The Entrepreneur in “Transformation Cinema”: Representing the Economic Changes of the 1990s in Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia

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This article analyses how economic change after 1989 was perceived and rooted in society through cultural representations, specifically in the film production of Poland and Czechoslovakia (and later the Czech Republic and Slovakia). The starting premise of this investigation is that popular commercial films, alongside the media and discourse of politicians and other key actors of the systemic transformation, also informed ideas about the free market circulating in the public sphere. Filmmakers, faced with the new realities brought about initially by the gradual liberalization of the economy in the late 1980s and later the systemic change of the economic transformation in both countries, immediately turned to capturing and fictionalizing the changes surrounding them. They presented audiences with role models of what it means to be a capitalist, but also tales of warning. This article investigates the “transformation cinema” of the 1990s, focusing on the figure of the entrepreneur and private enterprise. It examines how filmmakers searched for a visual language to critique or affirm the new social order, but also continued to work with inherited modes from the late socialist era. The article asserts that while the economic expectations conveyed through cinema focused largely on structuring the imagination of a new middle class in Poland, Czech(oslovak) cinema adopted a more sceptical outlook, suggesting that the promises of the free market were not available to “ordinary” working people.

Keywords: cinema; economic transformation; entrepreneurship; Poland; Czechoslovakia

The radical change of the economic system in Central European countries after 1989 brought about not only new forms of economic, political, and social behaviour, it also affected culture industries, both in terms of the field of production and the possibilities of representation. In Poland and Czechoslovakia—and from 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia—filmmakers, faced with the new realities brought about by the gradual liberalization of the economy in the late 1980s and subsequently the systemic change of the transformation from a planned to market economy, immediately turned to capturing and fictionalizing the changes surrounding them. These films of the 1990s tend to have a poor reception among film scholars.
for their meagre artistic qualities and low production values. Yet today, what I am
terminating the “transformation cinema” of the 1990s—that is, films that sought to the-
matize and comment on the economic and social changes—can be seen as a relevant
historical source for investigating not only the change in visual culture during this
period, but also the popular mythology, stereotypes, and horizon of the economic
imaginary associated with the introduction of the free market as expressed in popu-
lar culture.

This article thus sets out to at least partially fill the gap in current scholarship on
the role of culture industries in the onset of capitalism in Central Europe after the
collapse of the Eastern Bloc. A sizeable literature in the fields of film studies and
cultural studies pertaining to Polish cinema produced during the period of the sys-
temic transformation already exists, but is practically absent in Czech and Slovak
scholarship. This enquiry thus offers an opportunity to see how the insights of Polish
scholars can be applied to neighbouring cinemas. But it is also an opportunity to
historicize all three case studies. By this, I mean that cinema is not analysed as a
simple reflection of the systemic changes in terms of its content, but is seen as itself
a product of this transformation in its broad historical context. Not only did filmmak-
ers turn to new topics of representation, but their very mode of production was deter-
mined by the changes that took place, especially as their industry underwent
privatization (in Poland, the first steps were taken as early as 1987 with a new law
easing the state monopoly on film production, while in Czechoslovakia, privatiza-
tion commenced only after 1989). Filmmakers thus had to search for new models of
financing and accommodate their work to what private sponsors were willing to pay
for. Financial conditions necessarily affected the forms filmmakers chose: seeking
profit (or at least attempting to not make a loss), the 1990s saw many directors turn
to commercial cinema and marketable genres, primarily comedy, crime stories, and
gangster movies.

Investigating feature film as a historical source has an established tradition at least
since the 1970s with the work of historians such as Marc Ferro, Anthony Aldgate,
and Jeffrey Richards, even if “a universally accepted, coherent and comprehensive
methodology for studying film as a source for historical analysis has not yet been
formulated.” These scholars do not treat feature film as a document of a particular
historical reality (other than perhaps in an ethnographic sense as capturing contem-
porary fashions or landscapes), but rather as artefacts that allow them to glean how
significant cultural actors helped, through visual narratives, to co-construct particu-
lar discourses. In this enquiry, I focus on the values attached by commercial films to
the free market and the transformation in general. Such a focus is relevant as com-
mercial films attracted sizeable audiences to cinemas and even more so in later tele-
vision repeats; as such, their ability to inform shared values and expectations relating
to the economy should not be underestimated.

In keeping with the proposed aim of applying the insights of Polish scholars to the
Czech and Slovak case, rather than contributing my own theoretical framework to
the debate on the study of history in film, I draw inspiration from two of the most comprehensive studies in Polish dedicated to the visual culture and cinema of the 1990s respectively. Both Magda Szcześniak and Michał Piepiórka perform a contextualized analysis of film, which they approach not as an autonomous work of art, but as a product of social, cultural, and economic forces. Szcześniak focuses on the transformation of the visual sphere in the 1990s and analyses images—whether representations or, for instance, magazines—as “active participants in the process of creating the new order.”5 Piepiórka uses the term “documents of mentality,” approaching film as “a construct—a socially-determined narrative—expressing cultural beliefs about the ways of perceiving reality.”6 In other words, he is interested primarily in the ideological messages in films, which he attributes not to society as a whole but to specific “cultural communities” that produced particular films. In summary, popular feature films are regarded here as cultural products participating in the discourse of the transformation through presenting a particular worldview (mentality), all the time bearing in mind that such discourses and worldviews are representative only of a segment of the society that produced them and not necessarily of the attitude of their audiences.

Representation of the economic and social changes demanded the use of new vocabularies. But as scholars have remarked, the use of set phrases such as “the invisible hand of the market” was often less a mark of economic expertise and more a wish to become part of the new elites, at least verbally. Others have pointed out that particular groups, such as managers, were quick to adapt to the new language of Western managerialism, but only as a kind of mimicry, in fact continuing with established practices.7 Here I wish to investigate how cultural producers attempted to appropriate and master a new language in order to convincingly critique or affirm the new social order and respond to the marketization of their industries. On the one hand, I analyse this process within cinematic works themselves, looking at the language screenwriters and directors attributed to the characters in order to describe the new realities; on the other hand, I investigate how filmmakers searched for a visual language to express the changes surrounding them. My argument is that despite turning to new subjects of representation and attempting to master new genre conventions, filmmakers often continued to work with modes inherited especially from the late socialist period. The article thus follows the continuities and discontinuities transformation cinema evinced with socialist cinema and enquires how such continuities shaped the critiques of the transformation process films were able to formulate.

