factors affecting the waiting time for a flat and the confusion about the significance of the factors, being allocated a flat is like winning the lottery. This feature is excellently conveyed in an early scene, when a crowd of cooperative members are waiting for a secretary to post a list of the people awarded flats. Indeed, those who get flats on this particular day are picked randomly by a television journalist who is visiting the cooperative to make a programme about the excellent progress of the Polish building industry, which is a typical example of the Gierek 'propaganda of success'. As in *Every Rose Has Its Fire*, the flats 'given' to the cooperative members are in dreadful condition. It takes the inhabitants a lot of money, time and effort to transform them into habitable places.

Another typical socialist figure who treats public space as his private kingdom is the janitor of the block at 4 Alternatywy Street, where

⁴ The phenomenon of attempting to 'jump the queue' by bribery was shown in some earlier Polish films, such as *The Eighth Day of the Week* by Ford and *The Troublesome Guest* by Jerzy Ziarnik. However, before Bareja no director had the courage to reveal the blatant corruption of the socialist cooperatives.

the main action of the series takes place. This man, meaningfully called Anioł ('Angel'),⁵ who was previously employed as a cultural officer in the provincial town of Pułtusk, acts like a cross between a landlord and the overseer of a youth camp. He forces the inhabitants to clean the staircases, decorate the block and spy on each other, and he passes the 'intelligence' he collects to the local police. It must be added that Anioł himself aspires to be the chief spy in his block. We can guess that his ideal would be Bentham's Panopticon, which Michel Foucault used as a metaphor for modern 'disciplinary' societies with their inclination to observe and normalise (see Foucault 1991), of which the society of state socialism was a perfect example. However, as the designers of the socialist blocks were unfamiliar with this concept or hadn't the courage to implement it, he has to make up for this 'defect' by using his wit and determination. He goes to great lengths to gain access to the lives of other inhabitants, leaning out of the window of his basement flat to see what is happening on the street or on the balconies above him, walking outside the block and gazing into other people's windows, or walking the stairs, trying to eavesdrop through the doors. Consequently, the block at 4 Alternatywy becomes a metaphorical Panopticon. In line with his 'sacred' name, Anioł also seeks to be worshipped and tries to accustom his neighbours to certain quasi-religious rituals, in which he functions as a semi-god, such as staging performances or singing songs in his honour. Needless to say, this enforced 'cult of Anioł' brings to mind the cults of various communist leaders, principally Stalin. The cult of Anioł is more visible, as the places of ordinary religious cults are excluded from Bareja's work. Socialist authorities were hostile to building churches, especially in new urban areas, where it was easier, at least in theory, to create the new socialist men and women. As a Panopticon with a semi-religious centre, the block at 4 Alternatywy thus becomes the totalitarian system in miniature.

The whole system of flat cooperatives comes across as, on the one hand, utterly personalised, because personal connections, bribes and gifts matter a lot. On the other hand, it is rendered as Kafkaesque or Haškian,⁶

in the sense that it is highly bureaucratised. Ordinary members of the cooperative or even the actual flats for which they wait for many years, if not decades, come across as merely shadows of their existence in a file. The motif of this 'shadow existence' is excellently rendered in an episode in which the people waiting for the completion of a block at 4 Alternatywy are informed that it will never be finished because it figured in the previous year's building plan and was ticked off as completed. Consequently, the current schedule is no longer of any importance. However, later we learn that the builders finished it promptly (by socialist standards), because of the intervention of a Party official. Another Kafkaesque moment concerns two families who move to the same flat because they share similar surnames (Kotek and Kołek) and the same initial, which makes their names look identical on official documents announcing that they were allocated the apartment. Although Mr. Kotek and Mr. Kołek both resolutely protest at being cramped in one apartment, their protests are in vain. What really matters for the cooperative hierarchy is the content of the document, not the actual situation of the desperate people. Eventually, the Koteks and the Kołeks become resigned to their fate and put up with their enforced cohabitation.

