

3. Mira and Antonín Liehm observe this in reference to the films of the late 1950s and early 1960s, but in my opinion it can refer to films of all periods.
4. I am omitting from this section *Eroica* partly because I analysed it elsewhere (Mazierska 2004a) and partly because I find *How to Be Loved* a more interesting polemic with the model of masculinity offered by Wajda. This also applies to *Salto* (1965) by Tadeusz Konwicki, which I have to leave out from my analysis due to lack of space. *Eroica*, in my opinion, largely conforms to Wajda's model (Werner 1987: 59–64).
5. Due to the lack of space I present very briefly the historical background of Wajda's films. More detailed analysis can be found in Paul Coates' book, *The Red and the White* (Coates 2005) and in my essay, 'Wajda on War', accompanying the DVD version of Wajda's 'war trilogy' (Mazierska 2004b), as well as in the historical books devoted to Polish history of the twentieth century, especially Norman Davies's *God's Playground* (Davies 2005: 322–66). See also Chapter 1 of this book.
6. In my opinion Cybulski's death and denigration of the films in which he played 'domesticated men' influenced negatively subsequent Polish male stardom. In particular, most Polish actors aspiring to the status of stars, including Olbrychski, Linda and Żebrowski, did not ever risk moving beyond the type of male pin-ups with hard muscles and apparent uninterest in those looking at them, as described by Richard Dyer (Dyer 1992).
7. Jackiewicz worked for some years as a film critic in *Trybuna Ludu*, the official newspaper of the Party, so it could be suggested that his political allegiance was a factor in his negative attitude to Maciek. However, I believe that his assessment of Maciek and the situation represented in Wajda's film was genuine.
8. Elsewhere I have argued that in his films Wajda is biased against working-class characters by representing them as simpletons (Mazierska 2002). This scene supports this opinion.
9. The relation between Hrabal book and Menzel's film is discussed by a number of authors, including Josef Škvorecký, Peter Hames and Jonathan Owen (Škvorecký 1982; Hames 2004; Owen 2007), therefore I am leaving it out from my discussion.
10. The literary roots and the political background of Wajda's film are discussed by Tadeusz Drewnowski (Drewnowski 1992).
11. Although *The Ring with a Crowned Eagle* warns against and condemns serving the 'two gods' of the communist authorities and anti-communist opposition, it could be argued that such an ideological position was espoused by Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski, the author of the novel on which Wajda's film is based, and Wajda himself. Both artists were close to the establishment, playing many important roles in the official culture of People's Poland and enjoying above-average affluence, yet at the same time attempting to convey in their works criticism of the authorities, as in the famous *Człowiek z marmuru* (*Man of Marble*, 1976), which Ścibor-Rylski scripted and Wajda directed. This position of the 'double agents' is examined and maliciously ridiculed by Andrzej Horubała in an article written for the influential *Kino* magazine in 1992 (Horubała 1992). I find it interesting that an author born in 1962, who has no personal experience of the war or Stalinism, has the cheek to judge so harshly the morality of Wajda or Ścibor-Rylski.
12. Kolski's approach to Polishness and the war can be linked to the fact that he is of Jewish origin, although I try not to base too much on the filmmakers' biographies.
13. Hřebejk's forgiving attitude, to which I feel more attuned, can be contrasted with that of Andrzej Horubała, who implicitly accused Ścibor-Rylski and Wajda of being 'double agents'. It can be suggested that the former represents Czech moral minimalism, the latter Polish maximalism.

CHAPTER 3

Who Is My Father? Representation of Fathers, Sons and Family Life in Polish and Czechoslovak films

Children? Who amongst us could take responsibility for others if we hardly managed with our own lives?
(Andrzej Wajda 2000: 46)

I do not feel the need to reproduce myself. But the fact that the role of the father is missing from my life has kept me rather immature; and I am more of a failed son than a wise father.
(Jiří Menzel, quoted in Pošová 1998)

After the war, many fathers were dead. Not just one little boy sought out a father. Whole nations, countries, people created fathers, if they didn't have strong leaders. Stalin, Churchill, Roosevelt – people make fathers out of their leaders – or vice-versa?
(István Szabó, quoted in Jaehne 1978: 32)

Fatherhood in Poland and Czechoslovakia

There are several reasons to include fathers in my study. Firstly, since the 1960s the topic of fatherhood features prominently in research on men. We now find more books written about men as fathers than about men in any other role and those on men in general typically include long passages devoted to fatherhood. Consequently, writing about masculinity without mentioning fatherhood can be compared to ignoring motherhood in research on women. Secondly, in social theories, particularly Freudianism and Marxism, both drawing heavily on anthropology, the study of the family (real or mythical, current or past, civilised or primitive), with specific reference to the role of the father, provides the key to understanding society as a whole, which is one of purposes of my book. Thirdly, the experience of fatherhood

in the countries of the Soviet bloc was distorted and consequently, fatherhood there gained a somewhat different meaning to that in Western societies.

According to Freudian psychoanalysis, the father enters the child's world during the stage of its development described as the Oedipus complex. At this stage the child abandons its exclusive relationship with the mother and enters into the structures of human sexuality. Confronted with the authority of the father, the child now sees the mother, formerly the repository of all identity, as lacking a phallus, as castrated, therefore a testimony only to the authority of the father. Recognition of the presence or absence of the phallus creates the child's awareness of sexual difference, and the girl's sense of lack and penis envy and, consequently, inferiority towards boys. This inferiority will last throughout her life, affecting her position within the family and society (Gay 1995: 631–45; 670–678). Freud's followers, particularly Jacques Lacan and Juliet Mitchell, argue that the Oedipus complex cannot be taken literally because it does not refer to the situation of each individual child and its relationship with its parents, but metaphorically, as a means to conceptualise how the child enters culture and acquires its heritage of ideas and laws within the unconscious mind. Thus the 'phallus' is not identical to the physical penis, but is its representation, the signifier of the laws of the social order, the Law of the Father, through which obedience to the social (and patriarchal) order is instilled. As Juliet Mitchell writes,

The myth that Freud rewrote as the Oedipus complex and its dissolution reflects the original exogamous incest taboo, the role of the father, the exchange of women and the consequent difference between the sexes. It is *not* about the nuclear family, but about the institution of culture with the kinship structure and the exchange relationship of exogamy. It is about what Freud regarded as the order of all human culture. It is specific to nothing but patriarchy which is itself, according to Freud, specific to all human civilisation. (Mitchell 1974: 377)

Freudianism is indifferent to changes in human societies; it assumes that the Oedipus complex and the Law of the Father are eternal. This assumption was challenged by a number of thinkers, including Friedrich Engels. In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* he argued that patriarchy, understood as men's domination over women, appeared at a specific moment of cultural development, namely when the human labour force was able to produce more than was necessary for its maintenance, and wealth started to be accumulated.

The herds and the other new objects of wealth brought about a revolution in the family. Gaining a livelihood had always been the business of the man; he produced and owned the means therefor. Hence, he owned the cattle, and the commodities and slaves obtained in exchange for them. All the surplus now resulting from production fell to the man; the woman shared in consuming it but she had no share in owning it. The 'savage' warrior and hunter had

been content to occupy second place in the house and give precedence to the woman. The 'gentler' shepherd, presuming upon his wealth, pushed forward to first place and forced the woman into second place. And she could not complain. Division of labour in the family had regulated the distribution of property between man and wife. This division of labour remained unchanged, and yet it now put the former domestic relationship topsy-turvy simply because the division of labour outside the family had changed. The very cause that had formerly made the woman supreme in the house, namely, her being confined to domestic work, now assured supremacy in the house for the man: the woman's housework lost its significance compared with the man's work in obtaining a livelihood; the latter was everything, the former an insignificant contribution. (Engels 1972: 158)

The obvious conclusion from Engels's reasoning is that the more wealth that is accumulated in a society, the more it is 'civilised', the more patriarchal it is. As capitalism is the highest stage of wealth accumulation, it is also the stage where women are most subjugated to men. A working-class woman is exploited as an unpaid worker in the home and a wage labourer outside it, and her inferior status makes her an instrument for the intensified exploitation of the working class. At the other end of the scale, the loveless bourgeois family jealously guards its integrity and its myths, for it represents a union for the consolidation and expansion of property stolen from the workers. In this family the wife is wholly owned by her husband, and fidelity is demanded of her to insure the legitimacy of his heirs (Scott 1976: 30). However, Engels also argued that in capitalism the majority of men do not take advantage of the capitalist exploitation of women. In *The Condition of the Working Class in England* he pointed to the negative effect mothers' work outside home has on children, who feel isolated for the rest of their lives and are unable to feel at home in the families they themselves eventually set up. Engels also criticised the arrangement, not atypical for capitalism, where the wife supports the family working outside the home and the man stays at home, tends to the children, sweeps the rooms and cooks. He claimed that such an arrangement, while the other social conditions remain unchanged, undermine a working man's pride, 'virtually turning him into a eunuch' (Engels 1971: 162). On the whole, in Marxist discourse the capitalist model of the family has negative connotations, being associated with the exploitation of women,¹ a 'bourgeois mental framework' and putting private interest over the welfare of the society as a whole (Bronfenbrenner 1972). Engels did not limit himself to criticism of the status quo, but proposed a new order of things – socialism. He argued that its advent would overturn patriarchy by enabling women to take part in production equally with men, and by freeing them from domestic chores by passing them to society, as was the case in the primitive, communistic household (Scott 1976: 28–45; 138–9).

Engels and his intellectual legacy was a significant factor influencing official thinking in the Soviet bloc about the institution of the family, motherhood and fatherhood, state policy in these matters, as well as the everyday reality of millions of

families living there. What was of particular importance was the assumption that the roles of mother and father should be equal or at least similar, and that this should be assured by allowing women to work outside the home and by the state looking after the children.

