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## Tourism and film in the Polish People's Republic in the 1950s

### Keywords

Cultural tourism, film tourism, Poland, Czechoslovakia

### Abstract

The article considers the relationship between film and tourism in the initial period of the Polish People's Republic (PPR). It puts forward the question about the possibility of applying the concept of film tourism (*film-induced tourism*) to research into the relationship of the cinematographic industry and tourism in Poland in the 1950s. The presented argument assumes that considerations in this field should rely on textual analyses, extended by reception of supplementary materials. Research into the phenomenon of the relationship between film and tourism requires understanding the realities of how the tourism industry functions, hence the article also discusses the key problems associated with the growth of tourism in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s. The proposed research approach is illustrated by a discussion of the film-tourism relationship on the example of the first post-war Polish-Czechoslovakian co-production entitled *What Will My Wife Say to This?* (*Co řekne řena/Zadzwońcie do mojej żony*, 1958, by Jaroslav Mach). The text considers the role the film was given in the process of building positive meanings associated with Poland as a tourist destination, and how these associations were constructed.

And if not all Czechs can come to the Vistula  
– at least let them by the Vltava  
watch Poland on film.

*G. Dubowski, review of the film What Will My Wife Say to This?*

Film tourism, until recently considered a tourist niche and mentioned in the same breath as military, space or diving tourism, is currently one of the fastest growing branches of cultural tourism and has a significant impact on mainstream tourism [Faber, Tomala, 2011, p. 148-158]. Film tourism, also called *film-induced tourism*, is not just visiting locations portrayed in films or on television (*on-location tourism*). The term also includes such phenomena as travelling to sites linked with film stars, film studio tours and theme parks, or tracing the footsteps of film protagonists (*off-location tourism*) [Beeton, 2016]. As shown by the work of Stefan Roesch [Roesch, 2009], some of the more important activities undertaken by a tourist inspired by film are trips to places where a film has been made – in his book, he accompanies tourists following the footsteps of their favourite films. The most popular among tourists are the locations and attractions connected with strong film brands, such as the Tolkien's universe, Star Wars, Harry Potter or James Bond [Beeton, 2016]. At the same time, the visitors' interest is generated by those cities and open-air settings where many films have been, and still are, made. This explains the film tourism career of Paris, as well as the trend among Indian tourists for visiting English shooting locations, motivated by the fact that a large number of Bollywood films are made in the UK [Tanskanen, 2012, p. 44-51].

It is significant in the context of film tourism that the plot of the films which serve its propagation is not always affirmative in terms of the illustrated events, places, and spaces. In the case of *What Will My Wife Say to This?* this image is largely positive (excluding satire targeting the bureaucracy and imperfections of life under socialism), but we can point to

examples where the promotional effect is achieved despite, or against the meaning contained directly in the story. Promoting Łódź as a tourist destination with the help of the television crime series *Commissioner Alex* (*Komisarz Alex*, 2011-2016), depicting Łódź as a city of crime and misdemeanour (albeit detectable, and for which villains receive well-deserved punishment) may not seem like a sound idea. However, there are plenty of examples showing that crime, violence and murder are great fuel for tourism. A case in point is the staggering career of Albuquerque, New Mexico, promoted by the series *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013), whose story centres on drug trafficking, or the interest generated by tourism products such as *Grave Line Tours* or *Oh Heavenly Tour*, retracing famous murders, both real and film or gaming ones [Tzanelli, Yar, 2014, p. 9].

Interest in the links between the tourism industry and the film industry has recently been providing inspiration to researchers seeking answers to the question about economic and symbolic legitimacy of film tourism [Ciszewska, 2016a]. We can observe a coupling between theory and practice: tourism and film industry entities, recognising the economic potential of film-inspired tourism, support scientific practices aiming to explore and describe the phenomenon as well as possible. Knowledge which would make it possible to determine the impact of film on the development of tourist traffic – mainly case studies and quantitative research – is produced to order<sup>1</sup> as a result of direct demand. In fact, most of the discussions available so far have been cultural analyses (text and context), whose authors have pointed to the indirect evidence showing that the tourist traffic has increased – for instance a greater number of tourist offers dedicated to this product [Tzanelli, 2014] or visit results for a museum presenting a film-related exhibition [Tzanelli, Yar 2014]. However, there has been – and still is – a lack of reliable research reflecting the impact of film and practices related to film consumption on the growth of tourist traffic. One of the few exceptions is an in-depth study prepared by the agency Olsberg/SPI in 2007, commissioned by the UK, which contains recommendations and guidelines for the strategy to promote film-induced tourism at the national level. The issue of film tourism becomes particularly important in the context of the search for economic legitimacy of urban and regional film committees, which see the purpose of their existence in the context of boosting tourist traffic through locations presented on film.

## Film in the PPR as a tool to promote tourism

The mission of film in the Polish People's Republic (PPR) was not only to promote specific patterns of behaviour. Even then film's potential for advertising and popularising was noticed, as evidenced by a competition announced in 1953 which was supposed to select the most interesting short film with a tourism and sightseeing theme<sup>2</sup>. It was a palpable sign of an alliance between the cinema and the tourism industry. However, we do not have information allowing us to determine the motivations of tourists, or data on tourist traffic within the shooting locations. Such data – especially that concerning motivations for choosing tourist destinations – is difficult (and at times impossible) to obtain even today, as it is associated with the area of individual psychological predispositions and emotions playing a crucial role when choosing a travel destination.

In the context of the limitations indicated above, an analysis of film tourism issues in relation to the PPR-era cinema productions can rely on attempts to read the intentions inscribed in cultural texts, in other words to consider the extent to which the creators –

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<sup>1</sup>See materials created within a project subsidised from the funds of the European Regional Development Fund, EuroScreen (European Screen Destinations), carried out in 2012-2014 by European production organisations and tourist agencies. [http://www.euroscreen.org.uk/?page\\_id=132](http://www.euroscreen.org.uk/?page_id=132), 25.01.2017.