4 Alternatywy Street not only laments the absurdities of the pseudo-cooperative system, but also celebrates the resilience with which ordinary people endure and subvert it. For example, in the depth of winter the inhabitants, deprived of central heating, organise their own heating by acquiring a railway engine. In another scene, when deprived of electricity, they gather in the apartment of Comrade Winnicki, who has a television which runs on batteries. Such scenes bring back memories of earlier Polish television serials, in which people living in one house worked together to ensure a minimum living standard and shared their limited resources (see Talarczyk-Gubała 2007: 256–257). The spontaneous cooperation of the people living at 4 Alternatywy also subverts the enforced cooperation imposed on them by Anioł (see Mioduszevska 2006). Finally, *4 Alternatywy Street* proclaims the end of the pseudo-cooperative era. Thanks to the joint efforts of the inhabitants of

the block, Anioł is overthrown and the cooperative block receives a new, humble janitor. It is not difficult to see the demise of Anioł as a metaphor for the victory of Solidarity in 1981.

In *What Will You Do When You Catch Me?* (*Co mi zrobisz jak mnie złapiesz*, 1978) and *Teddy Bear*, probably the most appreciated film Bareja ever made (see Janicka 1997: 18), the director moves away from satirising the challenges of living in a cooperative block, taking issue with the use of public space, principally the space of work, for private activities. In *What Will You Do When You Catch Me?*, the pretext for such an exploration is the attempt of the director of a large state company, named Tadeusz Krzakoski, to prove that his wife has been unfaithful to him, so that he can conveniently divorce her and marry a new woman whom he met on a short business trip to Paris. *Teddy Bear* focuses on the problems of a certain Mr. Ochódzki, the chairman of a sports club who was recently divorced by his wife, who tries to deprive him of everything they have collected in their marriage, including their flat and the contents of a foreign bank account. The narratives of these films are looser than those of the two films previously discussed; the camera often appears to leave the main actors of the drama, in order to follow other citizens of Warsaw navigating their way through the multiple absurdities of modern living. In this way, Bareja can show how public space and property is impoverished and degraded by three types of people using it: managers and overseers, ordinary employees and customers.

The people at the top unofficially privatise public space by running their private or semi-private businesses there. In *What Will You Do When You Catch Me?*, the manager of a garage prioritises repairing the cars of people who repay his services beyond what is required by the official tariff, usually by gifts in kind. It is not difficult to see a parallel between his behaviour and that of the chairman of the housing cooperative in *4 Alternatywy Street*—both take advantage of their positions as custodians of queues by re-prioritising places in them. In addition, Krzakoski pays for the repair of his private car out of company funds. He also employs in 'his' firm a man whose job is to spy on his wife, paying him

for some extra months of service and providing him with expensive cameras. A more extreme example of using public space to private advantage consists of arranging an exhibition at a railway station, which makes the station unusable by passengers for days if not weeks, simply to allow the originator of the exhibition, Krzakoski's wife, to be interviewed for a television programme. Krzakoski needs his wife to be on television because he wants to show her to a man who is meant to spy on her.

Unlike managers who can manipulate public space in a number of ways, ordinary employees must content themselves with mere neglect or humble theft. To demonstrate this, on several occasions the camera in *What Will You Do When You Catch Me?* focuses on the building site of a new Warsaw estate, where the workers spend a large proportion of their time in idleness, because they are waiting for certain documents, or simply because they prefer not to do anything. On another occasion, the lorry drivers employed on the site cannot leave it until the inspection which is meant to establish whether the workers are stealing bricks is completed. The inspection consists of putting a skewer into the piles of rubble carried by the lorry. When the skewer does not detect any bricks, another, thinner one is used. This whole exercise is futile because everything of value has already been taken from the site. Yet, when a single brick is eventually found on a lorry, the whole cavalcade of vehicles has to return to the building site and the drivers are labelled 'thieves'. The low ethics of work, as revealed in these episodes, is closely related to the fact that in socialist Poland productivity was never an objective of the economy. Full employment and fulfilling some abstract plans were always more important, and companies were often rewarded for the size of their projects and the number of resources they used, which in practice equalled rewarding waste. In this and other episodes of *What Will You Do When You Catch Me?*, such

5 'Angel Guardian' is in Polish *Anioł Stróż* and *stróż* means both 'guardian' and 'janitor'.

6 I am evoking Kafka and Hašek in one sentence because the universes they created in their work have much in common (see Steiner 2000: 34–36).

as when a man says that he cannot send a crane somewhere because that day he is expecting an 'unexpected inspection', Bareja also satirises socialist 'inspections' which were ineffective as they came too late, were easily predicted and focused on the misdemeanours of ordinary workers, rather than the crimes of those at the top who were responsible for losses of gigantic proportions. Inspections of this kind also underscored the absurdity of the socialist economy, as the principle, in this case punishing a worker for stealing a single brick, proved more important than the negative result of following this principle, in this case producing total chaos at the building site.