In Poland and in some measure in the Slovak region of Czechoslovakia, another important factor from the sphere of ideology, influencing society's ideas about family and fatherhood, and by extension, masculinity, is Catholicism, a religion that (in common with most Christian religions) is phallogocentric. According to Catholic doctrine the role of the father is of utmost importance for men and society at large. This is because all men are meant to follow God the Father and Jesus Christ who are 'Fathers of the Church'. We find in the Catechism such statements as 'God's fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood', therefore a man who becomes a father becomes similar to God. Moreover, the father-son relationship is privileged over other types of relations within the family and society at large, including that between mother and her children (Adamiak 1993: 73-4). 'Father' is understood here not only as the man who conceives and brings up his children, but also as a master and leader of people who are not his biological children. A good father is one who is responsible, tender, forgiving and selfless, but also one who does not hesitate to reprimand and use physical force to make children behave well. The Catechism implies that the father's power and authority should be greater than that of the mother as, similarly, the husband should have a higher position in the home than his wife. Catholicism also tacitly assumes that the man's place is to govern both at home and in the wider world, whilst a woman should content herself with staying at home and serving her husband and children. This short description suggests that in Poland there was a conflict between the official and unofficial, albeit dominant, doctrines on the character of family and fatherhood. In reality, however, the conflict was much less because the socialist authorities failed to meet their pledges about 'liberating women' (together with the majority of their other pledges). True, women in socialist countries were allowed to work in factories and on cooperative farms, but usually in positions much lower than those occupied by men (Scott 1976; Gal and Kligman 2000). On the other hand, their domestic work did not diminish due to acute shortages of even the most basic necessities that forced them to struggle to obtain them to support their families, and the tradition created by centuries of historical development, according to which women serve their men and children (*ibid.*).

Czech thinking about family and fatherhood, on the other hand, is strongly influenced by the culture of Biedermeier that, according to Josef Kroutvor, was matriarchal (see Kroutvor 2001: 258). A typical Czech man does what his wife tells him both in domestic arrangements and political issues (*ibid.*: 257).

Another important factor shaping fatherhood in Poland and Czechoslovakia was the acute shortage of real fathers and men of fathering age after the Second World War. Fathers in the whole Eastern bloc were in short supply because of the war and its aftermath that decimated and crippled a generation of men of parenting age. They perished fighting the Nazis and in the case of Poles, as a result of being deported into the interior of the Soviet Union, following the Ribbentrop-Molotov treaty of August

1939 (Walichnowski 1989). Moreover, if they fought in Great Britain, after the war they were imprisoned in the camps for the state's enemies or sent to Siberia. This problem was particularly acute in Poland that lost six million people in the years 1939-45, the majority of them men. Moreover, many 'war children', although their biological fathers were alive, did not know them, because they were the fruit of short encounters, conceived by men who often had other families elsewhere and returned to them when the war was over. The lack of fathers put extra pressure on women and the state. Mothers of fatherless children had to fulfil the duties and combine the skills of both parents, or put up with the fact that their children lacked something important that children from 'full families' had. The state, on the other hand, had to step in financially to help the fatherless families, as well as providing role models to children, especially sons. Consequently, we could observe a relocation of fatherhood to non-fathers, such as political leaders, as mentioned by István Szabó, as well as to institutions and ideas, such as the Party or the State. Such relocation was facilitated by socialist ideology that set out to free families from some duties traditionally attached to them. The displacement of fathering functions to non-fathers was also helped by the personal ambition of certain communist leaders, especially Stalin and those who attempted to emulate him, such as Bolesław Bierut in Poland and Klement Gottwald in Czechoslovakia, to become the 'fathers of their nations'. This phenomenon can also be linked to the fact that some famous communist leaders, most importantly Lenin and Stalin, lost their fathers at an early age (Clark 2000: 134). By placing extra value on the 'surrogate father' and the 'great family' of a nation or socialist community they attempted to rationalise and soothe their pain of being orphans.

The shortage of fathers was experienced most severely soon after the war. In due course the fatherless boys matured and became parents themselves (although, it could be argued, the lack of fathers affected the way they brought up their own children)² and gradually the balance between the number of men and women of reproductive age was restored. Not surprisingly, the projection of fatherhood into non-fathers and national institutions pertains most to the Stalinist period. However, even when the shadows of the war and Stalinism receded, other factors remained and new factors appeared, significantly affecting men's chances of being fathers and the type of fatherhood available to them. We should list here the nationalisation of the economy, the privileging of heavy industry, the limited promotion opportunities for both men and women, the high employment rates of women, the shortage of affordable accommodation and, consequently, the small size of the average socialist apartment, as well as the relatively liberal abortion laws in the majority of the socialist countries, including Poland and Czechoslovakia. Nationalisation of industry and agriculture forced most men in socialist countries to work outside the home, in large factories where their work was unskilled, mechanical and repetitive (not unlike in capitalist factories). This situation led to the breakdown of the link between home and male work and the disappearance of opportunities for men to teach their sons professional skills and attitudes, so important, in the opinion of Robert Bly and his followers, in creating, preserving and strengthening the bond between fathers and their male offspring (Bly 1991: 96-102). Moreover, the chance to achieve higher

positions in society, or even being able to earn one's living, were linked to political conformity and hypocrisy (Taborsky 1961; Paul 1979; Havel 1985; Wedel 1992; Holý 1996). This distortion of the channels of professional promotion and mechanisms of social recognition had a frustrating effect on men, sometimes leading to a sense of emasculation (Watson 1993: 471–87), or structural feminisation or infantilisation in their relations to the state (see Kligman 1994: 255; Gal and Kligman 2000: 54), which further diminished the socialist father's ability to impress and guide his children, especially his sons.

The shortage of accommodation led many adult children to live with their parents. Such a situation had its pros and cons for all concerned. On the one hand, it made grandparents in socialist countries more involved in bringing up their grandchildren than their counterparts in the West. In the absence of a parent away working long hours in a factory or on the compulsory *subbotnik*, the grandfather often took the role of surrogate father, offering the child care and entertainment that he or she otherwise would not receive. The grandparents also provided a safety net for children whose parents could not look after them at all, due to studying or living in a workers' hostel in a far-away town, as well as for busy and poor single mothers. On the other hand, sharing a small flat with their parents or parents-in-law (who typically were the owners of the apartment) led to a continuous frustration for the middle generation, and even to emasculation of the younger men, who felt responsible for 'arranging' a state or cooperative apartment. Under the wings and the watchful eyes of their elders the younger men were not able to achieve maturity and fully exercise their rights and duties as fathers and heads of the family. In a significant proportion of men the lack of their own accommodation led to a decision to postpone marriage and fatherhood. As a result, the countries of the Soviet bloc (in common with Italy which also suffered a lack of affordable accommodation for young people) developed the phenomenon of a man in his thirties or forties still living with his parents. If such a man eventually married, he tended to treat his wife as his mother, expecting from her the care he received from his own mother. Moreover, the small dimensions of the average socialist flat resulted in a shortage of personal space which reduced the scope for developing interests and indulging in hobbies that required space, such as gardening or DIY. The most common way of spending free time for men was watching television. Women, by contrast, typically spent their 'free time' cooking and cleaning. Consequently, the prevailing model of fatherhood in the Soviet bloc was that of the 'domesticated' father, derided by Bly. For a large proportion of men the only way to escape from this model was the abuse of alcohol. Alcoholism further weakened their fathering credentials because alcoholic fathers are almost by definition absent fathers or fathers unable to properly fulfil their role within the family.

The harsh living conditions, the requirement to look after one's own ageing parents, combined with the relative easiness of terminating pregnancy and, in the later period of communism, beginning in the late 1960s, the temptations of consumer goods, travelling abroad and cars, that were easier to acquire if one was childless, led to a 'neo-Malthusian prudence' on the part of both men and women.

People in socialist countries tended only to have as many children as they could afford, which meant less than they wanted. Despite the state rhetoric that promoted large families, in popular consciousness a large number of children signified recklessness and even became associated with social pathologies, such as alcoholism. As a result of these factors almost the whole of the Soviet bloc during the postwar years experienced a fertility crisis (see Scott 1976: 138–63). A relatively high proportion of men in these countries did not experience fatherhood first hand or fathered fewer children than their counterparts in the West. However, there were national variations in these phenomena. In Poland a fertility crisis struck later than in its southern neighbour, which can be attributed to the lower employment rates of women, higher proportion of people living in the countryside, and the influence of Catholicism on citizens' attitudes to reproduction. Moreover, in Poland, where a large proportion of agriculture and small businesses remained in private hands, the urban father or father working on a cooperative farm was not the only available model of fatherhood. There were also men working on their own farms or in their own factories who wanted to pass their property and skills to their offspring. On the other hand, alcoholism was more of a problem in Poland than in Czechoslovakia, therefore in this country more women were forced into single parenthood than in its southern neighbour, even if it was not reflected in the higher divorce rate.

Polish, Czech and Slovak cinema reflected both the general tendencies pertaining to fatherhood in European socialist countries and the national variations. It also reacted to the transformation of the situation of fathers stemming from the change of political, economic, social and cultural circumstances. However, it must be stressed that the reaction cannot be conceived simply as the replacement of one type of father by another in films belonging to different periods. Although in consecutive cinematic paradigms we find different types of fathers prevailing, the earlier paradigms of fatherhood return in new guises or are accompanied by a new approach from the film's author. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that certain traits characteristic of one generation of fathers can also be found in latent form in subsequent generations. Furthermore, earlier cinematic representations of fatherhood influenced later ones. For example, the cinema created after the fall of socialist realism keeps including the figure of the 'Stalinist father', only treating him differently. For this reason, rather than using in this chapter a strictly chronological approach, I will identify certain models of fatherhood prevailing in particular historical periods of Czechoslovak and Polish cinema, but also look at how these models were used in subsequent periods and how they affected the construction of other models. Because, as I indicated, in the ideology and practice of state socialism fatherhood is particularly imbricated in such masculine roles as that of the political leader and worker, discussion of fatherhood appears to me the right place to touch upon these roles.