<sup>2</sup>The organisers of the competition were the Central Office of Cinematography and the Committee for Tourism. Advertisement e.g. in "Życie Literackie", 1953, no. 40, p. 11.

or the customers – saw the role of film media in promoting a given location (city, region, country) as a potential tourist destination. We can also analyse the films which contain themes of travelling, tourism and leisure activities. In both cases, it seems beneficial for the research to extend the analysis to supplementary sources: production and advertising materials as well as film reviews, which allows for a more complete reading of the intentions embedded in the text and at least partially determining the mode of receiving the work.

Further discussions will be dedicated to the links between film and tourism in the second half of the 1950s in the PPR based on the example of one film, a Polish-Czechoslovak co-production *What Will My Wife Say to This?* (Jaroslav Mach, 1958). The character and storyline of the film allow for a multi-threaded discussion of the relationship between film and tourism. Not only does the film contain tourism themes (its main character is a Czechoslovakian writer touring Poland), but also, which I will attempt to prove, it is an example of cinematographic work created with the intention of strengthening the tourism potential of Poland. As the film was the first Polish-Czechoslovakian co-production after the war, high hopes were attached to it in terms of promoting of a positive image of the brother countries [Ciszewska 2016b].

*What Will My Wife Say to This?*, unlike modern productions, often financed by tourist agencies, was not commissioned by or created in cooperation with state-owned tourist enterprises, but its subsidiary role in relation to tourism was recognised by both the audience and the critics. It also did not escape the universal attention that the nature of the work was utilitarian, aiming to show the Polish-Czechoslovakian brotherhood and the positive direction in which the development of Poland and Czechoslovakia was moving.

The intention of the production of the film was to exorcise the unappealing image of Poland as a tourist destination. It was commonly recognised that a multitude of shortcomings was hindering, or even preventing Poland from becoming an attractive holiday destination. This was clearly evidenced by the words of Kazimierz Załuski spoken in 1959, a year after the premiere of *What Will My Wife Say to This?*, at a conference dedicated to the development of tourism in Poland:

“Our airline has had a small and outdated fleet. The only international airport in the capital is a disgrace to the most modest standards. The railways are packed, the dining cars occupied by consumers of vodka. Taxis are scarce and go in the direction selected by the driver, not the customer. The means of transport are insufficient, roads are better than before 1939, but there is no service network, no accommodation, no restaurants, poor and monotonous cuisine, disastrous service in hotels, restaurants and shops, no attractions and souvenirs, filth and sloppiness, widespread lack of the most basic sanitary conditions”<sup>3</sup>.

Poland mediated in the film of Josef Mach is as distant as possible from this description. This text discusses how the film creates tourist attractions of Poland, and which of their features are brought to the fore. It attempts to read the text of the film as a promotional and advertising statement, whose overriding intention is to present Poland as a country which could be a tourist destination. The idea of showing Poland as an attractive holiday destination will be visualised through an analysis of the changes made to the script. The arguments in favour of the thesis will also be the materials produced to promote the film (stills for cinemas, information materials about the film), as well as the reactions of critics and audiences in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

A brief outline of the tourism industry in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s will be a point of reference for the reader, allowing us to capture discrepancies between the film image of places and cities in Poland and the realities of tourism organisations and the state of tourism infrastructure in Poland in the 1950s.

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<sup>3</sup>K. Załuski, *Turystyka zagraniczna (zagajenie dyskusji)*, 1959, AAN, KdsT, 293/25, p. 14, as in: P. Sowiński, *Wakacje w Polsce Ludowej. Polityka władz i ruch turystyczny (1945-1989)*, Wydawnictwo TRIO, Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa 2005, p. 153.

## Organisation of tourism in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s

Post-war years in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the field of tourism were marked by the creation of institutions involved in the organisation and operation of tourist traffic<sup>4</sup>, as well as the introduction of a new, mass model of recreation. In both countries, the promoters of tourism preferred collective trips at the expense of individual tourism. Emphasis was placed on the fact that leisure should be available to all social groups, rather than belong to an elite and exclusive sphere. Before World War II, "a wall of zloty coins turned the most beautiful sights of the country into private properties of one class"<sup>5</sup> – in the words of one journalist. In the post-war period, everyone was to have access to leisure, regardless of the size of their wallets. The importance attached to the right to rest is highlighted by the fact that the corresponding record certifying the right to a "healthy and cultural recreation to an increasing number of working people of town and country" was included in article 59 of the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic from 22 July 1952.

In Czechoslovakia, the first people to make use of organised holidays after the Second World War were prisoners of concentration camps and political prisoners. They vacationed in attractive locations such as the Bohemian Forest, the Krkonoše mountains, or the Jeseníky mountains. The stay was usually arranged in estates left behind by the exiled Sudeten Germans, in most cases adequately equipped, which allowed for their immediate use. Also in Poland, though on a smaller scale, German properties in the so-called Recovered Territories were used for tourist purposes; unfortunately, most were in a deplorable condition – mountain shelters in the Sudetes were in ruins, and their repair required great outlays [Jarosz 2003, p. 220].

Bespoke tourism, customised to individual professional or social groups, dominant in the postwar period in Czechoslovakia was not a new concept. During the period of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia<sup>6</sup>, inspired by the the Protector Reinhard Heydrich, summer vacations were made available to workers<sup>7</sup>. The idea of nature holidays and the educational character of the trips matched Heydrich's overriding intention, which was to "depoliticise the workers". The first holidays were organised before the assassination of the Protector, and continued after his death under the slogan "Reinhard Heydrich's Mission" [Čornejová 2014, p. 57-61].