The article focuses on the challenges of finding a new language through the example of the figure of the entrepreneur, and more broadly the topic of entrepreneurship. This is a particularly pertinent topic as it was precisely in the ability to conduct private business that scholars, politicians, foreign advisors, and much of society saw the essence of the free market. The shared image of the early 1990s entrepreneur as someone cleverly operating in the grey zone of unclear legislation produced its own
mythology that filmmakers were quick to exploit in visually attractive displays of mafia-style gangs and gun crime. Entrepreneurship is also one of the areas that represented something almost completely new and thus needed its own vocabulary. Czechoslovakia had one of the most thoroughly nationalized economies of the former Eastern Bloc. The experiences of citizens with private enterprise were very limited and took place practically only through the informal economy until the very end of the 1980s. Such black-market experience, however, was essential to the rise of a new entrepreneurial class, as Marek Skála argues in one of the few works dedicated to the history of small business in the post-1989 Czech Republic.\(^8\) Poland, on the other hand, never completely abolished certain forms of private enterprise. So-called prywaciarze (private entrepreneurs) or badylarze (costermongers) were often scorned in official socialist propaganda and were also popular subjects for socialist-era filmmakers, taking on the role of negative characters. This only changed in the late 1980s.

By late 1988, the so-called “Wilczek law” in Poland, named after industry minister Mieczysław Wilczek, liberalized the rules for private enterprise. This had significant implications for how filmmakers chose to speak about business practices and the cultural valences attached to them. I thus date the rise of transformation cinema from the beginning of 1989 in Poland. As I am particularly interested in widely circulated popular cinema, the analysis is based on a corpus of thirty commercial films aimed at broad audiences produced between 1989 and 1999 in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia that thematize the topic of business, entrepreneurship, and private economic initiative in various ways, although only the most relevant examples will be discussed here. Among these, Polish films are represented most numerously simply because of the volume of Polish film production, which was much more sizeable (more than twenty films per year during the first half of the 1990s) than in the Czech Republic, let alone Slovakia, where the film industry took the biggest blow in a prolonged privatization process, so that as a result the country only produced a handful of feature films per year during the 1990s. As the authors of a comprehensive history of Slovak cinema note, in this period, neither the Slovak nor the Czech film markets were large enough to allow producers to make a profit and “only the combination of the Czech and Slovak market, which has no language barrier and represents an audience of fifteen million, could increase the probability of financial success.”\(^9\)

Although the Slovak and Czech film industries were, of course, different, for the purposes of this enquiry—though it is an admitted shorthand—I will refer to them as essentially one case.

**Textbooks for Doing Business**

When looking at the early films of the transformation era, it would be hard to miss their didactic character. As Magda Szczęśniak has perceptively analysed, images circulating in the public sphere of the 1990s were removed from reality and
instead offered ideal models to be followed. Their object was, according to Szcześniak, to help form the new middle class. The ideology of the Polish transformation offered the “deceptive illusion” that membership in the new middle class was available to all. The core members of this new class were to be recruited amongst entrepreneurs, who would propel the economy through their activities and the creation of workplaces, the media and politicians at the time suggested. As sociologists have remarked, in order to start a business venture in the early phases of the transformation, financial capital was paradoxically not the most important factor. More significant were social and cultural capital—contacts, connections, and know-how. For this reason, as Czech scholars have observed, managers of state enterprises were particularly well equipped to succeed and the new entrepreneurial class was recruited often from their ranks, especially in Czechoslovakia with its absence of already established small-scale private business owners.

The first Polish transformation films also suggested to audiences that money is essentially secondary in succeeding on the free market. Illustrative is the hero of the inaugural transformation film that directly thematized the liberalization of the Polish market under the 1988 law, Feliks Falk’s *Kapitał, czyli jak zrobić pieniądze w Polsce* (Capital, or, How to Make Money in Poland, 1989). Set in May 1989, the bitter comedy details a series of unsuccessful attempts by sociologist Piotr Nowosad to succeed in the world of business. Returning from a fellowship in the USA with some savings, Nowosad encounters his home country changed by the relaxed laws on private enterprise. His friends and colleagues from the university are now all trying their luck at becoming entrepreneurs and are constantly asking him if he is already “doing business,” an activity now understood as a matter of course in his social group.

The film presents a dramatization of one of the key ideological messages of the transformation of “taking matters into one’s own hand,” which, as Jakub Majmurek notes, formed the basis of the new transformational social contract. In order to achieve such individualized responsibility, the characters in the film constantly mention one keyword: *kombinowanie*. This word with no direct English equivalent, which, depending on the context, could be rendered as “hustle,” “getting ahead,” but also “playing the system,” expresses an often-cunning ability to come up with solutions not necessarily beyond the sphere of legality but certainly on the border. Even the taxi driver taking Piotr from the airport at the very beginning of the film uses this keyword to describe the new habitus.

As he tries to integrate into the changed world surrounding him, Nowosad adopts not only a new language to talk about investments and profits but also new visual status markers—he starts to play tennis and finds a young and attractive lover. But as remarked above in relation to managers, Nowosad’s appropriation of the language and symbols of this new class is only mimicry, empty signifiers that temporarily grant him access to the sphere of business but do not translate into actual financial gains. In this sense, though tackling new social and economic phenomena, *Kapital* evinces continuities with the cinema of moral anxiety of the 1970s and 1980s, of
which Falk was a key representative. This cinematic current often explored moral dilemmas and tested the principles of its characters; *Kapital* also questions the moral costs of succeeding on the free market. While the characters in the film struggle with a new language on the level of vocabulary, Falk’s own approach remains similar to his previous output.