Among the people who work in state enterprises, as portrayed by Bareja, we can identify two contradictory or perhaps complementary approaches to the space of their work: appropriation and alienation. The first attitude is, understandably, more common among managers and directors, who furnish and decorate their offices as if they were their private homes and use them for private pursuits, such as sex. The people on the lower rungs of the social ladder tend to use their work places as little as possible, and disappear from them as early as they can, either physically, for example to the nearby shop to buy alcohol, or mentally, by switching themselves off from work by phoning relatives, manicuring nails or eating. Of course, both attitudes have a detrimental effect on customers. Consider, for example, the situation in *What Will You Do When You Catch Me?*, where a postal clerk eats strawberries and cream while serving customers standing in a long queue. When one of them reproaches her by saying 'Either eat or work', she closes her till, clearly demonstrating that private pleasure is more important for her than public service. In *Teddy Bear*, a man who visits a shop is simply informed by the shop assistant: 'Don't you see that I am eating.' The power of employees to refuse to serve customers breeds a special kind of customer who is very patient, humble and grateful for any service, as if it were a personal favour. Not surprisingly, customers who expect a high standard of service are refused any service, and are even stigmatised, such as the hapless visitor to the grocery shop in *What Will You Do When You Catch Me?*,

who, after complaining that he has been given a dirty chicken, is photographed and the photograph is displayed in the shop as one of the customers whom the shop will not serve.

Bareja also shows customers who steal from public places, most often from shops and restaurants. In due course, such 'privatisation' of public resources affects the way the customers are treated, namely with distrust. We find an extreme version of this attitude in the milk bar featured in *Teddy Bear*, where all the cutlery and crockery is chained to the table. As a result of this arrangement, the aluminium bowls from which the guests eat are never washed; the food scraps are merely wiped out with a dirty cloth by a person serving food from a gigantic bowl full of potatoes or buckwheat. The chain to which spoons used by two customers are attached is so short that when one person lifts a spoon to his mouth, the person sitting opposite him cannot eat. This arrangement, while satirising the excessive reaction to a common problem (after all, stealing from restaurants also happens in the West) is also symbolic of the enforced collective use of public space in Poland, which thwarts any pleasure or even the fulfilment of the most basic human needs.

Zones that should be shared by everybody in a specific way in Bareja's films are also appropriated for private uses. A street is not only used for driving vehicles, but also for selling petrol by lorry drivers to the owners of private cars or for leaving unwanted goods. Of course, such a use of a street makes it inconvenient or even dangerous for their proper users, but their interests are not protected. The policemen who should forbid such practices are more concerned with arresting pedestrians who use vulgar words or drivers who go over the speed limit in areas where special dummy houses are erected to catch drivers not expecting to see them there.

The more lamentable the state of public space, the more effort is put into covering it, literally and metaphorically. Huge slogans, posters and billboards are erected to hide ugly building sites, decrepit walls and factory buildings. This dominance of, as Jean Baudrillard would put it, the kingdom of signs over the kingdom of material things, is excellently portrayed in the previously mentioned scene from *What Will You*

Do When You Catch Me?, where the railway station is unusable by passengers, as it has been changed into a space for an exhibition called 'Travelling by train saves you time'. *Teddy Bear* begins with a scene of constructing the large façade of an estate, complete with dummies pretending to be real people. This scene can be regarded as a metaphor for the whole building industry in Poland—what mattered was its façade or representation in official reports, not qualities which could be appreciated by the inhabitants. A façade can also act as a trap, as shown in the scene of catching the speeding drivers: those who do not grant the dummy houses the status of reality are punished by fines.

Dobrochna Dabert observes that the space of offices is represented in Bareja's films, as in other films of the Cinema of Moral Concern (to which she links Bareja's films), from an external perspective, suggesting the author's emotional distance from it (see Dabert 2003: 136). Indeed, we typically see offices from the viewpoint of the hapless customer, rather than from that of the powerful chairman or director. Typically a large desk and chairs divide them. These pieces of furniture point to the impossibility of any solidarity between the authorities and citizens of Poland under state socialism and, in a wider sense, are a potent symbol of the neglected opportunity to create an egalitarian society.