In Poland, the institution whose task was to organise the leisure of the working masses was the Employee Holiday Fund. In the period just after the war, the Fund, above all, managed and supervised leisure in houses owned by other institutions and social organisations. Its own hospitality resource base was gradually created, consisting of objects handed over by various parties: an estate in Spała (from the President of the National Council), a villa district in Bielsko (from the National City Council), or post-German resorts in the regions of Poznań and Pomerania [Jarosz 2003, p. 23]. After many discussions, following the Czechoslovakian model, in 1948 the management of the Employee Holiday

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<sup>4</sup>A brief description of the structures of the state tourism institutions in Poland between 1945 and 1970 can be found in: M. Majowski, *Polska Ludowa zaprasza. Polityka turystyczna w czasach Edwarda Gierka*, Wydawnictwo TRIO, Warszawa 2008, p. 19-24.

<sup>5</sup>Włodzimierz Reczek, *Nowe drogi polskiej turystyki*, "Turystyka" 1950, no. 1 as in: D. Jarosz, *Masy pracujące przede wszystkim. Organizacja wypoczynku w Polsce 1945-1956*, Instytut Historii PAN, Akademia Świętokrzyska, Warszawa-Kielce 2003, p. 215.

<sup>6</sup>A protectorate of Nazi Germany established following the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, lasted in the years 1939-1945.

<sup>7</sup>The idea of organised tourism addressed mainly to workers was an important element of the social policy in Nazi Germany. One example of its implementation was supposed to be the gigantic holiday complex Prora on the island of Rügen, able to receive twenty thousand tourists at a time. The Second World War has thwarted the completion of these plans, and unfinished buildings on the island of Rügen are still there today - a 400-bed hostel has recently opened in one of them. A. Čornejová, *Dovolená s poukazem. Odborové rekreace v Československu 1948-1968*, Academia, Praha 2014, p. 43-53.

Fund was entrusted to unions, and more specifically – the Central Committee of Trade Unions (KCZZ). The Fund began – not without conflicts – to take over holiday homes from institutions and trade unions. The Fund's largest competitor was the Polish travel agency Orbis, which had its own tourist base. The infrastructure was therefore owned partly by Orbis, and partly by the Employee Holiday Fund and individual trade unions. To sum up, Orbis operated on a commercial basis, while the Fund dealt with the needs of mass tourism as a quasi non-profit.

In Czechoslovakia, tourist traffic service was monopolised by Čedok which began to lose its unique position in the second half of the 1950s. The creation of institutional facilities for the development of mass tourism in Czechoslovakia started in 1948, when communists came to power. The care over all of the infrastructure and organisation of holidays went to Revoluční odborové hnutí (ROH), and later to Ústřední správa rekreační péče ROH (ÚROH). Its activity significantly contributed to the construction and quality maintenance of tourist infrastructure in attractive locations [Franc, Knapík 2010, p. 630].

In this period, three main types of tourism already developed: 1) top-down managed selective tourism (*výběrová rekreace*) – domestic and foreign, 2) workplace tourism (*závodní rekreace*), and from 1955 also 3) youth tourism (*pionýrská rekreace*), mostly in the form of trips to scouting camps [Čornejová 2014, 72]. Workplace tourism was the most popular, not only because it took place in smaller resorts, but also because it was easier to access – it was enough to be an employee and pay the annual ROH contribution. Until 1960, the year when family tourism was introduced, as a rule the trips could not be attended by family members.

Workplace tourism to some extent levelled the typical workplace hierarchy – representatives of the management and workers were to holiday in the same way. This "levelling" in the social environment of Czechoslovakia was more pronounced than in the hierarchised Polish society. In Poland, tourists were mostly blue-collar staff, and attempts to combine various social groups encountered numerous difficulties [Sowiński 2005, p. 45-49].

## Support of foreign tourism in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s

An important issue in the context of the analysed film, whose protagonist, as already mentioned, is a Czechoslovakian writer on a business trip to Poland, is the organization and support of foreign tourism. In the period just after the war, international tourism in Poland was virtually non-existent – both in terms of any contacts with the West, and with the neighbouring countries. To describe the foreign traffic at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s the phrase "the great shutdown" is used, meaning that unprecedented restrictions were imposed on foreign trips, and thus the borders were almost completely closed for passenger traffic [Stola 2001, p. 55]. This situation lasted until 1954. Similarly in Czechoslovakia, trips abroad, including to socialist countries, were an exception<sup>8</sup>.

Only the death of Stalin and the warming of East-West relations created a new framework for tourism development, both in Poland and in Czechoslovakia. The traditional links with Czechoslovakia in the pre-war period were referred to by signing on 6 September 1955 of the Agreement on Conventional Tourist Traffic on the Polish-Czechoslovakian border [Gaj 2001, p. 59]. It created the possibility of crossing the border without passports and visas, on the basis of passes issued by local authorities. Polish tourists could stay in Štrbské Pleso, Tatranská Lomnica, New and Old Smokovec, and Czechoslovakian – in all of the Polish Tatras and in the Pieniny mountains. There was a clear increase in border traffic, mainly due to the increased trade within the socialist countries – about a quarter of the tourists who crossed the border with Czechoslovakia did so on the basis of the abovementioned

<sup>8</sup>The slogan *cestování do ciziny*, in J. Knapík, M. Franc and team, *Průvodce kulturním děním A životním stylem v českých zemích 1958-1967*. Volume I, Academia, Praha 2012, p. 187-189.

convention [Gaj 2001, p. 148-149]. The year 1955 saw the appearance of the first advertising leaflets about Poland for foreigners [Sowiński 2005, p. 83]. The expansion of tourism after 1956<sup>9</sup> was also aided by the introduction of inserts instead of passports, and the abolition of visas for tourism between Poland and Soviet Union, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia [Kulczycki 1977, p. 106].