Falk’s early film is ambivalent as to the promises offered by the transformation—after all, all of Nowosad’s business ventures fail. It was, however, followed by a whole series of pictures that adopted an enthusiastic stance towards the free market, conveyed with didactic overtones. The edifying remit of these films aimed at different audience groups. Waldemar Szarek’s children’s comedy *Mów mi Rockefeller* (Call me Rockefeller, 1990) offered an indisputable message to children and young adults—the free market will benefit all those who put in enough effort—straightforwardly illustrating one of the founding myths of capitalism. This message was so obvious that one reviewer even titled her review “A Small Textbook of Entrepreneurship.”16 The protagonists of the film, three enterprising school-age siblings, use the prolonged absence of their parents to become successful entrepreneurs. The film is replete with catchphrases of the new market ethos. While at the beginning the children’s father instructs them, “If you want, you can always make do (poradzić sobie) in one way or another,” at the end of the film, it is the eldest daughter who has interiorized the capitalist mantra: “You can rely only on yourself.” *Kombinowanie*, which had a somewhat negative valence in Falk’s *Kapital*, becomes one of the assets of those who have found their place in the new reality. While contemporary sociological surveys documented that entrepreneurs were often seen by the public as scammers and chancers ready to make their fortune at the cost of others,17 the film’s favourable portrayal of entrepreneurs as people attempting to make a living through their own ingenuity reveals its normative ambitions, an attempt on the part of the filmmakers to participate in creating the new order.

A model of female entrepreneurship could be found in Filip Bajon’s *Lepiej być piękną i bogatą* (Better to be Beautiful and Rich, 1993), which one reviewer called a “propaganda poster for the privatization era.”18 Rather incredibly based on a true story, the film’s plot copies the classic rags-to-riches story of Cinderella: the heroine, textile worker Dorota Waltz, finds out she has inherited the factory where she works. Her transformation from dowdy labourer into a stylish industrialist is captured primarily visually, suggesting that mastering the visual symbols of the new era will lead to economic success—in Szcześniak’s words “visual cultural capital” is treated as “a necessary investment to obtain profit.”19 Building aspirations and forming expectations—if in the hyperbolic genre convention of the fairy tale—the film is also something of a “textbook” on becoming a successful businesswoman.

Male role models, on the other hand, were offered by the hit film *Młode wilki* (Young Wolves, dir. Jarosław Żamojda, 1995), presenting the glamorous life of a gang of teenage smugglers. The success of the film with young audiences was probably to be found in the exhilarating promise that “dirty business, illegal profits are for
Despite the moral at the end of the story (not all gang members survive the final showdown), the film thrives on a vision of easy money. Indeed, many transformation films saw making money as essentially effortless, suggesting it only requires will and determination. In Krzysztof Kieślowski’s internationally acclaimed *Trzy kolory: Biały* (Three Colours: White, 1994) penniless hairdresser Karol, having been stripped of all his possessions by his wife in France, immediately builds a successful business career upon his return to transforming Poland. Polish cinema thus saw a sizeable production that in hyperbolic mode modelled what it meant to become a “winner of the transformation” for its audiences.

**Entrepreneurs without Capital**

The Czech economic transformation is often compared to the Polish case, as in both countries the deregulation of the market along neoliberal lines, guided by Leszek Balcerowicz in Poland and Václav Klaus initially in Czechoslovakia and later the independent Czech Republic, took a swift pace. Slovakia, on the other hand, chose to follow a more gradual scenario under Vladimír Mečiar after Czechoslovakia’s split. Despite the ostensible similarities in their post-1989 economic paths, popular films in the first two countries sent differing ideological messages to their viewers, building different horizons of expectation in audiences. These differences need to be understood in the context of longer economic histories as well as cultural traditions of representation, and the different financial possibilities available to filmmakers in privatizing film industries. Czechoslovak filmmakers took somewhat longer to respond to market changes, as the year 1990 saw primarily the completion of already ongoing state-funded projects. The following year witnessed a scramble for private sponsors as the state withdrew most of its funding from cinema production. The overabundance of product placement—often only feebly related to the story—in early Czech and Slovak transformation cinema is hard to miss.

Czech cinema primarily suggested that Czechs were not ready for capitalism, a trope that appeared less frequently in Polish films. Helena Růžičková, the screenwriter and leading actress of *Trhala fialky dynamitem* (She Picked Violets with Dynamite, dir. Milan Růžička, 1992), one of the first films to thematize private business in Czechoslovakia, claimed: “We wanted to show how many people have literally gone crazy for doing business at any cost. If you do something you don’t have the skills for, you have to go bankrupt in the end.” Perhaps this unenthusiastic message in relation to the free market was tied to the rather haphazard funding mechanisms that reigned in the Czech and Slovak film industries. The fate of sponsors who decided to invest in film could at times be reminiscent of the “controversial entrepreneurs”—as the contemporary catchphrase had it—who populated transformation films. Filmmakers in all three cinemas developed an
easily recognizable visual code to distinguish business people recruited from the underworld: former black marketeers wore their hair slicked back, golden chains and colourful open-necked shirts; mafia bosses donned red or purple blazers with square shoulder pads as a shorthand for power. Rudolf Hošna, who funded Trhala fialky, fully embodied this stereotype of the unrestrained 1990s, living the highlife in an opulent villa; not all of his businesses, ranging from textiles to car sales, however, adhered to legal norms and he was eventually sentenced for embezzlement in 2004.24

Unlike Hošna, the small business people in Trhala fialky display little competence in accumulating capital. The Karafiát family decide to open a travel agency and set out to Paris in order to bring French tourists to Czechoslovakia. Generally regarded as one of the worst films in the history of Czechoslovak cinema by reviewers,25 the screenplay suffers from many logical gaps. One of them is that although the film’s protagonists adopt the new language of business, using phrases such as “The customer is always right” or “Business is business, the laws of economics are relentless,” these are only a caricature that bear no consequences on their actual business practice (if their chaotic efforts to get their clients to Czechoslovakia in their ramshackle bus can be called that).

Trhala fialky attempted to satirize the new realities. In a similar vein, Zdeněk Troška’s Slunce, seno, erotika (Sun, Hay and Eroticism, 1991) was among the first films to poke fun at enterprising “ordinary” Czechs with a story of villagers attempting to do business with an Italian farm. Both Trhala fialky and Slunce, seno were comedies that capitalized on plebeian, often vulgar humour, provoking scathing reviews from critics and simultaneously attracting large audiences.26 The films mine jokes from the ineptness of their provincial characters at doing business. The protagonists display a grovelling deference towards their Western business partners or customers, while at the same time betraying a deep-seated conviction that their culture and traditions are in fact superior (as embodied for instance in the disgust of villagers in Slunce, seno upon encountering seafood for the first time in Italy). Unlike the characters in Polish films, these pioneering business people possess no kind of capital whatsoever and their enterprises are doomed to failure, as Růžičková suggested above. These films are thus not concerned with building a new middle class; taking place in rural settings, their underlying critique is that the fruits of the transformation are not readily available to “ordinary” people and the working classes.