Another dialectic to which Bareja draws attention is that between urban and rural space. Natolin in *4 Alternatywy Street* has the worst features of both the country and city. As in the country, it has an undeveloped transport system which makes any journey to the centre of Warsaw long and cumbersome. There are few shops, and no cinemas, restaurants or cafés (therefore workers often drink alcohol on the pavement), not to mention any buildings that might attract tourist gaze or symbolise the glorious socialist future. On the other hand, the multitude of high blocks of flats creates a sense of anonymity, of being among large numbers of people but without any contact with them (see Mazierska, Rascaroli 2003: 98; Talarczyk-Gubała 2007). One gets the impression that nature has been devastated but nothing of value has replaced it. Not surprisingly, one of the new inhabitants, upon receiving the keys to a new flat laments:

'We were sent to a desert.' *What Will You Do When You Catch Me?* begins with the image of a man on horseback riding through Warsaw. In *Teddy Bear*, a horse cart loaded with coal moves through central Warsaw, in close proximity to the Palace of Culture, Warsaw's most prominent building. The film begins and ends with a view of a large straw bear, attached to a helicopter, floating over Warsaw. Likewise, many of Bareja's films include people from the country coming to Warsaw in search of a better life. This mixture of rural and urban can be interpreted as Bareja's critique of an artificial, rushed and incompetent Polish urbanisation and industrialisation (on the critique of Polish urbanisation see Wallis 1971). It can also be regarded as a satire on the alliance of workers and peasants, and the post-war promotion of folk culture in the form of folk festivals, galleries and shops selling kitschy souvenirs. This last policy again worked as a façade: the shallow support of folk culture obscured the real neglect and hostility of the communist authorities to the countryside.

The final opposition which Bareja tackles in his films is that between Poland and the rest of the world. As one might expect from the director's critical attitude to socialism, he represents the West positively, the East negatively. The West is full of goods which are lacking in Poland, and therefore the constant motif of his films is smuggling Western goods to Poland in order to consume them or sell them at a profit, and selling Polish goods, principally alcohol, in the West to obtain hard currency or scarce Western goods. Moreover, the West is a zone of freedom, including political and sexual freedom, as signified by the bank which is not serving customers due to industrial action in *Teddy Bear*, and numerous sex shops in *What Will You Do When You Catch Me?*. In Bareja's West, one can even find some Polish products which are lacking in Poland, such as Polish ham in the Polish Delicatessen in London, as shown in *Teddy Bear*. By contrast, in socialist Hungary, as depicted in *What Will You Do When You Catch Me?*, the work ethic is lacking: clerks are immersed in their own affairs and rudeness and drunkenness is common.

Just as Polish goods can be found in the West, so Western goods permeate Polish offices

and private houses. However, Western goods in Poland are clandestine, hidden from public view, such as Western comic books and alcohol locked in the drawers and cupboards of various clerks and officials. This has to do with their preciousness and their status as forbidden fruit, dangerous for a healthy socialist body and mind. The idea that the West is attractive but, from the official perspective, corrupt and dangerous, is excellently conveyed by Ochódzki, who in *Teddy Bear* tells a group of sportswomen about to cross the border to travel to London that this city may have some charms but they should make sure that these charms do not obscure its shortcomings. From the current perspective, Bareja's idealistic representation of the West might appear slightly naïve, but even in its naivety it excellently transmits the socialist mindset.

The criticism of public space in Bareja's films goes hand in hand with an emphasis on the importance of the private sphere. Although the socialist tenement blocks are ugly and function poorly, people strive to acquire them and value them, because there are not enough of them. This idea is most clearly conveyed in *Every Rose Has Its Fire*, in which a couple who have just got the keys to their flat are so happy that they dance on the roof of their block of flats. Such an image belongs to the Poland of Gomułka and Gierek; after 1980, we find practically no cinematic characters who are happy simply because they have a roof over their heads.

KIEŚLOWSKI AND KOTERSKI— LATE COMMUNISM AND BEYOND

Unlike Bareja who focuses on public space and on the public-private dialectic, Krzysztof Kieślowski, in his *The Decalogue* (*Dekalog*, 1988), and Marek Koterski, in virtually all his films, focus on the private zone, typically the space of a private flat in a large block.