Non-fatherly Fathers and Fatherly Non-fathers and their Children in the Films about Stalinism

The father is like a dictator... from his voice shall depend all that is subject to him.
(Ayrault, quoted in Flandrin 1979: 130)

Stalinism and the aesthetic system it created, socialist realism, was very masculine and patriarchal (Kenez 1992; Robin 1992; Clark 2000; Tubielewicz Mattsson 2003a). Its patriarchalism did not consist only of women's subordination to men or sons to fathers, but of a rigid stratification of all relationships within the society. During this period the phenomenon of citizens' structural 'feminisation' or 'infantilisation' in their relations to the state was at its strongest. Different authors identify different principal categories of men within socialist-realistic art, but all agree that central amongst them is that of master or mentor. Stalin or other Party leaders (Bierut, Gottwald) are cast in this role or, more often, 'a sort of Stalin-to-scale, a figure with Stalin's significance but proportionate to the small world in which the action takes place' (Clark 2000: 132). He can be a Party secretary, an activist in a youth organisation, a high official in the secret service or an inventor passing his knowledge to pupils. The Party leader resembles the God-the-Father of Christianity, being utterly good, powerful and omnipresent, either appearing in person, or through his representations in monuments, pictures, sculptures, posters, or through actions of his disciples who follow his example and benefit from his actions (Tubielewicz Mattsson 2003a: 55). He is the superior or ultimate father; other men in relation to him are his sons (Clark 2000: 126–9) and can be fathers only as his deputies. Although benevolent, the leader of the Party is also a dictator – those who oppose him are by definition prodigal sons, whose actions must be corrected. This feature also likens him to the feudal monarchs and fathers in premodern societies, whose authority, as Jean-Louis Flandrin argues, included not only children and wives, but also servants, lodgers and others, and concerned such matters as the making of wills, the transfer of property, the choice of a marriage partner and the selection of an occupation. 'The authority of a king over his subject, and that of a father over his children, were of the same nature: neither authority was based on contract and both were considered "natural"' (Flandrin 1979: 1). The socialist realistic father – mentor is typically 'dressed in a semimilitary style, unencumbered by a family or love affairs, ascetic and flawless' (Kenez 1992: 158). By contrast, the son is initially allowed to be spontaneous, impulsive and to make mistakes before, as Katerina Clark puts it, 'donning the austere cloak of supreme responsibility' (Clark 2000: 133). A socialist realistic film, like a socialist realistic novel, is always a '*Bildungsroman*, that is, it is about the acquisition of consciousness. In the process of fulfilling the task, the hero, under the tutelage of a seasoned Party worker, acquires an increased understanding of himself, the world around him, the tasks of building communism, class struggle, and the need for vigilance' (Kenez 1992: 158).

The fact that the political leader in Stalinist ideology is regarded as a 'superfather' inevitably undermines the position of the biological father both within the

individual family and in the society at large. Not only is he inferior in relation to the Party leader, but also to men who are above him in the political hierarchy and who encounter his children in political and professional lives, such as directors of factories, foremen or Party secretaries. Moreover, in Stalinist ideology the biological father can be a good father only through emulating Stalin in his dealings with his children. If he fails to do so, becoming, for example, an enemy of the socialist cause, he also loses any paternal rights over his offspring. Similarly, his children do not need to love or respect him any more, but could and should treat him as their enemy. In its extreme version this line of thinking requires children to denounce their parents to political authorities if they deviate from the behaviour prescribed by the Stalinist ideology. In the 1950s in the Soviet Union and other communist states camps for scouts were set up in which young people learnt how to be vigilant, even in their own homes. However, as Piotr Zwierzchowski observes, whilst in the Soviet Union it was acceptable to present as a national hero somebody like Pavlik Morozov who betrayed his own father – a saboteur – in Poland such an attitude was unacceptable (Zwierzchowski 2000: 127). Consequently, while in the Soviet Union books and operas were devoted to Morozov and the leading creator of socialist cinema, Sergei Eisenstein, made a film about him, *Bezhin Lug* (*Bezhin Meadow*, 1937), in Poland Morozov-like figures hardly found a place in literature or cinema. The closest to Morozov on the Polish screen is probably Hanka Nalepianka in Stanisław Różewicz's socialist realistic classic, *Trudna miłość* (*Difficult Love*, 1953). She denounces her father who is both a *kulak*, the murderer of the chairman of the local agricultural cooperative, a misogynist who does not allow Hanka to study and the chief obstacle against her marrying a man whom she loves. Yet, despite having so many reasons to inform on her father, Hanka is still very uneasy about doing so.

In Czechoslovakia Morozov was set up as a role model for society and was occasionally imitated. The most significant example was the son of one of the co-accused in the trial of Rudolf Slánský, the general secretary of the Communist Party, demanding the death penalty for his own father (Taborsky 1961: 94–5). However, in Czech and Slovak cinema the motif of children denouncing their fathers, as in Polish cinema, was rare. The most memorable example of a child who declares their father to be a traitor is offered in *Žert* (*The Joke*, 1969), directed by Jaromil Jireš and based on Milan Kundera's novel that unequivocally condemns the crimes of Stalinism. Here the son, despite renouncing his father, ends up in a labour camp and is treated as a freak both by the inmates and the camp's guards.

Both in Polish and Czechoslovak films of the Stalinist period we find the figure of a fatherly man who influences or indeed, engenders a young character, a young couple and sometimes a whole group of people to achieve a goal beneficial to the cause of socialism as well as to their own happiness, on the way teaching them the principles of Marxist economics. We find a typical representation of the father figure in the Czech film *Dovolená s Andělem* (*Angel on Vacation*, 1952), directed by Bořivoj Zeman, an instalment in a popular series of films of the 1950s, featuring a zealous ticket controller Mr Anděl (*Angel*), played by Jaroslav Marvan. The film is set in a holiday camp for exemplary workers from all over the country and has a kind of

musical structure, with several subplots and numerous characters who one by one take central stage, in due course to leave it to the next character, as well as playing ensemble. One of these subplots concerns a couple, still married, but experiencing a profound crisis, a sign of which is the wife filing for divorce. Both are dismayed to meet each other at the hotel and initially they want to return home, but the conflict around who should return and who stay, and the persuasion of the Party official, prevent their departure. They learn that their coming to this place was not a coincidence but a plot on the part of the Party organisation that wanted to offer them an opportunity for reconciliation. Indeed, exactly this then happens, as during the time they spend away from their natural environment they begin to discuss the reasons for their conflict. It turns out that the wife was frustrated by staying at home; she would like to seek fulfilment in paid employment to which her husband objected. Eventually, he understands her mindset and accepts her wish. Thus their 'adopted father', the Party secretary, and the whole political organisation he represents, succeed in two objectives at once: mending the rift between the spouses and helping the economy to overcome the problem of manpower, which at the time could be alleviated largely by mobilising women into the workforce.

By contrast to *Angel on Vacation*, in a later episode in the adventures of Mr Anděl, *Anděl na horách* (*Angel in the Mountains*, 1955), also directed by Zeman, the central role is given to a biological father – Mr Anděl himself. This time he travels to a resort in the Tatra mountains to spy on his son's fiancée and in this way to find out whether she is suitable to become young Anděl's wife. However, he mistakes the girlfriend of his son's fiancée for her and comes to the completely wrong conclusion that she



Figure 3.1 Jaroslav Marvan as Mr. Anděl in *Anděl na horách* (*Angel in the Mountains*, 1955), directed by Bořivoj Zeman.

cheats on his son with another man. As a result he even attempts to stop their wedding. Luckily, the mistake is corrected when he learns who the real fiancée is. Nevertheless, comparing these two films demonstrates that while the surrogate father who is the Party leader never makes any mistakes and acts for the good of everybody concerned, as well as for the whole country, real fathers can do much damage to the welfare of their children. The obvious conclusion is that the more fatherhood is relocated from family to respectable institutions, such as the Party, school or state, the better for everybody concerned.³

In Poland the fatherly non-fathers appear in such socialist-realistic films as *Opowieść Atlantycka* (*Atlantic Story*, 1954), directed by Wanda Jakubowska, *Przygoda na Mariensztacie* (*An Adventure at Marienstadt*, 1954), directed by Leonard Buczkowski, *Celuloza* (*Cellulose*, 1953) and *Pod gwiazdą frygijską* (*Under the Phrygian Star*, 1954), both directed by Jerzy Kawalerowicz, *Niedaleko Warszawy* (*Not Far From Warsaw*, 1954), directed by Maria Kaniewska, and Andrzej Wajda's *Pokolenie* (*A Generation*, 1954), in which the principles of socialist realism blend with that of the new paradigm – the Polish School. In each of these films the substitute father, typically a communist activist, takes the role of the mentor of the young person (Stachówna 1996: 21–3; Ostrowska 2005: 206). *Adventure on Marienstadt* and *Not Far From Warsaw* can be seen as Polish counterparts of *Angel on Vacation* because in these films the role of the Party secretary is to help overcome sexist prejudices predominating in factories and families. The words directed to the father of the female steelworker in Kaniewska's film perfectly capture the importance of the substitute father and the redundancy or even harmfulness of the real father: 'You think that you brought up your daughter? Wielicki [the Party secretary] brought her up, the steelworks brought her up, the working class brought her up, not you.'