One reason for the discrepancy between the Czechoslovak and Polish cases relates to cultural continuities. Just as the characters are not particularly apt at using the language of capitalism, filmmakers did not employ novel cinematic language to tell these tales. Both films are variations on the popular socialist genre of communal satire (komunální satira), a type of comedy that poked fun at low-level officials and social customs but never rose to systemic critique.27 They are thus rather demonstrative of the survival of the modes of representation of socialist-era cinema, applying new content to well-tested forms. In terms of the approaches employed by
these filmmakers to portray contemporary realities, 1989 does not represent a major
cultural turn, evident already from the fact that Troška’s Slunce, seno was the third
sequel to two previous films produced during the 1980s, set in the same village and
populated by the same characters.

Comedic observation of the everyday dilemmas of ordinary people could consti-
tute successful satire during late socialism, where humour could function as a form
of mild criticism. But satire in a period of tumultuous social change was less likely
to achieve success, as this mode requires a certain amount of sedimentation and
needs to aim at something recognizable. As media scholar Jan Jirák summarized in
an interview, satire was also difficult for political reasons in the nascent democracy.
Political elites constantly repeated that “whoever criticizes the present wants to
return to the old order.”28 This may also account to an extent for the diverging critical
and popular reception of films like Trhala fialky and Slunce, seno: reviewers, as part
of the cultural elite, were more likely to participate in the prevailing anticomunist
discourse of dismissing all criticism of the new order as dangerous communist revi-
sonism, even though the films’ critique was not aimed at condemning the free mar-
ket as such, but rather the inability of Czechs to adapt to it.

Viewing the new business boom with suspicion was a staple of Czech cinema of
the period. One of the most popular early transformation films, Konec básníků v Čechách (The End of Poets in Bohemia, dir. Dušan Klein, 1993), second only to
Jurassic Park in terms of audience figures in 1993, suggested through the eyes of a
jobless medical doctor unwilling to work in the private sector that making money
from other people’s ignorance is unethical. The creators of Konec básníků, as well as
a number of other Czech films of the period, ask their audiences to sympathize not
with entrepreneurs, but rather those whose honesty or incompetence prevents them
from taking advantage of the free market. Perhaps the only highly popular represen-
tation of the early 1990s that embraced the neoliberal narrative of working oneself up
through a savvy use of different types of capital was Kamarád do deště II—Příběh z Brookylnu (Brooklyn Story, dir. Jaroslav Soukup, 1992), a sequel to a popular 1988
film about a waiter and taxi driver and their brush with the underworld; in the new
market conditions, their business efforts are thwarted by a gangster called Kadlec.
The film suggests that honest efforts will get you nowhere in the world of business;
the heroes have to come up with their own ruse to get rid of Kadlec.

Passive Agents of the Transformation

The portrayal of individual enterprise in Czech cinema of the first half of the
1990s is in fact quite rare. The cinema of the period developed a whole sub-genre
of “privatization” or “restitution” comedies, which, as the name suggests, were
about gaining previously state-owned property—one of the key transformation
mechanisms that played a larger role in Czechoslovakia than Poland and necessarily
captured the imagination of filmmakers. In these films, the restitution of property into private hands often functions as a *deus ex machina* device that catches its beneficiaries by surprise. Czechs are thus often portrayed as passive agents of the transformation, who haplessly squander the property they have unexpectedly gained, quite unlike the self-made man myth popular from Western representations and indeed Polish cinema of the period. Typical for this sub-genre is its inaugural film, *Dědictví aneb kurykohosigutntag* (The Inheritence, 1992), directed by acclaimed Czechoslovak New Wave director Věra Chytilová. The film is a tale of village bumpkin Bohuš, who is unexpectedly visited by a lawyer informing him he has inherited a substantial amount of property. Bohuš’s first instinct is to ostentatiously display his new wealth: he pays for all his friends at the pub, invites them to a fancy restaurant, arranges for his neighbour to visit a brothel, hires a prostitute to come and live with him, builds a pool in his backyard—all of this, in contrast to the enterprising Dorota Waltz, without adopting any of the visual symbols of his new status that would suggest he possesses sufficient cultural capital to effectively manage his financial assets. He spends most of the film in his well-worn tracksuit bottoms and beret.

As an established director with an extensive back catalogue, similarly to Falk, Chytilová approached the transformation with the same moral lens as the material of her previous films. *Dědictví* is a morality story, warning of the temptations of money: Bohuš can buy all the material goods he wants, but of course, he cannot buy happiness or love. The film satirizes one of the common rhetorical manoeuvres of the transformation where freedom and democracy were used interchangeably, all the while referring first and foremost to the freedom of the market. Bohuš achieves financial freedom, but immediately uses it as a tool to curtail the freedom of others, believing that his financial status grants him the right to terrorize them into fulfilling his whims, justifying his actions with the words “We have democracy, don’t we?” Like a number of Chytilová’s previous films, the moral judgement of the film is applied primarily to people’s everyday interactions in their communities (a form of communal satire, even if rather biting) and satirizes small abuses of power. The film thus performs a type of critique that Michał Piepiórka noticed also amongst Polish transformation films: the functioning of the characters on the free market and their failings are not understood as stemming from the inherent inequalities of capitalist economies, but from the moral failures of individuals. The critique expressed by such films was thus not systemic, but rather applied the same toolkit as late socialist cinema, with its criticism of everyday power relations and moral judgement of individual behaviour. The free market is accepted as a matter of fact; characters are then judged on their ability to adapt to the new rules.

While from today’s point of view transformation films can act as a memory medium for the image of the “wild 1990s” (*divoká devadesátá*) as the widely used Czech phrase has it, when regulations did not exist and anything was possible, in fact, popular Czech films of the period were at odds with the efforts of politicians and the media to portray entrepreneurs as the creators of values and the motor of the
The same plot scheme as that employed by Chytilová was used also in *Hotel in the Heart of Europe* (dir. Milan Růžička, 1993) and *An Even Bigger Fool Than We Hoped For* (dir. Vít Olmer, 1994), both of which dealt with equally naïve male characters who inherit a fortune, in both cases a hotel. In both cases, the main protagonists come from the ranks of the intelligentsia, and their complete mismanagement of their business efforts suggests—much like Falk’s sociologist in *Kapital*—that the types of capital they possess are inadequate for the hustle of private business. As film critic Kamil Fila remarks, restitution comedies all followed a similar scheme that pitted a “Czech fool” against a “pimp” or “black-marketeteering crook” (*vekslácký šíbr*). The bottom line is that the latter are better equipped to prosper in the new reality.