In this period, foreign tourism started to be regarded not only in terms of the risks resulting from the confrontation of the living conditions in capitalist countries with the Polish reality, but also as an ideological tool, which could convince visitors to the Socialist Poland that they share the same essential ideas of struggle for social and civilization progress. This task was the responsibility of the Committee for Cultural Cooperation with Foreign Countries (KWKZ), operating in the years 1950-1956. Its purpose was to promote contacts of Poles with foreigners, to promote Polish art and culture abroad, and to develop cooperation between countries. The activities of the Committee gave the state a chance to exercise custody over the sphere of international and cultural contacts, and eventually to include a yet another area of life into the almighty central planning system of the Polish People's Republic [Lisiecka 2011, p. 207]. The expected range of responsibilities of the Committee included various areas of life, which often shared little in common; in practice, the focus was on cultural exchanges and organising stays of foreign guests in Poland. It was made sure that Poles' trips abroad would bring concrete results – and so members of the Polish Writers' Union, after returning from a delegation across the eastern border, released a book entitled *Among friends*. The publication was rated by critics as a good example of "literary propaganda of the Polish-Soviet friendship" [Lisiecka 2011, p. 224]. The Committee looked after foreigners visiting Poland, and with "specially programmed trips" the tourist could get to know the most valuable cultural locations of the given country [Majowski 2008, p. 41-42]. The organisers sought to fill the tourists' time – with sightseeing, meetings, conversations, visits. The goal was to solidly tire out the guests and eliminate free time, in which they could come into contact with ordinary citizens or families in the country. The rule of limiting contacts of the Polish diaspora with their relatives, unexpected for the guests, often provoked protests, which the Polish side tried to suppress using all available methods: e.g. members of a Canadian tourist group were constantly offered alcohol which, in the words of the commentator, improved their mood and allowed them to forget about their families [Lisiecka 2011, p. 231].<sup>10</sup>

Leisure – whether individual, or in groups – was overseen by a designated, authorised guide. By the way, on route the guides often proved unreliable; reports of the Committee contain complaints about their "weak political formation" and "a lack of new interpretation – they showed pre-war landmarks and buildings from the Sanation era" [Lisiecka 2011, p. 231].

The control extended also to the ways of spending holiday time, and one of the condemned uses of tourism was trade. A tourist reference book for Poles going to Czechoslovakia contained both encouragement and warnings:

"Do not trade, do not drop litter, and be respectful towards everyone. Remember the popular proverb: "they judge you by the cover", and be careful, so our "Express" or "Szpilki" do not write about you – or worse, the Czechoslovakian press"<sup>11</sup>. In the Employee Holiday Fund's

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<sup>9</sup>Chroniclers of the day locate the process of liberalisation of trips in the countries of the Warsaw Pact after 1960, seeing the cause of this delay in the hard to solve currency inconvertibility problem. Z. Kulczycki, *Zarys historii turystyki w Polsce*, 3rd edition amended, Sport i Turystyka, Warsaw 1977, p. 105.

<sup>10</sup>The fact that alcohol was a frequent roadtrip companion when travelling around Poland is also evidenced by artistic sources such as among others, Mach's film or the novel by Ota Filip, *Blázen ve městě*. In the latter, the engineer Jaroslav Kabát recalls his trip to Poland through the amount of vodka drunk in the visited cities: Krakow, Lodz and Warsaw. Cf. O. Filip, *Blázen ve městě*, Profil, Ostrava 1991, p. 21 (first edition prepared for print in 1970 was not published.)

<sup>11</sup>Rules of traffic between Poland and Czechoslovakia within the agreement on border tourist traffic (1956), AAN, KdsT, 253/64, k.20 in: P. Sowiński, p. 144.

instructions for people going abroad it was concluded that: "those leaving should be instructed about the necessity of proper behaviour during the journey and the stay abroad, as well as pay attention to antisocial conduct of holiday makers engaged in illegal trade, discrediting the dignity of a trade unionist" [Jarosz 2003, p. 39].

"Parasitic" tourism – i.e. using the weaknesses of communism for individual profit – is a long list of sensational stories and a picture of the informal economy in Poland at the time. A random sociological study of trade on foreign trips has shown that it was indeed a mass phenomenon [Sowiński 2005, p. 164]. Motivation for buying/selling was provided by both favourable price relations (resulting, among others, from large differences in the purchasing power of different currencies and their artificial exchange rates), as well as the shortages of certain goods on the domestic market. As a result, trips abroad were often only seemingly touristic in nature, but they should in fact be classed as carefully masked (as it was organised against the existing regulations) labour mobility<sup>12</sup>. Small international trade and undeclared work abroad are important, but poorly described aspects of foreign tourism in the Polish People's Republic.

An indispensable part of a trip was the need to attend to numerous travel formalities. A citizen wishing to spend a holiday in the country or abroad had to exert patience, willpower - and have an unblemished political record. In the words of Paweł Sowiński:

"To spend two weeks on holiday in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Romania or Hungary, it was necessary to meet a variety of requirements, which could successfully discourage even the most persistent fans of "strengthening fraternal relations between socialist countries". Perhaps it was in the event of cancellation or rejection of applications that the reserve list was set at 30% of all places. The whole operation of picking candidates for a holiday could begin a few months after returning from the previous one. If in the case of domestic holidays people were favoured based on communist criteria, here others were just unthinkable" [Sowiński 2005, p. 52].

Treating foreign trips as a kind of reward and expression of confidence in loyal citizens was a common practice, and was reflected in the works of popular culture – in the film *Sprawa pilota Maresza* [*The Case of the Pilot Maresz*] from 1956 the title protagonist, a former participant in the Battle of Britain, gains the confidence of his superiors only by overpowering a spy, which results in obtaining a permit for international flights. Similarly, in Czechoslovakia a trip abroad was a distinction for political loyalty and good work performance [Franc, Knapík, 2012, p. 188].

It is also worth mentioning that in foreign tourism the initiative belonged to the individual customer only to a small extent. The workplace, school or travel agency decided on their behalf – institutions which ensured the proper selection of participants and which could be controlled [Sowinski 2015, p. 52].