I want to pay special attention to the woodcutter Blachier (Stanisław Kwaskowski) in *Atlantic Story*, despite its rather exotic setting on the Atlantic coast of France. As an uncle of a ten-year-old boy named Gaston, whose mother was killed by the police during a trade union demonstration and father was jailed for participating in the workers' movement, he is a kind of link between the real family and the communist organisation. Blachier educates his nephew in the spirit of socialism, telling him about the injustices of capitalism and imperialism. He also adopts this role in relation to Bernard, Gaston's peer, who comes to the coast on holiday with his bourgeois parents. In contrast to Blachier, Bernard's father, Doctor Oliver, is very conservative in his political views and home arrangements. He strongly rejects the idea of the French colonies gaining independence and is very strict with his son, whom he would rather see spending the whole summer in solitude than mixing with the children of the local workers. Despite his father's attitude, Bernard strikes up a secret friendship with Gaston. The boys, trying to discover who steals their fish, find in a Second World War bunker a hungry German fugitive who left the Foreign Legion because he could not accept its brutal suppressing of Indo-China's independence. At first Bernard, indoctrinated by his nationalistic father, rejects the story, claiming that the French could not do anything dishonourable, either in his own country, or abroad, but is eventually persuaded by

Gaston and his uncle to accept the soldier's version. The film ends with Bernard and his parents leaving the village. Their car is driven through a crowd of woodworkers, taking part in a protest against the employers. Among them are Gaston, his uncle and the soldier, who was given shelter by the workers. Bernard, who observes the demonstration from the window of his car, shouts to his friends that he did not betray them to anybody. Thus, Jakubowska makes us believe that the seeds of socialist ideology were planted in the young organism thanks to the 'good gardener' Blachier. In a wider sense, the film conveys the idea that good surrogate (socialist) fathers are able to overcome the influence of bad (capitalist) home.

In other films the Party secretary acts both as an educator, moulding the young person in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism and as a matchmaker, introducing him to his future girlfriend or wife. Take Sekuła (Janusz Paluszkiwicz) in *A Generation*, who explains to a young worker Stach the principles of capitalist exploitation and introduces him to the young communist Dorota who becomes his flame. It is worth adding that the woman, who is more mature than the man, if not in terms of age, then politically, also takes the role of mother. We find a similar arrangement in *Under the Phrygian Star* where a young worker Szczęsny has an older communist mentor Olejniczak (Bolesław Płotnicki) and a girlfriend who is politically more experienced than him, and therefore behaves more like his mother than his girlfriend.

Both in Czechoslovak and Polish socialist-realistic films the surrogate father is a 'mature' father, often he could be the grandfather of his adopted son or daughter. The gap in age fulfils two functions. Firstly, it endows the older man with knowledge and experience that a man twenty or so years younger might not have. It is so important because the young socialist characters tend to be impulsive and hot-tempered. Take Szczęsny in *Under the Phrygian Star* who kills a spy without consulting anybody. His act is rational but it is against Party discipline and he realises it only after a conversation with the old comrade Olejniczak. Similarly, the young conspirators in *A Generation* want to fight the Nazis immediately, without proper preparation, thus committing themselves to an inevitable defeat. Secondly, in the case of male offspring the difference in age reduces the possibility that the father might compete with the child for the commodities he is after, such as a position of power or an attractive woman. If we employ psychoanalysis, we can come to the conclusion that the construction of the substitute father as an asexual figure on the brink of retirement removes the danger of Oedipal competition between father and son. It is also worth noting that typically the substitute father does not have children of his own, or at least they are not shown in the film, to avoid any competition between two sets of children: real and adopted.

This idealised image of substitute fatherhood did not last forever. The decline of socialist realism allowed for more realistic and critical depictions of men in father-like roles, as well as a gradual shift in interest from surrogate to real fathers. However, the surrogate fathers survived both in Polish, Czech and Slovak cinema, and can be found up to the present day, although their behaviour towards their 'children' changed. In the Czechoslovak post-socialist-realistic cinema the focus is on the surrogate fathers' lack of success in moulding the young generation according to the

old principles, or even simply in helping them to fulfil their most basic desires and needs. We observe this phenomenon in two films by Ladislav Helge, *Škola otců* (*School for Fathers*, 1957) and *Velká Samota* (*Great Solitude*, 1959). In the first film a middle-aged Mr Pelikán (Karel Höger), takes a post as teacher in a village school. The pupils there have very good marks but Mr Pelikán discovers that this is not thanks to their talents or hard work but due to pressure exerted by parents and the educational authorities (and in a further instance, the Party – the ultimate 'mother and father') on the teachers and the headmaster to demonstrate their achievements. Mr Pelikán opposes such an approach and for the children's good gives them worse marks than his predecessor. Although in the end he wins the children's trust and respect, as well as the heart of a young and attractive colleague, he leaves the village in disappointment.



Figure 3.2 Karel Höger as Mr Pelikán in *Škola otců* (*School for Fathers*, 1957), directed by Ladislav Helge.

In *Great Solitude* a young Party enthusiast brings to a degree of prosperity a foundering cooperative farm by using dictatorial methods, but in so doing loses the affection and the confidence of the people. It is worth mentioning that the characters who occupy the positions of fathers in Helge's films are significantly younger than those in socialist-realistic films and here lies part of the responsibility for their failure. Being young, they lack the experience and patience their counterparts in the earlier films revealed. Similarly, their subordinates do not treat them with the same respect which they would show if they were twenty or thirty years older.

The role of fathers, real and surrogate, was reexamined in later films that looked at Stalinism with a critical eye. Such films were made predominantly in Poland in the 1970s and early 1980s, thanks to the easing of censorship. Examples are *Wahadeltko* (*Shilly, Shally*, 1981), directed by Filip Bajon, and *Człowiek z marmuru* (*Man of Marble*, 1977), directed by Andrzej Wajda, which I will discuss in detail, *Matka Królów* (*Mother of the Kings*, 1982), directed by Janusz Zaorski, *Wielki bieg* (*Big Race*, 1981), directed by Jerzy Domaradzki, *Dreszcze* (*Shivers*, 1981), directed by Wojciech Marczewski and *Niedzielne igraszki* (*Sunday Games*, 1983), directed by Robert Gliński, almost constituting a genre of its own. By contrast, the severe post-invasion regime in Czechoslovakia did not allow any frank discussion about the late 1940s and the first half of the 1950s.

Bajon's film centres on a relationship between son Michał (Janusz Gajos), and his mother (Halina Gryglaszewska) whose devotion to the cause of communism made her a shock worker, exceeding the production norms many times but at the price of neglecting her children, especially her sickly son. She did not even spare her time to visit Michał in a sanatorium and ultimately caused his mental breakdown and prolonged incapacity. The film also addresses the communist attempt to project to children the figure of a political leader as the father figure. We see it in an imaginary scene opening the film, in which small Michał enters a large hall where Christmas celebrations unfold. There a man clad as Santa Claus hands him a Christmas present. The boy, however, shouts that he is not Santa Claus and pulls the artificial beard and moustache from his face. After that the man himself removes the remaining pieces of his Christmas attire, revealing that in reality he is Stalin (whose portrait is also hanging on the wall). Subsequently the fake Father Christmas pats the boy on his shoulder in a friendly manner. In the next scene, set in the present, a man is sweating in his bed and rubbing his shoulder, at the same place he was touched by Stalin, as if he wanted to get rid of any remnants of this contact. The nightmare indicates that the boy does not want Stalin to usurp the role of Santa Claus, normally taken by biological fathers. His outrage and fear, which do not disappear even after thirty years, can also be regarded as his yearning for a real father, not one imposed on him by the state. However, unlike Michał's yearning for a proper mother, which he fully realises and articulates, his desire to have a father remains unspoken and suppressed. During the course of the film we learn that Michał knew his father but it is hinted that he was an alcoholic, marginalised in his professional and family life. We can guess that he was an absent father who had ceded his parental duties to his wife and the state. In this way he avoided his son's hatred and his bitter love, all of which was invested in his mother, testimony of which is Michał's attempt to emulate her political career in communist organisations. The ultimate proof that the Stalinist approach to bringing up children did not work is Michał and his sister's childlessness. It could be argued that the metaphorical marriage of stakhanovite mothers with their sexless, political leaders produced a generation of degenerate and sterile children. Having said that, I want to draw attention to the difference between Michał and his sister. Although she is unmarried and possibly, as her brother alleges, sexually frustrated (one sign of which is her growing of phallic cucumbers), she comes across as less traumatised by the family situation and better

adapted to adult life. Thus, it could be argued, Stalinism has a particularly destructive influence on the relations between fathers/parents and sons.

The eponymous 'Man of Marble' of Wajda's film, Mateusz Birkut, a shock worker from the 1950s, is a metaphorical Stalinist son in the vein of young protagonists of socialist-realistic classics, as he faithfully follows the ideas promoted by the Party leaders. He also becomes a metaphorical father once the authorities choose him as a hero of socialist work, to be immortalised on posters and statues, and emulated by succeeding generations. Wajda focuses on various fabrications and falsifications used in the process of producing a model superson and superfather. At the same time he shows that such a fabrication destroyed Birkut's family relations, including that with his own son, Maciek Tomczyk. The fact that Maciek does not even bear his father's surname but that of his mother suggests the gap between father and son caused by subordinating family ties to political ideas in Poland of the 1950s. However, unlike Bajon, Wajda shows that despite the gap there is also real connection and closeness. It is demonstrated by the son choosing a similar career to his father as a worker and political activist fighting for a better life for ordinary people in Poland and remaining honest and true to himself. Most importantly, as Anita Skwara notes, the resemblance of father and son's biographies is conveyed by Wajda's casting in the role of father and son the same actor, Jerzy Radziwiłowicz (Skwara 2006: 322). It feels as if by such a choice he is saying that ideologies come and go, binding and dividing people, but blood ties remain.