Restitution comedies reinforced the notion that capitalism is dysfunctional, a system that privileges those who disregard honesty and adherence to legal norms. They were thus far from building a horizon of expectation in which anyone who puts in a little effort can succeed on the free market. Czech cinema rather fed the already mentioned popular opinion that regarded entrepreneurs with suspicion, or at least their ability to earn significant amounts of money without resorting to illegal means.

### Honest Bandits and Evil Businessmen

If restitution comedies formed a distinctive sub-genre that nevertheless evinced continuities with late socialist cinema, the rise of the gangster movie in Poland presented a more evident break with previous film production. Although sensational Hollywood productions were attracting the largest crowds to cinemas during this period, Czechoslovak filmmakers lacked the financial means to emulate high-budget Hollywood storytelling. Vít Olmer’s *Nudity for Sale* (1993), advertised as the “first Czech action movie” is today seen as a paradigm of 1990s exploitation cinema that made use of all the unsavoury and shocking “props” of the times, such as prostitution, racist violence, and corruption. Contemporary Czech critics, who largely rejected Olmer’s film, quoted Władysław Pasikowski’s *Pigs* (Pigs, 1992) as an example of an action movie set in post-communist realities that does not unnecessarily pander to American models.

The greater continued role of the state in film production in the 1990s must be seen as a contributing factor that made the domestication of the action movie possible in Poland as opposed to the Czech Republic or Slovakia. As film scholar Ewa Gębicka writes about the Polish situation, “from the beginning of the transformation, nobody questioned the necessity of the state to subsidise cinema.” Even with the entry of a substantial number of private companies onto the film market, several state-run film studios, which emerged directly from the communist-era system of film units (*zespoły filmowe*), continued their work in the new circumstances. Especially when it comes to commercial, audience-oriented cinema, the film studio Zebra under the direction of
Juliusz Machulski, which also produced *Psy*, was an important institutional actor within the Polish film industry. Although the precise relationship between the institutional and financial circumstances of the Polish, Czech and Slovak film industries and the types of film produced would require further investigation, the greater institutional continuity as opposed to the unstable financial conditions of Czech and Slovak film industries forcing filmmakers towards low-budget productions, placed Polish film production in a better position to attempt visually spectacular genre pieces. *Psy* was the most commercially successful film of the first half of the 1990s in Poland that inaugurated a whole sub-genre of so-called bandit cinema.

Despite the novelty *Psy* presented with its violence, iconoclasm, and skilled appropriation of the gangster movie, like many transformation films, it, too, was a morality story, though one that rose above the communal character of many Czech and Slovak films, offering a damning picture of the highest echelons of power. Entrepreneurs and politicians come out scathingly in bandit cinema as corrupt and immoral, while, as Marcin Adamczak observes, “ordinary” gangsters or hitmen turn out to be more honest, likeable, and not devoid of a code of honour. Such a seeming critique stemmed perhaps less from filmmakers’ desire to comment on social realities than it did from the genre conventions of the gangster movie. But one postcommunist detail did add to the force of this particular message: negative business characters were often portrayed as having been high up in the communist hierarchy—and this applies to Czech and Slovak cinema as well. The underlying message is essentially anticommunist, suggesting that former communist forces are jeopardizing nascent capitalism.

Despite its focus on characters who do not abide by the law, bandit cinema, philosopher Andrzej Leder claims, is still inherently aimed at structuring a middle-class imagination. “A good crime story is a paean to individualism and entrepreneurship,” Leder argues—each protagonist displays primarily self-interest in enlarging his or her own fortune, power and influence. The ideology of bandit cinema is ridden with contradictions: while all principal characters operate beyond the law, audiences are asked to sympathise with those who cunningly “play the system.” What differentiates evil businessmen from “honest” bandits is their presumably innate moral compass that ultimately leads them to act for the higher good, if all the time furthering their own interest. The genre created a fictional universe where enterprise (whether in the form of business, or more generally as advancing one’s personal interest) is inextricably linked to criminality and where the law and institutions have essentially failed to provide any kind of safety and stability; it is only atomized individuals who uphold the moral fabric of society. In this sense, bandit cinema chimed with (neo) liberal messages of individual responsibility that accompanied the transformation towards a free market economy.

Bandit cinema is significant for revealing another central trope of the period. The ideology of the transformation was mainly directed towards men. Statistics show that men clearly outnumbered female entrepreneurs, and bandit cinema, too, was
dominated by male heroes. Indeed, transformation cinema as a whole typically portrayed men as beneficiaries of privatization measures or as active entrepreneurs or bandits, with women playing secondary roles. If *Lepiej być piękną i bogatą* was one of the few films to show an enterprising woman who achieves success, Juraj Jakubisko’s similarly titled *Lepšie byť bohatý a zdravý ako chudobný a chorý* (*It’s Better to Be Wealthy and Healthy Than Poor and Ill*, 1992) also presented female protagonists trying to find their way in the new realities, though with mixed results. One of the few Slovak films to approach contemporary topics, the picture offers a more complex reckoning with the introduction of the free market than the Czech communal satires. But the opportunities available to women, the film suggests, were limited. The only way they can get ahead is to exploit their bodies for profit. Initially, the two heroines Nona and Ester stumble through their early capitalist surroundings trying to sell whatever comes their way—butter, video cameras, but also erotic photographs and ultimately their own bodies, a trope repeated in many Czech and Slovak films of the period.

As film scholars have remarked, women who display too much initiative are often punished in commercial cinema for transgressing their perceived female role, and Czech(oslovak) cinema was no exception. In this aspect, practically all Czech and Slovak films of the era are equally damning in their vision of the agency available to women in free market conditions. Polish cinema fared slightly better in this regard, modelling enterprising females such as housewife-turned successful corporate employee in *Komedia małżeńska* (*Marriage Comedy*, dir. Roman Załuski, 1993) and the female CEO of a prospering advertising agency in *Dzieci i ryby* (*Children and Fish*, dir. Jacek Bromski, 1996), perhaps because filmmakers could draw inspiration from an already existing cannon of strong female characters especially from the era of the cinema of moral anxiety.