The Decalogue is regarded as one of the most important, if not the most notable, products of the Polish film industry in the 1980s. Kieślowski himself described the origin of this series of films in this way:

Chaos and disorder ruled Poland in the mid-1980s—everywhere, everything, practically everybody's life. Tension, a feeling of hopelessness, and a fear of yet worse to come were obvious. I'd already started to travel abroad a bit and observed a general uncertainty in the world at large. I'm not even thinking about politics here but of ordinary, everyday life. I sensed mutual indifference behind polite smiles and had the overwhelming impression that, more and more frequently, I was watching people who didn't really know why they were living. (Kieślowski, quoted in Stok 1993: 143.)

The Decalogue was, thus, meant to represent both Polish and global situations or, more precisely, the Polish situation as an extreme version of the global condition. Accordingly, what torments Kieślowski's characters in this series are not only the circumstances pertaining to late socialism, but modern times in general. The most important feature of the Polish context is the martial law of 1981 and its aftermath, which led to an atmosphere of stagnation for most of the 1980s (on society under martial law see Lewenstein, Melchior 1992). Kieślowski focuses on people living in one housing estate—Ursynów in Warsaw. He presents it as drab and unpleasant, although in reality Ursynów was, and still is, regarded as a success story in the Polish version of Le Corbusier's approach to urban living—an estate which is large, but inhabitant-friendly, full of greenery and with a reasonably good public transport system and infrastructure. On the other hand, the choice of Ursynów allowed Kieślowski to cast with plausibility some quite affluent, educated and cultured people as his protagonists. Had he chosen, for example, Bródno as the setting for *The Decalogue*, it would be unrealistic to tell the stories of a surgeon with an international reputation, a well-known advocate and an acting student.

Unlike in Bareja's films, the inhabitants of the housing complex in Kieślowski's series do not interact with each other. As Mirosław Przyłipiak observes:

The impression of imprisonment is overwhelming. Trapped in the small cubicles of their apartments, in the boxes of their tower blocks, in elevators and mazes of corridors, the protagonists additionally lock themselves in, cut themselves off from the outside world with bars (episode X) and bolts (episode I). In the staircases, on the paths winding among tower blocks, they occasionally meet characters known from other episodes, as if the whole universe consisted of a limited number of elements. This claustrophobic mood is enhanced by framing and lighting, which privileges close-ups and darkness, tightly enveloping the silhouettes of the protagonists. (Przylipiak 2004: 226–227.)

In such an environment, human bonds disintegrate and an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion grows. Locking themselves in private spaces leads to a proliferation of social pathology, and is a way to contain it and hide it from public scrutiny. In *The Decalogue*, we witness promiscuity and betrayal, incestuous tendencies and even the stealing of children, as well as many other transgressions of the Ten Commandments. On the whole, the director demonstrates that in Catholic Poland in the 1980s, the reality and even the concept of family deviated significantly from the ideas conveyed in the Catholicism. However, Kieślowski's characters lead very private lives and, because they do, they try to gain access to the existence of other people. Many of them spy on others, read their letters and eavesdrop on them, often using expensive and sophisticated equipment. Such practices are also depicted in Bareja's films, most importantly in *4 Alternatywy Street*, but their nature in Kieślowski's film is different. In Bareja's films, spying was typically politically motivated (by the authorities' desire to know what people know and say) or pragmatic—one did it to find out, for example, where the neighbour bought a scarce good, such as a fur coat or toilet paper. In *The Decalogue*, by contrast, it becomes a way of life, marking a breakdown of communication, distrust and aggression between people who should be close to each other. Distrust and aggression suggest that the people have

internalised the external enemy—the state; they do to each other and to themselves what previously the authorities have done to them. The state, their institutions and functionaries are almost invisible. Consequently, what I described previously as the official politics of space, is rendered either unimportant or invisible. The second reading is suggested by Paul Coates, who claims that the state might be represented metaphorically by the tower blocks of the series' housing complex; 'its authority a vague, looming presence limned with continual absence' (Coates 1999: 94). If this is the case, then it should be added that, unlike in Bareja's films, the state authority has as its adversary a different kind of authority: that of the Catholic Church. However, the Church, understood both as a religious institution and physical space where believers meet, as depicted by Kieślowski, fails to counter the melancholy and indifference his characters suffer.

While Bareja tended to idealise the West, either as a real space, or as a material or immaterial sign, frozen in a souvenir, a photograph or a foreign book, a real or invented story or even a hard currency, Kieślowski—perhaps drawing on his experiences as a disillusioned traveller—resisted such a temptation. Many of his characters, as Przylipiak observes, belong to the exclusive group of those who possess a scarce commodity—a passport and resulting opportunity to travel to the West (see Przylipiak 2004: 227). However, these trips hardly excite them and do not change anything in their lives. It is in their private space that they have to sort out their problems or remain unhappy forever. His lukewarm attitude to the West foreshadowed Polish post-communist reality and post-communist cinema.