Shilly, Shally and *Man of Marble* do not have its obvious counterpart in Czech or Slovak cinema, namely a film that would look critically at Stalinist fathers. As the closest to this model I will regard *Larks on a String* (*Skřivánci na niti*, 1969–1990), directed by Jiří Menzel, Juraj Herz's *Spalovač mrtvol* (*The Cremator*, 1968) and *Pelíšky* (*Cosy Dens*, 1999) by Jan Hřebejk, despite neither of them being set during the period of Czechoslovak Stalinism. Other films that touch upon the problem of Stalinist fathers, including Stalin himself, although more obliquely, include *Josef Kilián* (1964) by Pavel Juráček and *Farářův konec* (*End of a Priest*, 1968) by Evald Schorm.

Larks on a String, set in the late 1940s, depicts various enemies of the communist state being reeducated through work on a scrapyard, and a trade union official (Rudolf Hrušínský), who takes the role of their substitute father, as well as mentor and leader of the wider community. Superficially, he is the man who acts for the welfare of his 'children', but his interventions only worsen their situation. He is responsible for increasing the smelting quotas of the workers till they go on strike, for which they are subsequently punished. He prevents the young couple, Pavel and Jitka, from making love after their wedding, by forcing Pavel to take part in a demonstration for some elderly activist. Finally, the trade unionist turns out to be a sexual abuser of a poor Gypsy girl whom he visits in her flat under the pretext of teaching her about hygiene.

The Cremator, which is based on the novel *Spalovač mrtvol* (1967) by Ladislav Fuks, is set before the Second World War and addresses the influence of Nazism on ordinary Czechs, but can also be seen as alluding to the impact of any totalitarian ideology, including Stalinism, on family and society at large. Herz himself

encouraged such reading of his film by shooting a different ending of his film that included an image of the Russian occupation tanks passing through Prague. Of course, this ending did not find its way into the final version of the film for censorship reasons (Bird 2006: 8–9). In Herz's rendering of the totalitarian reality, personal relations are subordinated to ideological directives and even closest relatives are judged according to their value or usefulness to a certain ideological project, rather than cherished because of personal ties, not unlike in the famous story of Pavlik Morozov. As a result of adapting such an approach, the protagonist, Mr Kopfrkingl kills his wife and his son because he regards them as weak, racially impure (his wife is half-Jewish, therefore his children also carry Jewish blood), effete and useless. However, by killing his son, Kopfrkingl testifies to his own deficiency as a male and father. Interestingly, although Kopfrkingl manages to murder his son, he fails to kill his daughter; she escapes from her father's crematorium. Her survival, as the survival of Michal's sister in *Shilly, Shally*, confirms the idea that Stalinism proved especially damaging to sons.

Hřebejk's film, that was made after the collapse of communism, is set in Prague during Christmas 1967 and the days leading up to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia on 21 August 1968. It focuses on two families, living in the same apartment block. One is headed by Sebek (Miroslav Donutil), a high-ranking military commander who is fiercely, indeed caricaturally loyal to the communist regime; the other by Kraus (Jiří Kodet), a veteran of the anti-communist resistance. Although the men have opposing political views, they are similar in being very authoritarian toward their offspring. They expect their teenage children, respectively a son, Michal and a daughter, Jitka, to follow in their footsteps. This does not happen, but not so much due to their opposing their fathers' opinions, as because they reject their autocratic style and show little interest in politics. It could be said that Jitka and Michal's world is anti-totalitarian: softer, more feminine, tolerant and heterogeneous. Jitka is very close to her sick mother, whom the father accuses of being a hypochondriac and plotting against him; Michal dreams about trendy Western clothes which his friend wears and decorates his flat with a poster of Mick Jagger – an icon of androgyny in the 1960s. Moreover, the children are friendly with each other despite the deep antagonism between the older men.

In contrast to the appearances of toughness, the fathers turn out to be juvenile, solipsistic and misled in their views. The dissident father builds models of war memorials to Czech pilots who died in the Second World War and keeps repeating that the 'Bolsheviks will lose in one, maximum two years'. The father who is a zealous communist has a penchant for inventions in culinary equipment by scientists from neighbouring countries and predicts that socialist science and economy will soon overtake their Western counterpart. However, like Kraus, Sebek proves wrong – the East German plastic spoons he buys melt in tea and 'unbreakable' glasses from Poland break. In *Cosy Dens* we also find the familiar motif of a father who is more fatherly toward the children who are not his than to his own offspring. This is the case with Kraus – he prefers the son of his new girlfriend than his own daughter. Hřebejk's fathers are represented caustically but they never come across as truly demonic or

dangerous, as did Kopfrkingl. Andrew Horton explains the 'cosiness' of *Cosy Dens* by its being produced by the state-owned Czech Television whose productions are 'Central European cinema's answer to day-time television' (Horton 1999b), namely films that are populist and 'safe' to be watched by the whole family. Indeed, one believes that a truly Stalinist father, as well as a truly Stalinist son, is a creation not fit for such audience but rather for fans of psychological thrillers and horrors.

Generational Conflict in the 1960s

In Czechoslovak films of the 1960s the figure of the father gained particular prominence. Both substitute fathers and real fathers feature extensively in the Czechoslovak New Wave films. Their strong presence, however, can be attributed not so much to their importance per se, as to the preoccupation of this paradigm with youth, especially with the difficult passage from adolescence to adulthood, often resulting from the refusal of the protagonist to grow up. This refusal, that is typically treated with sympathy by the (often young himself) director, can be regarded as a metaphor for his rejection of socialism as an ideology that requires responsibility and maturity even from the youngest members of society (Liehm 1983: 213). Similarly, the father figure who attempts to prevent or at least contain the rebellious youth is usually criticised and ridiculed, or at least represented as ineffectual. Another reason why we find so many fathers and sons in the New Wave films, as opposed to mothers and daughters, is their sheer masculinism. As Petra Hanáková argues, 'the New Wave films—more often than the movies of earlier periods—generalise the man's story as a universal human story' (Hanáková 2005b: 63).

The films of Miloš Forman are an excellent illustration of a rebellious attitude on the part of the director (Škvorecký 1971: 79; Liehm 1983). We see it first in his medium-length debut films, *Kdyby ty muziky nebyly* (*If There Were No Music*, 1963) and *Konkurs* (*Audition*, 1963). In the first film the leaders of two amateur brass bands try to give a moral lesson to two young musicians who had put the pleasure of watching a motorcycle race above a rehearsal for an annual brass band competition. As a punishment for their lack of dedication they are expelled from the bands. However, the young men easily outwit their 'fathers' by each joining the band from which the other was expelled and receiving a warm welcome there.

Forman shows that the older men are not only ineffective in their educational efforts but they have no right to preach to the youngsters about the importance of 'their' music, because the music they are playing is mediocre. In reality, there is little difference between the motorcycle race and the fireman's ball where one of the bands is playing. It can even be argued that the race is of a higher quality than the band's performance as it offers the audience more thrill. Hence, in the conflict between older and younger generations it is the former that is mistaken. Forman conveys the superiority of the 'sons' over their 'fathers' not only through the construction of the narrative, but also visually. For example, one of the band conductors (Jan Vostrčil) is overweight and when conducting perspires heavily, cutting a rather comical figure.

In *Audition* older men are juxtaposed with young women who audition for a pop group. The men are the judges and the boss of a young hairdresser who sneaks out of her work to take part in the talent competition. The majority of the girls lack talent but despite that they come across as victorious, whilst their surrogate fathers prove less impressive. This is because the girls are full of energy and enthusiasm, unlike the authoritarian and conservative men.

If *There Were No Music and Audition* render the spectacle as a privileged type of a relation between the men of authority and their surrogate children. Children perform for their fathers to get good marks, fathers perform for their children to convince them of their superiority and deserve their respect. There is a lack of sincerity on both parts. Ultimately, Forman shows that basing one's relationship on performance precludes partnership and true understanding between the generations. However, members of the younger generation can be excused for pretending because they did not establish the rules of the spectacle. Their elders prepared the spectacles, therefore are to blame. The show performed by the young for the elder and vice versa can be regarded as a metaphor of the mode of communication between the socialist authorities and the citizens. Neither the socialist authorities nor the citizens are sincere towards each other, but it is the authorities that are mostly to blame for the inauthenticity of their relationship.

The relation between the young person and his father and other men of authority is rendered as a performance also in the next Forman film, *Černý Petr* (*Black Peter*, 1964). Petr (Ladislav Jakim) is a supermarket apprentice surrounded by older men who try to teach him how to live. His father is an overpowering figure who feeds his son with lengthy sermons about his own achievements and values, and his plans for his son. He does not hide the fact that he wants the son to imitate him, both in his general outlook on life and in specific situations. However, his advice is either unattractive for a young person or impractical, or even contradictory, which betrays the father's lack of any morals (Świątochowska 2003: 48). For example, the father admits that he had little pleasure in his life and had to thwart his views and emotions – in short, to be a conformist and a hypocrite – in order to achieve what he achieved. He gives Petr such tips as, 'Do not interfere in anything!', 'One is lucky who is near the manger!', 'Observe and be vigilant!'. These tips are not only repulsive due to their moral viciousness but also due to their contrast with the father's modest achievements: his rather unappealing apartment, an unattractive and unsophisticated wife and a son who ignores him. Typically the father stands or walks when Petr is sitting, which gives the impression that the father is the conductor of an orchestra instructing musicians. In fact, he is a conductor in an amateur brass band and he is played by Jan Vostřil who was also the brass band conductor in *If There Were No Music* (and who in reality was a brass band conductor). Father's educating style is so intimidating that Petr never confides in him, only reluctantly replies to his questions. The boy's lack of confidence makes his father angry and further increases the distance between them. Thus, we observe a vicious circle of the father's intimidation, the son's rebellion (albeit a rather quiet one) and his withdrawal from meaningful communication, which feeds the father's anger and exasperation.