**The Late 1990s**

By the end of the decade, the visually attractive symbols of early capitalism had been depleted on the silver screen. Around the middle of the decade, Szczęśniak argues, both public discourse and popular culture began turning away from the entrepreneur as the central economic role model of the new system, and instead, with the entry of more international corporations onto the Polish market, it is the corporate manager who becomes emblematic of the new middle class. Andrej Halada made an analogous observation in the context of Czech film. “Typical commercial cinema, which showed to a heightened extent topical phenomena of the day, all but disappeared by the mid-1990s. Restitutions had ended, private enterprise had become a normal part of everyday life, travel abroad or a confrontation with the world were common practice. . . . Today it would be hard to find such a connecting topic as the explosion of private enterprise,” he wrote in 1997.
By the late 1990s, transformation cinema had created a symbolically rich self-referential world, where subsequent representations referred not so much to actual realities as to previous images that had shaped an enduring picture of the early years of capitalism. A pertinent example is the Slovak film *Rivers of Babylon* (dir. Vlado Balco, 1998), based on the eponymous bestselling novel by Peter Pištánek, which details the unscrupulous rise of vulgar villager Rács from stoker in a Bratislava hotel to becoming the hotel’s owner. Symptomatically, one reviewer remarked that the characters that populate this story—prostitutes, black marketeers, pimps, porn producers, bodyguards, former secret police officers, the nouveau riche—refer not to the world of post-1989 Bratislava, but to the world of post-1989 cinema. The comment reveals how cinema was successful in constructing a self-referential mythology of early capitalism as a world in which playing by the rules did not count. Similarly, in Poland, the hit comedy *Kiler* (dir. Juliusz Machulski, 1997) symbolically closed the wave of bandit cinema by consciously parodying some of the key scenes, characters, and visual symbols of this sub-genre.

Scholars tend to agree that Krzysztof Krauze’s *Dług* (The Debt, 1999) offers a conclusion to the wave of transformation cinema. The critically acclaimed film presents a departure from the early Polish transformation films that portrayed doing business as a matter of course, something that practically anyone could achieve if they put some effort into it. It also offers a more sophisticated critique of the possibilities of succeeding on the free market than bandit cinema, which cast the blame on formerly communist mafia structures. The promise of the transformation to create a middle class accessible to all was false, the film suggests. The two protagonists, friends Adam and Stefan, come from good family backgrounds; one of them is well connected thanks to his father. They do not lack the social and cultural capital that the early films of the transformation suggested was necessary for doing business. They do, however, lack financial capital, and unlike earlier films where money seemed to materialize as a matter of course, the main obstacle to Adam and Stefan’s business venture of selling Italian scooters is lack of an initial investment. They eventually borrow money from Stefan’s acquaintance Gerard, who charges more and more extortionate interest on their “debt” to him.

As Piepiórka has observed, the film demystifies the figure of the young entrepreneur whose road to success seems guaranteed, but on the other hand, it does not dispense with the central characteristic of transformation cinema, an intensely moral stance. The film’s plot was based on a true story and although the filmmakers presented a clear critique of the possibilities of doing business with honest intentions in contemporary Poland, they do not judge capitalism “on an economic or social basis, but on a moral one,” condemning Gerard for abusing his position of moneylender and justifying the heroes’ ultimate murder of him. In this sense, not even late transformation cinema found a language to present a critique of the economic transformation or the functioning of the free market, but only the specific flaws of individuals. Despite attempts to prod the dark underside of the nascent capitalism, ultimately,
filmmakers interiorized the individualistic postulate that each person is responsible only for his or her own success or failure.

**Conclusion**

Commercial cinema of the 1990s serves as an archive of the early messages cultural producers sent in relation to building a free market economy, at times affirmative and at other times suspicious of the ideology of the transformation, and illustrates how these developed over the course of the decade. Despite the relative similarities of the Polish and Czech(oslovak) path to capitalism, the cinemas of these countries expose different expectations of the economic changes, especially when it comes to class formation and the promises offered by the free market.

Returning to the initial question posed by this enquiry of how the Polish literature can be applied to the Czechoslovak case, much of the Polish writing on the cinema of the period focuses on the building of the middle class and representations of this process. Scholars and critics underline cinema’s didactic nature in this regard, modelling the new class of entrepreneurial citizens. Films such as *Kapitał*, *Mów mi Rockefeller*, *Lepiej być piękną i bogatą*, *Młode wilki*, and others did indeed compound the ideological tenet of the transformation of working oneself up through one’s own efforts. Filmmakers thus contributed to modelling for Polish audiences what anthropologists have termed the “enterprising self,” who interiorizes flexibility and individual responsibility, having discarded the obstacles posed by a “socialist mindset.” That these images presented an ideal to strive for rather than an exploration of the actual state of affairs is also evident from the fact, as Piepiórka observes, that pressing problems such as unemployment and closing factories rarely made it onto the silver screen.

In this regard, the Polish literature is surprisingly ill fitted to the Czech and Slovak situation. Czechoslovak, and later Czech and Slovak, cinema displayed relatively little preoccupation with structuring the aspirations of the middle class and rather evinced continuities with late socialist cinema and its satire of everyday interactions. The early comedies of the 1990s were either focused on working people in rural settings, or on characters who despite inheriting property were completely maladapted to joining the new class of business people. Explanations need to be sought in the economic histories of both countries; unlike Poland, Czechoslovakia lacked the historical continuity of small business owners that could easily be turned into the figure of the new entrepreneur in representations; instead, filmmakers primarily cast former informal economy actors as post-89 business people.

The material conditions in which the film industries in these countries operated also cannot be ignored. Czech, and even more so Slovak, filmmakers of the 1990s were working in a climate of greater financial insecurity than their Polish counterparts, who had access to more state support. It is thus not surprising their representations
embraced the possibilities offered by the free market less wholeheartedly than Polish ones. A fact that seems to speak in favour of such an interpretation is that television production, with a more stable financing model (especially when it comes to public TV) in the Czech Republic produced representations that like the early Polish films openly fulfilled the function of “textbooks of capitalism,” modelling typical characters of the new middle class. Emblematic of such efforts is the series Život na zámku (Life in the Palace, Czech Television, dir. Jaroslav Hanuš, 1995–1999), which details how the family of a dentist learns to manage property after inheriting a palace. Nevertheless, the connection between the model of financing of the film industry and the attitudes towards the economic transformation in cinema would, admittedly, warrant further enquiry beyond the scope of this article.