In Kieślowski's *The Decalogue*, the ordinary block of flats is endowed with metaphorical meaning, but is still realistic. In Marek Koterski's cinema, especially his second film, *Inner Life* (*Życie wewnętrzne*, 1986), it verges on the surreal. Similarly, while Kieślowski's characters are suspicious and extra-sensitive, in Koterski's films they tend to be paranoid. The protagonist of all Koterski's films, Adam Miauczyński, whom we can at times regard as the director's *alter ego*, depending on the movie, works as a

film director, teacher or literary critic (which are occupations Koterski himself engaged in), or the precise occupation is not disclosed. Central is the fact that he is a frustrated member of the intelligentsia and his housing situation is the main cause of his unhappiness.

Miauczyński's block is situated among many similar buildings, in a grim housing estate in Łódź, which, despite being the second largest city in Poland, is, or at least was, regarded as very provincial, working class and generally unattractive: an epitome of communist drabness. Although the block is huge, it comes across as claustrophobic. Few outsiders venture there and everybody seems to spend all their time behind the locked doors of their flats, in lifts or standing idly in long, dark corridors, reminiscent of the characters in Roman Polański's *The Tenant* (*Le Locataire*, 1976). All Michał's neighbours reveal some eccentricity, such as drilling holes in walls purely for the pleasure of it. Michał himself is not lacking in peculiarities; he secretly collects whisky bottles from the rubbish chute and spies on his neighbours. Unlike in Bareja's films, spying is not political and, as in Kieślowski's films, it does not have any real purpose, such as finding out about one's wife's extramarital affairs. It only testifies to the characters' boredom and paranoia. While in Kieślowski's film, people are distrustful or indifferent to each other, in Koterski's film they are openly hostile, rude and malicious. They derive true pleasure from getting on the nerves of fellow inhabitants.

Koterski's films, beginning with *Inner Life*, can be perceived as the chronicles of a man imprisoned in an apartment block. Hence, in *Inner Life*, Michał is married to an attractive woman who works as a teacher and they have a son, who causes his parents no trouble at all. However, Michał and his wife hardly speak to each other and it is clear that, from his point of view, the relationship is a failure. Miauczyński hates his flat, his block, his housing estate and his town; each of them constitutes one circle of his oppression. By extension, he is a prisoner of communism, which has created all these circles of oppression. In Koterski's later films, the protagonist's personal life disintegrates even further, which can be read as a metaphor

of the moral decline of late socialism, which the new regime was unable to reverse. In *Nothing Funny* (*Nic śmiesznego*, 1995), the wife of the protagonist considers divorcing him and marrying a wealthy foreigner met through a dating agency, and his teenage children ignore him. At this stage, however, the protagonist not only blames his relatives and neighbours for his disappointing situation, but also the political system. He says at one point: 'Communism spoilt forty years of my life and democracy completed my destruction.' In *Day of the Wacko* (*Dzień świra*, 2002), made seven years later (by which time Poland had enjoyed over a decade of democracy), when the protagonist collects the modest monthly salary of a secondary school teacher, he complains: 'Governments change, but my life does not change, because every new authority treats me like a dog, like an arsehole, paying me next to nothing.' At the same time, he continues to blame his family, his neighbours, the housing estate and his unappealing city for his wasted life. By this time in the narrative, his separation from his previous family is almost complete: he lives in a different flat, although in the same block as his ex-wife and his son, whom he visits occasionally. It should also be added that the flat is rather spacious and tasteful, with the walls painted in clean, distinctive colours, as opposed to the dark-grey of his previous flats, and the flat is often bathed in sunlight.⁷ The surroundings are also more appealing, with a multitude of shops, better roads and parks. Thus, although objectively Miauczyński's housing situation has improved, in comparison with the situation in the earlier films by Koterski and those of the characters depicted by Bareja, Koterski's protagonist is far from happy. His continuing critical attitude to the space of his life points less to his objective standard of living, than to the gap between the reality and expectations of a member of the Polish intelligentsia. Koterski attributes to his protagonist the view that, as an educated and cultured man, he should be granted a special position in society, not having to mix with ordinary people and having enough personal space to develop his creativity.⁸ However, this view is as rejected by the new authorities as it was by the old. After 1989, a new class usurped the

position of the nation's elite: businessmen and managers; and the intelligentsia felt more undermined and powerless than ever.