## Closely watched Poland

The storyline in the film *What Will My Wife Say to This?* begins when a satisfied Tuma runs out of the Foreign Department, where he has received permission to travel abroad, and has been instructed to proudly represent his homeland everywhere. As it will turn out, this has not been in vain – Tuma, following the instructions, will not dishonour himself with trade abroad, and the only form of exchange of goods he recognises will be non-cash trade, involving the exchange of gifts. Tuma generously mediates the transfer of a whole arsenal of "trifles", entrusted to him earlier in Prague by closer as well as more distant friends. And so, his luggage will contain: bagpipes, light bulbs for his friend Rybkowski, high-heeled

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<sup>12</sup>The unclear boundaries between tourism and the labour mobility in the Polish People's Republic: D. Stola, *Międzynarodowa mobilność zarobkowa w PRL*, in: *Ludzie na huśtawce. Migracje między peryferiami Polski i Zachodu*, ed. E. Jaźwińska, M. Okólski, Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR, Warsaw 2001, p. 62-100.

shoes, children's shoes, a set of fishing accessories, a satirical sketch and... a parrot in a cage. Tůma will show the correct – in other words negative – attitude towards trade abroad during his stay by the sea, when an elegant Polish woman starts to question him about the goods worth taking on a trip to Prague. Disgusted by her behaviour, he will arrogantly answer that currently the most desirable commodity in the Czech Republic is coal<sup>13</sup>.

In 1957, when the script was completed and the shooting began, the Committee for Cultural Cooperation with Foreign Countries no longer existed. However, the nature of the institution in charge of handling the foreign guest in Mach's film allows to trace its origin to the Committee. In *What Will My Wife Say to This?* an employee meeting is pictured, during which an older tour guide hands over the care for the visitor to a younger colleague. It is no coincidence that the first shot of Irena shows her face against the coat of arms of Poland. It indicates her as a worthy representative of her homeland, a person who will not fail the expectations placed on her.



Picture 1. The guide Irena against the coat of arms of Poland  
Source: *What Will My Wife Say to This?* (1958) dir. Jaroslav Mach.

Irena's task is to accompany the Czech on his tour of Poland, take care of all the formalities (this aspect is not shown on screen), and have the initiative in terms of the route. Never leaving his side, she becomes Tůma's shadow – which due to the beauty of his companion he finds to be in his favour. Irene also takes over the financial affairs – on the screen, apart from small payments when buying flowers on the main square in Krakow – we do not see any major transactions.

<sup>13</sup>The commonness of foreign trade during tourist trips is also highlighted by a scene from the film *Deszczowy lipiec* (1957) by Leonard Buczkowski. The narrator and heroine of the event is an elderly lady, who reminisces: "Three years ago I was in Varna on an Orbis tour. Very interesting. For three nylon sets you can have a sheepskin coat. And they also have very nice weather." This account is an additional argument for the negative attitude to the film character taken by its creators. The theme of "trade trips" also appears in the television play entitled *Branecz* (2014), written and directed by Juliusz Machulski. The character played by Stanisława Celińska only went on trips during the PPR period to places where one could trade. She visited many countries, but has never been to Paris because the wealthy French did not need to buy or sell anything.



The schedule of Tůma's trip is extremely tight. The guest is picked up from the airport by the tour guide Rybińska. She starts by inviting Tůma for a glass of wine to a cafe in the Old Town Market Place. Then, despite the declarations of the guide and the guest's desire, the visit turns into a peculiar race. In one afternoon, they visit the 10th-Anniversary Stadium, have a picture taken with a bear, visit a nursery, watch a theatre show<sup>14</sup>, record a radio broadcast, and visit a workplace. To reflect the swift pace of the trip, the film is dynamically edited, with multiple shots getting increasingly shorter. A lunch spent in the company of important guests is followed by a tour of Krakowskie Przedmieście and the New Town Market Square. A tired Tůma willy-nilly admires also the panorama of Warsaw from the terrace of the Palace of Culture and Science. After a day like this, the guest cannot think of anything else than a hotel bed.

Tůma accepts with a great relief the change of his tour guide, as well as a change in the way the visit is led. Irena does not torment the guest with sightseeing, putting more emphasis on spending time pleasantly in restaurants, on walks, and on the beach.

### Why are there no ruins in Warsaw and no factories in Łódź?

Films can strengthen the image of places long recognised as tourist destinations both by emphasising the classic qualities of given locations (such as *To Rome With Love*, 2012 by Woody Allen, in which the characters visit a *postcard* Rome), or by creating non-obvious travel routes: here a good example would be Prague without the Prague Castle and Charles Bridge in *Loners (Samotáři)*, 2000) by David Ondříček. Film is also an opportunity to promote places without ancient monuments and respectable museums; it can transform even a plain pine forest into an attractive location (*Blair Witch Project*, directed by Eduardo Sánchez and Daniel Myrick). In the case of Jaroslav Mach's film, it both supports the potential of obvious tourist destinations (Warsaw, Krakow, Sopot), and creates new, alternative destinations (Łódź). Using today's nomenclature, the film was to encourage *set-jetting*, in other words visiting places known on-screen.

*I'm going abroad!* – shouts Tůma happily running out of the door of the Foreign Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia. His excitement had to be understandable to all Czechs and Poles – after all, it was not so easy at the time to get permission to travel, even to a brother country. Unsurprisingly, the main character's joy with his trip is huge. Poland is indicated as an attractive and desirable destination already in the episode set on the steps of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when Tůma bumps into a sheikh, dressed in a turban and a trailing robe. The collision of messages "trip to Poland" and "an exotic guest" leads to a clear conclusion: a trip to a brother country can be just as exciting and thrilling an adventure, as a visit to the Middle East.

Building an image of Poland as an attractive tourist destination is also served by the selection of places included in Tůma's tour. These are respectively: Warsaw, Łódź, Krakow and Sopot. The image of Polish cities in Mach's film is subject to the "tourist view", which ignores problem areas – whether due to the complicated history they carry, or due to ideological baggage. As noted by Tadeusz Lubelski, popular Polish cinema of the era of political 'thaw' in principle passed over the recent past – such as the Second World War, the Stalinism, or the October 1956 events [Lublin 2009, p. 223-224]. Similarly to the film series about Mr Anatol or the film *Deszczowy lipiec* (1958) by Leonard Buczkowski, *What Will My Wife Say to This?* is dominated by historical "timelessness", only occasionally disturbed by comedic quips referring to political or social events.