The initial group of affirmative Polish films of the transformation suggested to their audiences that adopting the language of the new neoliberal order will bear fruit. Perhaps more important than the use of actual linguistic terms, however, was also a new visual symbolism designed to convey the possession of not only financial but also cultural and social capital allowing their bearers to successfully manage their assets. It is this combination of different types of capital that Czech and Slovak characters are shown as lacking. Instead, they continue to be impostors of the new era. Even Rács in Rivers of Babylon, whose ruthless rise from oafish villager to owner of a hotel imperium and political career suggests a straightforward success story, presents a not-so-veiled critique of Slovak political elites’ lack of cultural capital—a move that brought the film a controversial reception.

Czech and Slovak cinema offered few role models, rather curbing than encouraging aspirations of economic success for ordinary people. The latter are portrayed as somewhat helpless in the face of the free market, unlike essentially capable Polish heroes. Yet the critique offered by transformation cinema in all three national contexts is not aimed at the system, but at individuals—in this sense, despite the possibility of uncensored expression, transformation cinema did not necessarily move beyond the types of criticism present already in late socialist cinema. Characters in 1990s films are blamed for lacking the adequate capital, for remaining mentally in the past, for choosing to disregard honesty, for trying too hard to get ahead (especially women), or for making money from their immoral communist-era connections, an obligatory anticommunist critique so prevalent at the time. As such, transformation cinema was a key cultural product for strengthening a free-market imagination in transforming postcommunist societies, where individual responsibility and the fundamental value of accumulating capital are rarely questioned.

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Notes

1. See, e.g., M. Piepiórka, *Rockefellerowie i Marks nad Warszawą. Polskie filmy fabularne wobec transformacji gospodarczej* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2019); M. Szczęśniak, *Normy widzialności: Tożsamość w czasach transformacji* (Warszawa: Fundacja Nowej Kultury Bęc Zmiana, 2016); K. Puto, *Film jako “chłopiec z Marriotta.” Ideologia kina polskiej transformacji* (1987–2005) (MA thesis, Jagiellonian University, 2016); E. Mazierska, *Polish Postcommunist Cinema: From Pavement Level* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007); M. Adamczak, *Globalne Hollywood, filmowa Europa i polskie kino po 1989 roku* (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2010); M. Radkiewicz, “Młode wilki” polskiego kina: Kategoria gender a debiuty lat 90. (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2006); D. Mazur and P. Zwinzewski, eds., *Polskie kino popularne* (Bydgoszcz: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Kazimiera Wielkiego, 2011); A. Wiśniewska and P. Marecki, eds., *Kino polskie 1989-2009: Historia krytyczna* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2010).

2. See e.g., Gębicka, *Między państwowym mecenatem a rynkiem: Polska kinematografia po 1989 roku w kontekście transformacji ustrojowej* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2006), 33.

3. See M. Ferro, *Cinema and History*, trans. Naomi Greene (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1988) (first published 1976); A. Aldgate, *Cinema and History: British Newsreels and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Scolar Press, 1979); A. Aldgate and J. Richards, *Best of British Cinema and Society 1930–1970* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

4. G. Fantoni, “Film and History: a Very Long Engagement. A Survey of the Literature Concerning the Use of Cinematic Texts in Historical Research,” in *Film, History and Memory*, ed. Fearghal McGarry and Jennie Carlsten (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 18.

5. Szczęśniak, *Normy widzialności*, 35.

6. Piepiórka, *Rockefellerowie i Marks nad Warszawą*, 17.

7. V. Kaláb, “Je česká privatizace jen souhrnem skandálů?,” in *Co se stane, když se zhasne? Dvě podoby české privatizace*, ed. Petr Holub et al., 113–122 (Prague: Prostor, 2004), 114; M. Kopeček and V. Rameš, “Od socialistické teorie řízení k neoliberálnímu manažerismu,” in *Architekti dlouhé změny: Expertní koreny postsocialismu v Československu*, ed. M. Kopeček, 155–84 (Prague: Argo, 2019), 173.

8. M. Skála, Počátky drobného podnikání a privatizace v době ekonomické transformace 1990-1997 (MA thesis, Charles University, 2017).

9. V. Macek and H. Paštěková, *Dejiny slovenskej kinematografie* (Martin: Osveta, 1997).

10. Szczęśniak, *Normy widzialności*, 107.

11. Ibid., 44.

12. H. Dołanski, “Nowe identyfikacje klasowe i nowe podziały społeczne,” in *Zmiana społeczna: Teorie i doświadczenia polskie*, ed. J. Kurczewska, 157–85 (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 1999), 166.

13. See, e.g., G. Eyal, I. Szelenyi, and E. Townsley, *Making Capitalism without Capitalists: Class Formation and Elite Struggles in Post-Communist Central Europe* (London: Verso, 1998); G. Skapska, “O zasobach indywidualnych, społecznych oraz kulturowych w procesie tworzenia kapitalistycznej gospodarki,” in *Buddenbrookowie czy piraci. Polscy przedsiębiorcy okresu głębokich przemian*, ed. G. Skapska (Cracow: Universitas, 2002), 13–34; I. Szelenyi, *The Rise of Managerialism: The “New Class” after the Fall of Communism* (Budapest: Collegium Budapest Discussion Papers No. 16, 1995), 1.