Petr's boss, the manager of the supermarket, not unlike his father, gives Petr little opportunity to express his opinion or show initiative. He does not listen to him, only gives him orders and critically comments on his behaviour. Moreover, the manager's advice is inconsistent, which points to the same lack of morals and hypocrisy that Forman exposes in Petr's father. For example, he tells his young employee that he trusts his clients but at the same time gives him the task of spying on them, because 'some people are stealing'. He also at one point claims that working in a shop is a good job, while later admitting that this occupation has become totally feminised and only boys who are complete idiots come to work there. It is worth mentioning that for Petr's father the feminisation of the retail sector means a greater chance for his son to be promoted. He correctly assumes that where there are many women working in a particular profession, the only man among them will be their boss (Scott 1976: 117–37). Nobody in the film questions such blatant sexism, contradicting the official socialist ideology of equal opportunities for men and women. Other older men also do not miss the chance to play the role of surrogate fathers for younger men, albeit for a short time. A man at a ball, for example, noticing that Petr is smoking a cigarette, tells him that he would beat him up if he was his father. The foreman of Petr's friend Čenda so severely criticises the boy for getting drunk that he reduces the young workman to tears. On the whole, the older men have little tolerance for weaknesses of the young, although they reveal those very vices that they criticise in the younger generation.

The mentality revealed by the generation of fathers in *If There Were No Music* and, to a greater extent, in *Black Peter*, bears resemblance to the mindset described by Václav Havel in his famous essay, 'The power of the powerless' and Miroslav Kusý in 'Chartism and "real socialism"' (Havel 1985; Kusý 1985). The core of Havel's reasoning is that Czechoslovak society of the period known as real socialism (that covers the time depicted by Forman in his Czechoslovak films) is post-totalitarian. He argues that the inner aim of the post-totalitarian system is not a mere preservation of power in the hands of a ruling clique (as is the case in classical dictatorship), but making everybody in the system complicit with its aims and its functioning. Even those at the very bottom of the political hierarchy are thus both its victims and pillars by almost automatically accepting and perpetuating the rituals prescribed to them by the ideology. By pulling everyone into its power structure, the post-totalitarian system makes everyone an instrument of a mutual totality, the auto-totally of society. Kusý in his article shows how the system successfully ties people's interests to the formal acceptance of the 'as if' ideology – to a 'silent agreement' between the powerful and the powerless. In this way, they both survive. Havel and Kusý point to the dependence of the system on citizens' willingness to live a lie. Havel links this willingness to being consumption-oriented, rather than being focused on preserving one's spiritual and moral integrity. 'The post-totalitarian system has been built on foundations laid by the historical encounter between dictatorship and the consumer society' (Havel 1985: 38).

Forman shows no trust in the older generation to liberate itself from the shackles of Czechoslovak socialism because it reveals all the features that Havel identifies as

demanded by post-totalitarian rule: conformity, uniformity, discipline and hypocrisy, and which other authors identify as specific to the Czech or Central European mentality (Kroutvor 2001). The marches favoured by the 'fathers' in *If there Were No Music* and *Black Peter* perfectly encapsulate the first three values. Forman shows that the 'sons' might be different because they reveal opposite characteristics to their fathers, ones that Havel regards as pertaining to the aims of life: plurality, freedom, spontaneity. Thus, what unfolds on screen can be regarded as a struggle between life itself and post-totalitarian ideology. Off-screen Forman confirms this diagnosis, claiming in an interview given in 1968 that he chooses young characters because of their nonconformity (Kopaněnová 1968: 177). However, Forman's young people come into conflict with the older men not so much because they are purposefully rebellious, as because they focus on the present day and want to enjoy their lives. They are in conflict with their elders simply because they are young. In such a positioning of young people lies both a certain pessimism and the optimism of Forman's films. They are pessimistic because they predict that when the teenage 'Peters' of the 1960s reach their fathers' age, they will become like them: opportunistic, hypocritical and consumerist; and optimistic, because they suggest that there will always be a section of the Czechoslovak population that will not succumb to the post-totalitarianism – the young generation. This ambiguity of the film's message is excellently conveyed by the ending of *Black Peter* which presents a frozen frame of Petr's preaching father: a sign of the never-ending preaching of the older Czechs, but also of the chance of young Czechs to switch themselves off. From the current perspective we can say that Forman was right on both accounts. His 'Peters' created the conformist, consumerist society of the 1970s and 1980s. Yet, in the next decade this country also demonstrated its ability to break with the old ways, largely thanks to the efforts of the younger generation (Holý 1996: 145–8).

The way Forman represents young males in his first two films bears similarity to the way which, according to Laura Mulvey, women are portrayed in mainstream movies (Mulvey 1975). They are typically looked at by those in power while themselves are too shy to return their look. They are talked to, while they themselves are (almost) mute. They also remain outside the sphere of ideology and politics, perhaps because they are not aware of the advantages deriving from following certain political rules, especially from, as Kusý puts it, living 'as if'. In addition, their affinity for fresh air, for such pleasures as boating, sunbathing or even watching motorcycle races, situates them in the sphere of nature and outside culture. Hence, it could be argued that the lack of women in the New Wave films, to which Hanáková justly points, led to the young men taking women's place.

Forman's next film, *Lásky jedné plavovlásky* (*A Blonde in Love*, 1965) is set amongst the workers at a shoe factory. The very organisation of the factory attests to the patriarchal character of the socialist economy, masked by the rhetoric about championing women's cause by giving them the right to work. The factory employs hundreds of young women; only its manager (Josef Kolb) is male. Moreover, the work is manual, mechanical and low paid, and involves the uprooting and institutionalisation of its female work force; the young women live in a hostel, in

cramped rooms where they are not allowed to receive male visitors. By contrast, the manager appears to come from the village where the factory is set and does not live in such conditions as his employees. Forman constructs the factory manager as a well-meaning and asexual 'father' who, unlike his socialist-realistic predecessors, does not have any ideological ambitions for 'his girls'; he simply wants them to be content, probably partly out of altruism and partly to avoid problems at work resulting from their sexual frustration. His recipe is to provide the young women with their 'mating' partners by inviting soldiers to take part in a large party. However, he finds it difficult because of the very patriarchy of which he is a beneficiary. Firstly, he has to overcome the resistance of the army representative. Played by Jan Vostrčil, who largely repeats his character from Forman's earlier films, this man personally does not want to make such a decision, but prefers his superiors to decide – which points to the widespread malaise suffered by people living under socialism: passivity and fear of responsibility. Moreover, he cannot identify with the needs of the young generation, especially anything of a sexual nature. When the manager tries to explain to him that his employees want 'what all of us need', he appears not to understand, and when he finally grasps that the director is talking about sex, he makes it clear that he regards it as something which only refers to young people. The manager finally persuades the military man, and Vostrčil's character soon disappears from the picture, but the consequences of his blunder, in which he sends army veterans, rather than young soldiers, to the village, casts a shadow on all subsequent events. As a result of the lack of young men, one of the girls, Andula, ends up with the piano player at the party, and follows him to Prague. There she encounters another father – the father of her sweetheart Milda (Josef Šebánek). Unlike Vostrčil's characters, who come across as overbearing and intolerant, or the manager of the factory, who is energetic and practical, and despite his meagre stature commands some real power, the father of the pianist is completely emasculated and powerless. Short, balding and overweight, he comes across as a couch potato totally dominated by his nagging wife. Neither does he serve as a role model for his son who earns more than him (despite only starting his adult life) and is well aware of the father's inferior position towards his mother. The father of the pianist proves better disposed to Andula than his mother who is outraged by her visit, but it can be interpreted as a sign of his powerlessness and detachment from the family problems. As a person who makes no decisions about the household, he can afford to be friendly to a stranger and his friendliness does not change Andula's situation: she has to return home.

Such a diminished father as that of Milda's dad bears associations with Bly's 'modern father'. 'When a father sits down at the table', writes Bly, 'he seems weak and insignificant, and we all sense that fathers no longer fill as large a space in the room as nineteenth-century fathers did' (Bly 1991: 98). Bly argues that the weak father creates a problem for a son: how should he imagine his own life as a man? (ibid.: 99). Forman answers this question by portraying Milda as a man who tries to be everything his father is not: promiscuous, hedonistic, outgoing, able to charm and control women, interested in live entertainment rather than sitting in front of the television. However, if Milda can be regarded as an attractive model for a young single

man, we cannot regard him as a viable model of a father. His behaviour towards Andula suggests that if she became pregnant with him (as Milda's mother suspects), he would try to escape any responsibility for his child and its mother. It is worth mentioning here that such a scenario was presented in a film made in Czechoslovakia several years earlier, *Tam na konečné* (*House at the Terminus*, 1957), directed by Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos. In this film a young female student meets a charming and worldly man with a penchant for parties, who appears to fall in love with her, but abandons her when she becomes pregnant and refuses to have an abortion.

The diminishing of fathers, as represented by Forman in *A Blonde in Love*, attests not only to the actual lifestyles and positions of Czechoslovak men in the 1960s, but also indicates the weakening of patriarchy as a basis of organisation of Czechoslovak society. Other signs of its crumbling include Andula's ex-boyfriend's Tonda illegal entrance to the dormitory where Andula lives, causing almost mayhem there, and the girls' attitude to the 'sex education' offered them by their matron. Superficially they agree with her preaching, according to which girls should not cheapen themselves by going to bed with men before marriage, but in reality they, not unlike young men, want fun and do not think much about their future. The crumbling of the 'Law of the Father', as shown by Forman, might be linked to his premonition of the Prague Spring, a movement that would overcome patriarchy Czechoslovak-style by creating a more egalitarian, less puritanical and hypocritical society, albeit only for a short while.