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<sup>14</sup>Visits to the theatre were removed from tour schedules very quickly, as early as in 1955. This decision was motivated by the low interest of participants in this form of entertainment. A. Lisiecka, op. cit., p. 230.



Picture 2. 10th-Anniversary Stadium in Warsaw as one of Poland's most important tourist attractions

Source: *What Will My Wife Say to This?* (1958) dir. Jaroslav Mach.

Cities in Mach's film serve the viewer selected, stereotypically presented Polish values. And so Warsaw represents modernity and progress, Łódź is a city of art and sport, Krakow is an emblem of tradition, and Sopot is synonymous with relaxed leisure in beautiful outdoors. On this list, perhaps the most surprising is the presence of Łódź, which would not be found in most foreign guides today. In Łódź, the main characters see a painter's workshop, while another scene presented a visit to a culture centre. It may come as a surprise to a Polish viewer that *What Will My Wife Say to This?* accentuates the city's links with art, rather than its labour tradition. After all, Łódź, with its smoking textile factory chimneys, was known across the whole country as a "red" city because of its strong labour movement. Meanwhile, instead of factory halls the characters visit painters' studios. The decision to omit the labour theme – whose trace can be found in the film's general plan<sup>15</sup> – can be interpreted as a deliberate exclusion of episodes associated with the socialist realism novel. Mach's film was supposed to be an example of socialist entertainment cinema, devoid of unnecessary didacticism (which, however, could not be avoided), stressing the joyful aspects of life under socialism - and hard work at spinning machines was certainly not one of them. Łódź, despite its undeniable qualities (industrial architecture, examples of Art Nouveau in residential buildings, a unique Jewish cemetery, numerous green areas), has never been a tourist city of the same rank as Krakow or Wroclaw. However, it was this city which in the early post-war years experienced a remarkable cultural revival and became known as the "second Polish capital." Warsaw was rising from the rubble and the most important cultural institutions - theatres, cabarets, magazines - were moved to Łódź, only 120 km away. Also the nascent film industry found its home here - feature film and documentary film production companies were established in Łódź, as was a factory producing cinema projectors, and a school educating directors and actors. The presence of Łódź in a film produced at the turn of 1957/1958 can therefore be seen as an echo of unrealised hopes to transform a working city into a bustling cultural centre.

The decision to place Łódź on Tuma's route could also have had a practical dimension. After the Second World War, it was in the city of textile workers that the most important institutions associated with film were created - for this reason, the nickname "HollyŁódź" stuck with it for years. On the Polish side, the film work was executed by the Iluzjon filmmaker association, with film management's address given as the Feature Film Studio in

<sup>15</sup>The *Register of employment of extras and episodes* mentions the *Lodz montage 38a*, which consisted e. g. shots of a textile factory. The general plan for *What Will My Wife Say to This? / What řekne žena...*, State Archive in Lodz, act no. 636.

Łąkowa 29. The soundstages of the Łódź film studios were used to create the indoor photography for *What Will My Wife Say to This?*. Therefore, the inclusion of Łódź into the cities visited by the Czech tourist was beneficial for the film's budget and convenient for the film staff.

The portrayal of Warsaw proves equally problematic as the image of Łódź. It is created by the modern residential area of Mariensztat, the impressive Palace of Culture and Science, the newly built 10th-Anniversary Stadium, and the renovated Old Town Market Square. One will not find the slightest trace of the fact that the Second World War ended only twelve years earlier, and that at the time the film was made the city's landscape was dotted by destroyed buildings - they are clearly visible, for example, in the documentary film by Jerzy Bossak and Jarosław Brzozowski *Warszawa 1956*. Meanwhile, we will not find information about Warsaw as a city of ruins in *What Will My Wife Say to This?* neither in the visual nor auditory sphere. It is significant, however, that one version of the script comprised a scene in which, while viewing the panorama of Warsaw from the terrace of the Palace of Culture and Science, Rybińska shows Tůma a postcard of Warsaw right after the war - a city of ruins, burned houses and towering stacks of bricks [*Literární Scenar 1957*, p. 38].

### Women as a Polish tourist attraction

In addition to tourist attractions, an advantage of Poland in *What Will My Wife Say to This?* is its inhabitants, and speaking more precisely – female inhabitants. The notion of risk associated with Polish women is signalled even before Tůma starts his journey. The main character receives the warning "Pozor na Polky!" – "Beware of Polish women!" – illustrated with a sexy bikini-clad girl on the cover of the magazine "Świat"<sup>16</sup>. The warning comes from an airplane pilot, who – as we can guess – is an expert on the subject; moreover, in the presence of Tůma and his wife he places a call to one of his Polish female friends. In another episode, played out after the Tůma's departure for Poland, when Lida mentions her husband, wondering if he can see the stars just as brightly as she does, Gregor says, "Do you think he went to Poland to look at the stars?"



Picture 3. Beware of Polish women!

Source: *What Will My Wife Say to This?* (1958) dir. Jaroslav Mach.

<sup>16</sup>Interestingly, this *product placement* - another copy of "Świat" is read by Tůma's fellow passenger on the plane – did not save the filmmakers from extremely scathing criticism, which appeared in the pages of this magazine. The author of the unfavourable review was Krzysztof Teodor Toeplitz.

The main representative of the beautiful and dangerous Polish women is Irena, played by an actress of Slavic looks, Barbara Połomska<sup>17</sup>. Her character embodies the stereotype created in the film, a Polish blond beauty for whom every man will easily lose his head. "Perhaps because of *personal involvement* – wrote a reviewer in a Czechoslovakian film magazine, referring to the marriage of the operator Boguslaw Lambach to Barbara Połomska – shots dedicated to the actress are perfectly attractive, graceful portraits" [Dvořák, 1958, p. 626]. Barbara Połomska's face was also the centre of large advertising posters (as we would say today, billboards), which hung over entrances to Prague cinemas during the premiere.