14. L. Kalinová, *Konec nadějím a nová očekávání: K dějinám české společnosti 1969-1993* (Praha: Academia, 2012), 365; see also Kopeček and Rameš, “Od socialistické teorie řízení k neoliberálnímu manažerismu,” 155–84; T. Vilímek, “Podnikový management v Československu: Od socialismu ke
Kapitalismu," in Architekti dlouhé změny: Expertní kořeny postsocialismu v Československu, ed. M. Kopeček (Praha: Argo, 2019), 103–54.
15. J. Majmurek, "Ideaologia polskiej transformacji," in Straccone szanse? Bilans transformacji 1989-2009, ed. J. Majmurek and P. Szumlewicz, 119–45 (Warsaw: Difin, 2009), 129.
16. Aleksandra, "Mały podręcznik przedsiębiorczości. . .," Przekrój, 1 July 1990.
17. See J. Gardawski, "Przedsiębiorcy: beneficjenci czy przegrywający?," in Manowce polskiej prywatyzacji, ed. M. Jarosz, 110–29 (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2001) 113; E. Kubů, "Obraz czeské transformace v zrcadle sociologického výzkumu," Historická sociologie 1 (2011): 41–62, 55; T. Czekalski, "Czasy współczesne," in Obyczaje w Polsce: Od średniowiecza do czasów współczesnych, ed. Andrej Chvalba (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2006), 340–426. Even entrepreneurs themselves in sociological interviews confirmed that they felt compelled by the legal system to resort to illegal means, see G. Skąpska, "Kultura prawna w procesie tworzenia wolnej gospodarki," in Buddenbrookowie czy piraci. Polscy przedsiębiorcy okresu głębokich przemian, ed. G. Skąpska, 97–128 (Kraków: Uniwersitas, 2002), 120–21. Czech sociological research found that in the first half of the 1990s, many people believed wealth could only be gained in "dishonest" ways; see J. Večerník and P. Matějů, Zpráva o vývoji české společnosti 1989-1998 (Prague: Academia, 1998), 81.
18. T. Sobolewski, "Bajka dla zmęczonego," Gazeta Wyborcza, 26 October 1993.
19. Szczesiak, Normy widzialności, 138.
20. Radkiewicz, "Mode wilki" polskiego kina, 75.
21. For more on the Slovak case, see K. Morvay et al., Transformácia ekonomiky: skúsenosti Slovenska (Bratislava: Ústav slovenskej a svetovej ekonomiky SAV, 2005).
22. V. Mišková, "Jak Růžičkovi trhají fialky dynamitem," Rudé právo, 20 November 1992, 12.
23. J. Večerník, Czech Society in the 2000s: A Report on Socio-economic Policies and Structures (Prague: Academia, 2009), 223.
24. For more on Hošná’s biography, see J. Soukupová, “Tady je Hošnovo! Tedy bylo,” idnes.cz, 6 July 2010, https://www.idnes.cz/bne/zpravy/tady-je-hosnovo-tedy-bylo.a100601_1394210_bne-zpravy_dmk (accessed 27 March 2020).
25. A. Halada, Český film devadesátých let. Od Tankového praporu ke Koljovi (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 1997), 86.
26. Slunce, seno, erotika was seen by almost half a million viewers in cinemas in 1992; figures for 1991 are not available. Trhala fialky dynamitem was seen by more than half a million viewers in 1992 and another 240,000 the following year. Both have also been frequently repeated on television. All Czech audience figures are taken from Filmová ročenka (Film Yearbook), published by the National Film Archive.
27. The term originated with the satire of the early communist period in Czechoslovakia, to describe a ‘safe’ mode of permitted humour; it has since been frequently applied to late socialist comedies by film critics. See P. Janoušek et al., Dějiny české literatury II. 1948-1958 (Prague: Academia, 2007), 410–20.
28. V. Maňák, "Dobrá satira kritizuje nedotknutelné, ale to čeští politici nejsou, říká teoretik médií," ct24.cz, 21 December 2017, https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/kultura/2334595-dobra-satira-kritizuje-nedotknutelné-ale-cesti-politici-nejsou-rika-teoretik-medi (accessed 2 April 2020).
29. Piepiórka, Rockefellerowie i Marks nad Warszawą, 319–22.
30. A memory regime promoted, for instance, by various illustrated coffee table publications such as D. Radovanovič, ed, Svobodná a dívoká 90. léta: příběhy z doby, kdy bylo možné téměř vše (Prague: Radioservis, 2017); I. Motýl, ed., Taková byla 90. léta: obrazy z poslední dekády 20. století (Prague: Empress Media, 2016).
31. As documented by both Czech and Polish sociologists. See, e.g., B. Glinka, Kulturowe uwarunkowania przedsiębiorczości w Polsce (Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 2008), 98; S. Holubec, Ještě nejsme za vodou: Obrazy druhých a historická paměť v období postkomunistické transformace (Praha: Nakladatelství Scriptorium, 2015), 102.
32. K. Fila, “Privatizační, restituční a prostituci komedie devadesátých let,” Cinepur 29 (2020): 71–77, 76.
33. See Z. A. Tichý, “Nahota na prodej,” *Reflex*, 13 (1993), 25; Vladimír Wolhöfner, “Nahota na prodej,” *Český deník*, 4 February 1993, 10.
34. Gębicka, *Między państwowym mecenatem a rynkiem*, 58.
35. For a concise summary of the changes in the Polish film industry, see Mazierska, *Polish Postcommunist Cinema*, 25–40.
36. Adamczak, Globalne Hollywood, 286.
37. A. Leder, “Lata 90.: Co symbolizowały ‘Psy,’” *Dwutygodnik* 58, no. 6 (2011), https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/2273-lata-90-co-symbolizowały-psy.html (accessed 2 April 2020).
38. In 1999, almost 80 percent of business owners were men in Poland. See Gardawski, “Przedsiębiorcy,” 112. A 1997 sociological survey showed that men constituted 62 percent of entrepreneurs in Czech Republic; see Večerník and Matějů, *Zpráva o vývoji české společnosti*, 85.
39. See, e.g., A. Kuhn, *Women’s Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* (London: Verso, 1994), esp. 21–41.
40. See E. Mazierska, “Heroines of Polish Cinema,” *Kinema: A Journal for Film and Audiovisual Media* (Spring 2002), https://openjournals.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/kinema/article/view/994 (accessed 8 April 2020).
41. Halada, *Český film devadesátých let*, 89.
42. H. Herbychová, “Uzurpátor Bohem,” *Večerník Praha*, 21 August 1998, 29.
43. Piepiórka, *Rockefellerowie i Marks nad Warszawą*, 303.
44. See N. Makovicky, “Me, Inc.? Untangling Neoliberalism, Personhood, and Postsocialism,” in *Neoliberalism, Personhood, and Postsocialism: Enterprising Selves in Changing Economies*, ed. N. Makovicky (Farnham: ashgate, 2014), 1–16.
45. For further analysis of this trope, see Puto, *Film jako “chłopiec z Marriotta,”* esp. 39–56.
46. Piepiórka, *Rockefellerowie i Marks nad Warszawą*, 41.
47. M. Spáčilová, “Slováci mají svůj politický film, kontroverzní komedii Rivers of Babylon,” *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 4 June 1998, 18.

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