While in *A Blonde in Love*, and earlier films by Forman, the fathers, both biological and surrogate, function predominantly as individuals, in his last Czechoslovak film, *Hoří, má panenko* (*The Firemen's Ball*, 1967) he represents older men en masse. Similarly, he shows younger people acting together, although spontaneously. This shift is significant because such a representation allows us to see not only the vertical relationships between fathers and their children, but also fathers and their children in horizontal relations between themselves. Such a portrayal affords a better insight into the workings of Czechoslovak society as a whole (Horton 2000; Hames 2005: 126). Being firemen (an occupation which bears resemblance with such professions as soldiers and policemen) involves a significant amount of masculine authority, as only men could be firemen in Czechoslovakia. The director alludes to their patriarchal power by making them organise a grand ball, which in socialist countries was the preserve of those who were in the position of political power, not least because socialist ideology was hostile towards spontaneous festivity. The ball is meant to include the presentation of a ceremonial hatchet to their retired president and a beauty contest, of course for women. Again, the character played by Vostrčil gets centre stage, being the current president of the fire brigade. This time, however, he comes across as unsure of himself and disorientated, and has little power over the other firemen who disperse during the ball, each following his own agenda. This lack of leadership, unity and order has serious repercussions for the course of the event. The hatchet disappears and the beauty contest is marred by corruption and bribery, and ends in chaos, with an old woman crowning herself queen. As Peter Hames observes, although the girls who take part in the competition lack beauty and manners, in the end they prove more dignified than the lecherous and hypocritical

men who surround them. They also appear to be more in control of their lives than the men who cannot deliver what they intended (Hames 2005: 121–3). The final blow to patriarchal authority and professional competence is their failure to extinguish a real fire. Thus, if the firemen stand for the Czechoslovakian (patriarchal) state, this is a state in utter disorder and decline. We can guess that it will show little resistance to a radical change exacted from below, by those who are marginalised and silenced: the young people and women, because they are unspoilt (or at least less spoilt) by corruption, greed and hypocrisy.

From the perspective of representing father–child relationships, Forman's Czech films offer a certain trajectory. This trajectory leads from all-powerful and self-confident fathers to fathers who are weak, disoriented, ineffectual and seeking children's attention and cooperation, and from children who are sheepish and only passively resist their fathers' power to children who openly reject their authority and make the older men feel redundant. Step by step Forman strips the older men of their authority, demonstrating that they owe it to patriarchal tradition and current political culture in Czechoslovakia, as opposed to their personal achievements and charisma. Consequently, it reveals patriarchy Czechoslovak-style as vulnerable, as proved by the Czech Spring.

Whilst Forman's films focus on the relation between older men and their teenage children, a number of Czech New Wave films deal with the problems faced by young fathers. Examples are *Návrat ztraceného syna* (*Return of the Prodigal Son*, 1966), by Evald Schorm, and *Křik* (*The Cry*, 1963), directed by Jaromil Jireš. Before I move to Schorm's film, it is worth mentioning that its director combined making feature films with documentaries and devoted some of the latter ostensibly to the problem of the purpose of life, which is also a central issue in his feature films. In *Proc?* (*Why?*, 1964) Schorm asks people why they do not want more children. This question and the answers he receives point, as Jan Žalman argues, to the 'conflicts between the declared wish of society and the undeclared facts of living standards' (Žalman 1968: 66). The society, or the state, wants people to proliferate to create a larger workforce to fill factories and cooperative farms. The people, however, do not want children, because they undermine their quality of life. Moreover, they are convinced that bringing children into a world full of conflict and chaos might be not a generous act towards the future generation. The pessimism, present in *Why?*, which the director himself regards as an important feature of his cinema (Branko 1996: 69) and which we can also find in his *Každý den odvahy* (*Everyday Courage*, 1964), permeates *Return of the Prodigal Son*. At the centre Schorm situates a young engineer named Jan (Jan Kačer) who is both the real father of little Klarka and a surrogate son for a number of men (and women). Jan experiences a profound crisis that leads to his suicide attempt and hospitalisation on a psychiatric ward. This crisis has several dimensions, including his strained relationship with his wife and her parents, as well as his refusal to work. The title of the film, alluding to the Biblical story of a the prodigal son, iconography, consisting of cars and other means of transport, and the narrative form, that can be described as 'travel cinema', afford the film a metaphorical dimension. It is clear that Schorm attempts to universalise Jan's condition, seeing in it that of every

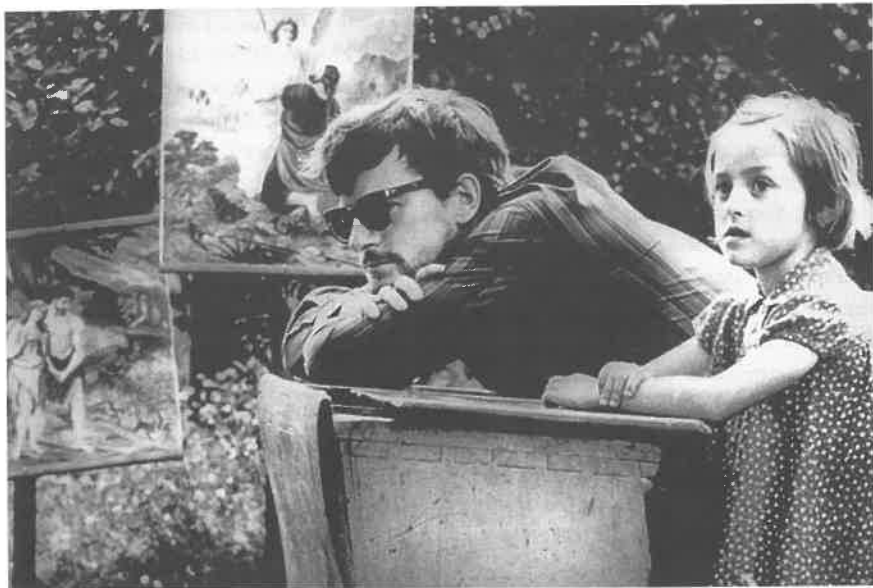


Figure 3.3 Jan Kačer as Jan and Klara Kačerová as Klarka in *Návrat ztraceného syna* (*Return of the Prodigal Son*, 1966), directed by Evald Schorm.

man. However, what is more interesting for me is not Jan as an everyman, but as a young Czech.

For Peter Hames, Jan is mostly a victim of the lack of democracy in Czechoslovakia, and of his wife, as conveyed by such a statement: 'A basic problem in his life is his relationship with his insecure and neurotic wife Jana (Jana Brejchová). She is unable to help him face reality because she is incapable of doing so herself' (Hames 2005: 90–1). Jana has an affair when Jan is in hospital but I would not regard her as neurotic or blame her for Jan's withdrawal from reality. If there is anybody to blame for this unhappy state, it is Jan himself. He comes across as an immature individual who refuses to get on with his life and places blame for his own shortcomings on others. Although he is pampered by those around him (for example, his parents-in-law offer him the best food at the table and his work-mates organise a party to welcome him back to the office), he never gives anything to anybody. Even when he accepts his responsibilities, he does not act upon them. For instance, when Jana reproaches her husband for leaving all the housework to her, he accepts her arguments, but does so absent-mindedly, as if he were bored with his wife's prosaic complaints. On the other hand, he has demands, as shown in a scene with Jana, where he asks her to prove that she loves him by standing on her head.

Jan can be regarded as a symbol of a postwar generation of Czech and Slovak men that fell victim of a socialist nanny state that, by making their life easy, disrupted their passage from boyhood to adulthood. What would happen to Jan and others like him in a different, more challenging reality? Such a speculation is encouraged by Josef Škvorecký and Peter Hames who draw attention to Schorm's interest in Jerzy

Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds* and Wajda's film based on this novel (Škvorecký 1971: 141). Hames claims that the dark glasses Jan sports make him look similar to Maciek Chełmicki in Wajda's film (Hames 2005: 94).⁴ Consequently, it could be argued that *Return of the Prodigal Son* is the story of the 'Maciek Chełmicki' who never took part in the war. If so, we can conclude that for Czech mutations of Polish 'Macieks' there is no hope of happiness. If they go to war, they would be killed, and if they live in peace, they will grow frustrated and alienated from society. Never having a chance to be soldiers, they prove unable to be fathers, husbands and workers.

Jana's lover, Jiří (Jiří Menzel) is represented rather as Klarka's new father than Jana's new partner. Therefore Jana's unfaithfulness, in my opinion, testifies not to her weakness, but rather to her resourcefulness, especially her desire to ensure that her daughter has a father, at least surrogate. Jiří puts the little girl to bed, tells her a fairy-tale and gives her a dummy. In this way he appears to be a more considerate father than Jan who usually shows his daughter little attention. Another surrogate father of Klarka is Zdenek, a circus artist and Jan's homosexual friend from the mental asylum, to whom Jan and Jana entrust their daughter when they go to discuss their affairs. Again, Zdenek proves to be a good companion for the little girl, showing her various tricks and making her laugh.

Schorm also gives Jan two surrogate fathers: his father-in-law and the psychiatrist (Jan's birth father is never mentioned). The former conforms to the model of the domesticated man, whose position at home is insignificant. He has little authority over Jan and his only chance to exert any pressure on his son-in-law is through Jana. The doctor, on the other hand, has a chance to become a figure of authority for the young patient, as revealed by their discussions about the meaning of life. However, not unlike fathers in Forman's film, the psychiatrist squanders his chance by being himself thwarted and dishonest. Although he tells Jan that life is worth living, he himself lives like a zombie, experiencing no stronger emotions. Work appears to him only a matter of mechanically repeating the same prescriptions. More importantly, there is no love left in his marriage, as reflected in his wife's search for romance with his patients. The marriage is also literally sterile, as they have no children. Jan seduces the psychiatrist's wife, or more exactly allows himself to be seduced by her, not unlike the mythical Oedipus. On the whole, the figures of his father-in-law and the doctor act as a warning for Jan, showing him what might happen to him if he follows their path. Emasculation of these men might even add to Jan's depression and refusal to live.