Picture 4. Attractive Polish women in a painter's studio  
Source: *What Will My Wife Say to This?* (1958) dir. Jaroslav Mach.

In *What Will My Wife Say to This?*, beautiful Polish women are present at every step: on a walk through city streets, during a visit to a painter's studio. Attractive women, ready for romance, can be met in a hotel hallway or at a seaside café. A space filled entirely by beautiful women is the Baltic Sea beach; not without reason did the stills of the beach and sunbathing people form a considerable part of film advertising materials directed to the Czech market. In *What Will My Wife Say to This?*, women in bathing suits appear as an ornament, a visual attraction. Their presence brings to mind the *bathing beauties* from the films of Mack Sennett – undressed groups of female extras in bathing suits from the beginning of the century, one of the permanent attractions of slapstick comedies. Polish women are basically presented in outfits emphasising their shapely bodies – hence many shots of women in tight blouses or daring bikinis. There are close-ups of women's buttocks and breasts. There is even a naked woman - as a model in the art studio.

## Poland – almost a foreign country

Polish exoticism, built by a string of associations with a warm country, endowed with the sea and attractive women, is a counterweight to the view through "ideological spectacles", accentuating Polish values linked to the political system it represents. This perspective allows to interpret, for example, the visit to Warsaw. The main characters visit sites demonstrating

<sup>17</sup>In 1960 one of American magazines printed photos of actresses, representing three types of beauty: Italian (Gina Lollobrigida), American (Jayne Mansfield) and Slavic. The latter was represented by Barbara Połomska. Material from the archive of B. Połomska.



the dynamic expansion of the city, which at the same time symbolise the new system. A must is a visit to the Palace of Culture and Science, opened to the public in 1955. Tůma is also shown the 10th-Anniversary Stadium, completed in the same year, at the sight of which he says with admiration: "One hundred thousand spectators and everyone is seated." In addition, Tůma explores the Old Town, visits a nursery, and watches a theatre show. The evening ends with a visit to the radio and a dinner.

When travelling around Poland, Tůma has the opportunity to experience both the achievements of socialism, and its shortcomings. Despite the implied exoticism of Poland, through the realities of its political system - bureaucracy, imperfections of the public sphere, realities of supplies and related to them methods of dealing with the shortage of many goods - it turns out to be a surprisingly well-known and familiar country. The experience of similarity is expressed by the film characters in several scenes – such as in an episode in front of the multi-storey Palace of Culture and Science when Tůma expresses his anxiety by saying: "if here, like back home, the lift is out of order...".

The affinity of Poland and Czechoslovakia is implied in the phrase book from which Tůma learns basic expressions on the way to Poland. In addition to the standard question about someone's frame of mind, it contains a question: "Does the reaction interfere a lot with your implementation of the five-year plan"?

The experience which in Mach's films brings Czechs and Poles closer together are the supply shortages. Although none of the characters of *What Will My Wife Say to This?* personally experience them, the suggestion that both in Poland and Czechoslovakia there are problems with availability of food, household appliances and clothes is all too clear. This theme is the focus, for instance, of the episode in Tůmas' apartment (where the main character receives a number of gifts from neighbours and friends to pass on to their Polish friends), and Tůma's chance meeting with a Polish woman on the Sopot pier, during which they talk about goods deficits in Poland and Czechoslovakia. It is worth taking a look at these two situations, as they allow us to capture the discrete, yet significant distinction between officially accepted ways of dealing with shortages, and the method which, although extremely popular, could not gain official approval. In the first case, passing on light bulbs to a Polish electrician, or bagpipes to a resident of Łódź is an expression of Polish-Czechoslovakian solidarity and a gesture of closeness and fraternity. In contrast, trade suggested by the Polish woman (she asks Tůma what is worth taking on a trip to Prague) is instantly condemned. The main character, having read the intentions of the woman, automatically loses interest in her, and with even more enthusiasm returns to Irena, who does not even think about reaping financial profits from the presence of a guest.

Picture 5. Gifts for Poles, masking supply shortages, as signs of Polish-Czechoslovakian friendship  
Source: *What Will My Wife Say to This?* (1958) dir. Jaroslav Mach.



The affinity of Polish and Czechoslovakian citizens is also reflected in the similar traits of their national characters. An important sense of understanding between Tuma and Poles he encounters lies in their alcoholic predispositions. Poles boast their knowledge about beer as the national drink of Czechs, and try to strengthen ties with Tuma by inviting him to drink vodka. Consumption of alcohol is in the film the main activity forming common ground between Tuma and the Poles he meets by chance.

Another element that builds and strengthens the Polish-Czech friendship is the similarity of languages. Irena, thanks to attending a Czech language course in Karlovy Vary is able to communicate with Tuma in his native language (or an approximation of it). When Tuma is left alone with Poles, he does not generally try to put into practice the skills learned from the superficial reading of his Polish-Czechoslovakian phrasebook on the plane, hoping that he will somehow be understood. And indeed, in most cases there are no major communication problems, and if they do occur, they are solved by consuming alcohol together.

While Poles at every turn make the main character feel important and interesting, and that the country from which he has come is close to them, Tuma behaves surprisingly indifferently. The Slovak film critic Pavol Branko rightly says that "Tuma's exploration of Poland during visits to bars and the beach is a cruel parody of exploring any country, it is an excellent material for satire. Unfortunately, the creators of his adventure treat it completely seriously" [Branko, 1958, np].

## Conclusion

*What Will My Wife Say to This?* is one of a few films about the forms of recreation, travel and sightseeing made in the 1950s<sup>18</sup>. Sources of its uniqueness should be sought in its production conditions: as the first post-war Polish-Czechoslovakian co-production, it had the task of capturing the realities of Poland and Czechoslovakia in an affirming way. As Rodanthi Tzanelli wrote, "in films and film-induced tourist practices we never seem to consume specific objects, but clusters of signs" [Tzanelli, 2014, p. 245]. Historic cities, the modern capital, the sea - these are the elements which construct a positive image of Poland and allow for its perception as an attractive tourist destination. There is one more quality that makes Poland a desirable place for holiday travels. It is the presence of beautiful and potentially interested in romance, women. In this way, Poland is presented as an ideal country for sex tourism, where the mere fact of being a visitor from a foreign country opens the welcoming doors of women's rooms.