Whenever Koterski's protagonist attempts to break with his life, whether before or after 1989, his escape is limited to a mental retreat: dreaming or daydreaming. If he actually leaves his block of flats, the escape is short-lived and disappointing. For example, Miauczyński's night walk in *Inner Life* is cut short by a group of policemen, who find it suspicious that a citizen is walking at night just for recreation. Another example is a brief holiday at the seaside by Miauczyński in *Day of the Wacko*. He intends to rest and enjoy himself, but his negative attitude to people on the train prevents him from participating in their conversations and makes him unable to concentrate on the book that he is reading. Later, he almost returns home immediately when he discovers that his neighbour is on a holiday to the same resort. Moreover, his everyday fears and obsessions, resulting from being convinced that he has failed as a lover, husband, father and professional man, and that he is surrounded by enemies, never relinquish their grip on his mind and they prevent him from enjoying the sea and the sun. His 'siege mentality' can partly be regarded as a legacy of communism, when citizens were discouraged from cooperating with each other outside any structures approved by the state and were expected to 'be vigilant'. Such an attitude, leading to social fragmentation, helped the communist authorities to govern and control the disgruntled citizens, as shown in Bareja's *4 Alternatywy Street*. Yet, Miauczyński remains *homo real socialism* even in democracy: politically passive, negatively disposed to all types of politicians, neurotic, even mad.

The *mise-en-scène* conveys the idea that the madness of Koterski's protagonist is caused both by his private idiosyncrasies and the failures of the public sphere. In his films prior to *Day of the Wacko*, the flats and housing estates bear a resemblance to the places depicted by Kieślowski, but they are typically darker and grimmer, as if they are made bleaker by the perception of somebody who utterly despises his environment. The director never misses the opportunity to show that the light in the corridor

or in the lift does not work or that the housing estate is placed in the middle of nowhere, having the worst features of two worlds: the city and the country. It is isolated from cultural life and lacking in the pleasures of nature. There are few trams reaching the estate and it is very windy. Furthermore, summer and winter rarely feature in Koterski's films. The most common season is late autumn or early spring, periods which expose all the inadequacies of the estate. Interiors, in common with exteriors, lack any individual features. In *Day of the Wacko*, as was previously mentioned, the flats and the whole estate look better, but the inhabitants are still not able to enjoy the improvements. For example, the modest area of parks and lawns are not used for human pleasure, but as toilets for dogs, and noisy road work disturbs the sleep of the people living in the estate. The view in Koterski's films is anything but that of a tourist. The director himself claims that he shot his films from the 'pavement's level', rather than from any high point a tourist might occupy (see Lenarciński 1996).

The same rule as that governing construction of the *mise-en-scène* applies to the use of sound. Blocks of flats in Eastern Europe are notorious for their acoustics: people who live there hear what their neighbours are doing, whether they want to hear it or not. Similarly, Miauczyński has complete aural access to the lives of his neighbours. He hears their conversations, the music that they listen to, the

7 This change might be linked to Koterski's relocation from Łódź to Warsaw. *Day of the Wacko* is set in a nameless town, but we can guess it is Warsaw.

8 This class was endowed with a special mission and status during the period Poland did not exist as a separate state as the creators of culture and models to be imitated by the rest of the nation. After World War II the importance of the intelligentsia in the official political and cultural discourse was undermined by their generally poor pay and the leadership role of the working class. The communist housing policy led to a much greater mix of people belonging to different social groups than in the West: engineers, teachers, even actors and factory directors tended to live in the same block of flats as factory workers, builders and cleaners, often to the significant discomfort of the higher classes. However, in the minds of the majority of Polish members of the intelligentsia, contrary to the official slogans, they remained the jewel in the national crown—its most precious asset. As a result of these factors in post-war years the intelligentsia experienced the greatest gap between, on the one hand, its perceived social status, dreams and aspirations, and on the other, its achievements and rewards which led to deep frustration.

noise produced by showers, children's toys and household tools. What differentiates his block or his perception of it from the average is the fact that in his place noises are amplified and echoed. Moreover, Adam's conviction that his neighbours or people working near his block are noisy in order to get on his nerves encourages him to take revenge and be even louder. Sometimes a peculiar competition takes place to see who can produce the most noise, which makes the lives of everybody involved in the contest utterly miserable.