*What Will My Wife Say to This?* was met with a rather cool reception by Czech, Slovak and Polish film critics. Reviewers flinched at the fact that the first post-war Polish-Czechoslovakian co-production was a wasted opportunity, as instead of an important, smart film it was a trivial comedy with erotic subtones.

Reservations in terms of artistic quality of the film were put forward, among others, by a Czech critic [Kopaněvová, 1958, p. 365] who ironically commented on Tuma as a writer who is not interested in culture, does not seek to meet Polish writers, and more than in the social situation of the visited country is interested in relationships between men and women. Also, personal experiences of film journalists became the basis for exposing the narrative

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<sup>18</sup> Some parameters defining the tourist traffic in Poland and Czechoslovakia can be found reflected - sometimes realistically, sometimes grotesquely - also in other works of literature and cinema. One of them is a comedy about the adventures of guests to a Zakopane holiday home, *Deszczowy lipiec* (1947) by Leonard Buczkowski. In Czechoslovakia, the diptych about the holiday adventures of a Prague ticket inspector, Mr Anděl, gained extraordinary popularity. In *Dovolená z Andělem (Holidays with Angel*, Bořivoj Zeman, 1952) and *Anděl na horách (Angel in the Mountains*, Bořivoj Zeman, 1955). Plans for the third part, this time about a foreign trip to the Adriatic Sea, were also made, but were never put into practice.

layer of the film. A reporter of the Czech "Kino", writing about his visit to a film set, stripped the vision of the trip to Poland, pictured as a dream journey, of its fairytale character: unlike Tůma, he did not meet a beautiful and witty stewardess on the plane, and no delegation with flowers was expecting him at the airport. The weather added to the grim reality of Poland – it rained during the reporter's entire stay [Vodička, 1957, p. 376-377]

The only positive aspect of the film, to some extent compensating for the blandness of the script and the shortcomings of the dialogues, was the portrayal of Poland and Czechoslovakia as attractive places in terms of tourism. The role of film as inspiration when deciding on travel destinations was considered an irrefutable – and often the only – merit of the film. This is how Krzysztof Teodor Toeplitz wrote about *What Will My Wife Say to This?*:

“We have made a film with no artistic advantages to either of the two involved parties - neither the Czech, nor us. It is to be hoped that at least Orbis could gain some advantage, for the only positive feature of this film is the fact that it gives a portrayal of some parts of Poland and Czechoslovakia as regards the opportunities for tourism. And if it had been Orbis or its Czech equivalent who stood behind the production of this film as their advertisement, I would not say a word. But given that it is shown to us as a result of artistic co-operation, I have to say that the film is, regrettably, a dud”[Toeplitz 1959, np].

The viewers did not agree with the critical ratings of the film published in the press. *You did a great job with this film. Formal reviews often do not reflect the feelings of viewers* - wrote J. Č. from Prague 7 in a questionnaire collected among Czechoslovakian viewers of the film [*Film viewer survey*, 1959]. The high number of completed questionnaires is proof of great interest in the film itself. Voices of praise dominated the statements, in which the audience expressed their joy that they could “laugh and relax while watching the beautifully photographed authentic beauty of our neighbours' land and merry adventures told by the movie” [*Film viewer survey*, 1959]. Viewers noticed the satirical dimension of the film and applauded the stigmatisation of behaviours such as the use of business trips as a pretext for personal leisure and bureaucracy impeding daily tasks.

*What Will My Wife Say to This?* met the implicit expectation of building a positive image of Poland and promoting the country as an attractive tourist destination, as evidenced by the textual analysis and the review of critical voices in the Czech, Slovak and Polish press. On the other hand, the film did not sufficiently manage to meet the demands posed to it as the first post-war Polish-Czechoslovakian coproduction. Voices of disappointment coming from the pages of the Czech, Slovak and Polish press reveal the unspoken assumption that the source of international cooperation should be a film of high artistic value, which *What Will My Wife Say to This?* was missing. This reception dichotomy illustrates a characteristic feature of films inspiring tourist trips. Fulfilling the assumed function - that is, to encourage travel - does not necessarily have to be associated with the high artistic quality of the image. Tourists are often inspired by weak, bad or bizarre films, and expert filmological evaluation formulated on the basis of the work's intrinsic features does not apply in the case of analysing the potential of the film in the context of film-induced tourism.

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## Turystyka i film w PRL w latach 1950-ch

**Słowa kluczowe**

Turystyka kulturowa, turystyka filmowa, Polska, Czechosłowacja

**Abstrakt**

Artykuł rozważa związki filmu i turystyki w początkowym okresie PRL-u. Stawia pytanie o możliwości aplikowania pojęcia turystyki filmowej (*film-induced toursim*) dla badań nad relacjami przemysłu kinematograficznego i turystyki w Polsce lat pięćdziesiątych XX wieku. Przedstawiona teza zakłada, że rozważania w tym polu powinny bazować na analizach tekstualnych poszerzonych o recepcję materiałów dopełniających. Do badań nad fenomenem związków filmu i turystyki niezbędna jest wiedza o realiach funkcjonowania przemysłu turystycznego, stąd artykuł omawia także kluczowe problemy związane z rozwojem turystyki w Polsce i w Czechosłowacji w latach pięćdziesiątych XX wieku. Egzemplifikacją postulowanego podejścia badawczego jest omówienie relacji film-turystyka na przykładzie pierwszej powojennej koprodukcji polsko-czechosłowackiej pt. *Zadzwońcie do mojej żony* (*Co řekne žena*, 1958, r. Jaroslav Mach). Tekst rozważa jaką rolę wyznaczono filmowi w procesie budowania pozytywnych znaczeń związanych z Polską jako miejscem wyjazdów turystycznych i jak owe skojarzenia były budowane.