Camera-work is another means which suggests that madness is all around Adam, but he magnifies it through his paranoid attitude to everything and everybody. It can usually be regarded as objective, but from time to time we also get slightly distorted compositions and angled shots, which, since the times of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (*Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari*, 1919), directed by Robert Wiene, have been regarded as signs that the images do not represent the real world, but the mind of a madman. Moreover, in *House of Nutters* (*Dom wariatów*, 1985) and *Inner Life* (two films which most strongly emphasise the character's madness), the protagonist is often lit in a way that distinguishes him from other people: he cuts a darker, more shadowy figure.

In addition, realistic narratives are occasionally disrupted by scenes clearly belonging to a different ontological order: dream, daydream or imagination. For example, in a scene in *Day of the Wacko*, Adam travels through his housing estate without touching the ground, as if the law of gravity does not apply to him. There are numerous scenes in which people change into animals or in which harmless animals are transformed into dangerous beasts. Such scenes suggest that Miauczyński leads his life largely in his head.

It is worth adding that, unlike Bareja, Koterski does not idealise the West. In common with Kieślowski, the West is for him like the East or, perhaps, even worse. We see this in *Ajlawju* (1999), where Miauczyński receives a fellowship to study in the United States. There, however, he ends up in a housing complex similar to the one he left behind in Poland and becomes even more detached from his surroundings. He avoids

conversations with the natives and instead spends his time watching television and phoning his Polish lover. It appears that, wherever he goes, Miauczyński carries his 'block' with him; it *blocks* him from any positive contacts with people, sentencing him to be a perpetual stranger. Koterski thus suggests, and I agree with his diagnosis, that space is a human construct, not only in the sense of being physically created by people but also, and perhaps more so, mentally constructed. The assessments of various elements or aspects of space, the meanings of spatial divisions, are all culturally constructed.

Koterski's diagnosis explains the paradox that, although the living conditions of Poles improved significantly over the period the films discussed here were made, the well-being of his characters did not improve or even deteriorated. It should be mentioned here that in post-communist cinema and other cultural discourses of this period, high-rise housing complexes have much worse connotations than they ever had before, being represented as hotbeds of all possible misfortunes and social pathologies (see Kalinowska 2005; Mazierska 2004). It feels like the old negative spatial evaluations are not only still projected on the new times, but 'enriched' by new layers of criticism. One wonders whether the tower block will ever be redeemed in post-communist cinema and other discourses on space. Perhaps, but to do so we need new generations of film-makers and cultural historians, able to look at the urban space afresh, taking into account such factors as, for example, the ecological dimension of living and the long commuting time from the suburbs to the centres of towns.

FILMS

4 Alternatywy Street (Alternatywy 4), dir. Stanisław Bareja. Poland, 1981

Ajlawju, dir. Marek Koterski. Poland, 1999

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari), dir. Robert Wiene. Germany, 1919

Day of the Wacko (Dzień świra), dir. Marek Koterski. Poland, 2002

The Decalogue (Dekalog), dir. Krzysztof Kieślowski. Poland, 1988

The Eighth Day of the Week (Ósmy dzień tygodnia), dir. Aleksander Ford. Poland, West Germany, 1958

Every Rose Has Its Fire (Nie ma róży bez ognia), dir. Stanisław Bareja. Poland, 1974

House of Nutters (Dom wariatów), dir. Marek Koterski. Poland, 1985

Inner Life (Życie wewnętrzne), dir. Marek Koterski. Poland, 1986

The Man from M-3 (Człowiek z M-3), dir. Leon Jeannot. Poland, 1968

Marriage of Convenience (Małżeństwo z rozsądku), dir. Stanisław Bareja. Poland, 1966

The New One (Nowy), dir. Jerzy Ziarnik. Poland, 1969

Nothing Funny (Nic śmiesznego), dir. Marek Koterski. Poland, 1995

Teddy Bear (Miś), dir. Stanisław Bareja. Poland, 1980

The Tenant (Le Locataire), dir. Roman Polański. France, 1976

Treasure (Skarb), dir. Leonard Buczkowski. Poland, 1948

The Troublesome Guest (Kłopotliwy gość), dir. Jerzy Ziarnik. Poland, 1971

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