The Cry encourages comparison with *Return of the Prodigal Son* because it also employs a narrative form of travel cinema (or, more precisely, its European version) and casts as the main character a young man separated from his wife, this time, however, due to her stay at the maternity hospital where she is giving birth to their first child. Yet, unlike Jan in *Return of the Prodigal Son*, who belongs to the intelligentsia, Slávek (Josef Abrhám) is a member of the working class: he earns his living by repairing television sets. This job is furnished with erotic undertones; television repairmen have been associated with affairs with bored housewives ready for romance. Jireš plays on these associations but only to frustrate them. During his working hours Slávek meets women willing to be seduced, but he remains faithful to

his wife. Moreover, like Jan, he encounters hypocrisy and hostility 'communist style'. The former is epitomised by the meaningless jargon employed by some party dignitary in whose office he repairs a television set. The latter we see most vividly in the scene of the harassment of a young black boy. Moreover, Slávek's wandering through the city is accompanied by excerpts from newsreels, 'giving a striking impression of the chaotic, uncertain, half-mad world into which the baby is to be born' (Žalman 1968: 64). Yet, these situations do not shake his optimism or make him anxious or withdrawn, but lead Jireš's protagonist to action, for example to standing in defence of the black boy. Waiting for the birth of his child also fills Slávek with reminiscences of the happy time he spent with his wife. It appears that the main reason for bringing new life into the 'half-mad world' is to make the child part of a loving family. Slávek's honesty and simplicity make us believe that love can counterbalance the hostility and madness of the wider world. At the same time as making us enchanted with young, innocent and idealistic parents, Jireš hints at the pitfalls of family life: routine, lack of freedom, overwork, as at the scene on the maternity ward when an older mother complains to Slávek's wife Ivana that before going into hospital she had to do extra cleaning and cooking for her husband. Her complaint makes us think that to be a husband and father in Czechoslovakia is merely to fulfil a decorative function; the real work of parenting is done by women.

When Polish films from the 1960s represent the father-son axis, they depict it against the background of a love affair. Typically the father and son are interested in the same woman. Consequently, the conflict between generations comes across as more serious and difficult to overcome than in Czech films. Whilst Czech cinematic fathers act in, however misguided, good faith, trying to further the son's position in the world, with regards to Polish films this assumption cannot be made. The fathers are often their sons' worst enemies and vice versa. This rule applies mostly to films about surrogate fathers, but hostility is also present in natural families. The difference can partly be explained by different genres used by respective filmmakers. Czechoslovak directors mostly use comedy to interrogate the relationship between older and younger men; Polish ones inscribe it into the structure of thriller or psychological drama. This difference can also be attributed to political and ideological factors, namely the filmmakers' perception of different generations competing for the same goods, rather than settling for what the authorities allocate to them. This competition, which is barely present in Czechoslovak films of the 1960s, in my opinion, bears testimony to Polish society of this period being less egalitarian and more economically polarised than its southern neighbour; a feature confirmed by sociological research (Scott 1976; Holý 1996).

The first Polish film that exposes the hostility between surrogate father and son with full force is *Nóż w wodzie* (*Knife in the Water*, 1961) by Roman Polański. Andrzej (Leon Niemczyk), the middle-aged owner of the yacht where the film is set, invites a young student (Zygmunt Malanowicz) to accompany him and his wife Krystyna on a sailing expedition on the Mazurian lakes. Andrzej ascribes the guest the role of his surrogate son who should respectfully learn from his 'father'. Instead, the young man appropriates the role of an Oedipus, seducing his 'mother' and



Figure 3.4 Leon Niemczyk as Andrzej and Zygmunt Malanowicz as student in *Nóż w wodzie* (*Knife in the Water*, 1961), directed by Roman Polański.

disposing of his 'father' who is left in the deep water searching for the student whom he deems drowned (Wexman 1987: 28). This unfortunate scenario is mostly of Andrzej's own making. Contrary to the impression the older man tries to give, he does not really want to teach the student useful skills, but only to gain control over him and humiliate him in front of his wife. If he can be compared to a father at all, then only to an abusive parent who takes revenge on his children for the wounds inflicted on him by the world.

Knife in the Water was interpreted as a metaphor of a young Polish citizen's rejection of socialist authority that is paternalistic, hypocritical and inept, of a political system that pretends to have authority, whilst in reality possesses only power. However, although Polański puts greater blame on the 'father's' sins, his 'son' is also far from innocent, proving disloyal and contemptuous towards Andrzej. Moreover, there is an aggressive edge to him, signified by the knife he carries with him. Although Polański shot his film shortly before the Czech New Wave began, the living standard of his characters, marked by the Western car the couple drive to the Mazurian lakes, the yacht and its luxurious furnishings, has no equivalent in Czech films of the 1960s. Hence, it could be argued that whilst in the eyes of Czech sons their fathers are losers not worthy of emulating, for Polish sons the fathers constitute models. They must be imitated or overthrown for the young generation to gain similar prosperity and power because, as Polański points out in his film, material wealth and positions of power are very scarce in Poland. As the student notes, there are only a handful of Western cars on Warsaw streets and only one yacht on the entire Mazurian lakes.

Můj druhý oženek (*My Second Marriage*, 1963) by Zbigniew Kuźmiński casts as the in character the farmer Marcin (Mariusz Dmochowski), with a teenage son. After death of his wife Marcin faces the choice of marrying a poor widow or a richer, younger and more attractive woman. His son wants him to choose the older and less active woman, but Marcin opts for the younger girl, despite her having a bad reputation and being pregnant by another man. Although ostensibly economic factors are at the fore of Marcin's marital plans, it could be argued that his decision is imposed by his fear of being defeated by his son in the sexual game. Similarly, the son's approval of his father's choice of wife can be seen as deriving from the Oedipal anxiety that he will be forced to compete with his father for a woman and, whoever wins this competition, it will have deadly consequences for the father-son relationship.

'Holy Family' after the New Waves

During the period of 'normalisation' the family remained a privileged zone for Czech and Slovak filmmakers. Its significance even increased. This was partly due to censorship, which prevented filmmakers from dealing openly with contentious political subjects, and partly to the character of life during this period, when the vast majority of Czechs and Slovaks withdrew from political and indeed, any communal life into the private space of their houses as the only place they perceived to be sheltered from state. Thus the chasm had grown between public and private space (Booth 1996: 16-30; Booth 2005: 43-4). The increased domesticity, encouraged by the political authority, impacted more on Czech and Slovak men than women because domestication was the accepted cultural norm for women anyway (Booth 2005: 43-4), making the men feel out of place, emasculated and powerless.

Jaroslav Papoušek's saga about the Homolkas is an important work both in terms of representing family relationships, including that between father and son, and as a bridge between the Czechoslovak New Wave and post-New Wave cinema, not least because Papoušek wrote scripts for some of the most important New Wave films, such as Forman's *Black Peter* and *A Blonde in Love* and Ivan Passer's *Intimní osvětlení* (*Intimate Lighting*, 1965) (that will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5). In *Ecce homo Homolka* (1969), Papoušek introduces us to the Homolkas, who are an extended family consisting of the grandparents (Josef Šebánek and Marie Motlová), parents Ludva and Heduš (František Husák and Helena Růžičková) and their twin sons of about six, Mata and Peta (twin sons of Miloš Forman of the same names), living in a flat in Prague. Nobody in this family has any space of their own and each member of the family has only a choice to be with different members of the family. Whilst this is not a source of conflict as such, it exacerbates all conflicts as nobody has a chance to reflect on their behaviour and cool down their emotions. The lack of personal space and claustrophobia is underscored by the motif of locking the door. Just as the grandfather is locked up by the grandmother as a punishment for undoing the bed in an act of anger, then the son locks himself up to detach himself from the conflict, and eventually the children lock themselves to emulate their elders.

Papoušek's film has a musical structure, with characters one by one taking central stage, as well as performing ensemble with the rest of the family. This allows more accurate presentation of the dynamics between various members of the family and the impact of performing particular roles. We learn that the Homolkas are divided along gender lines. Ludva emulates his father; Heduš, albeit to a lesser extent, her mother-in-law. The most conspicuous feature of the men is their desire to have fun together, away from women. They grow frustrated when their efforts to achieve this goal are doomed. When Heduš does not allow Ludva to see a football match because she wants the whole family to go to the horse races, he gets drunk. Similarly, the grandfather gets angry when his wife does not allow him to smoke in the bedroom. For the men, their ability to enjoy themselves is the main index of their masculine power. It could be argued that such a construction of masculinity was a consequence of the sociopolitical situation in Czechoslovakia, namely the reduction of the opportunities for self-fulfilment and participation in the public sphere. However, their efforts of male Homolkas to be 'masculine' are continuously thwarted by women. The grandmother locks her husband in the bedroom, telling him that she will only let him out after he makes the bed that he undid in an act of anger. He tries various tricks to avoid her requests, but when they fail he resigns himself to doing as she requested.

The grandfather is played by Josef Šebánek, who previously played Milda's father in *A Blonde in Love*, confirming his appearance as a man fighting against but ultimately overpowered by his wife. By extension, it corroborates the impression that Czech fathers are not patriarchs, but emasculated and domesticated men.



Figure 3.5 Helena Růžičková as Heduš and František Husák as Ludva in *Ecce homo Homolka* (1969), directed by Jaroslav Papoušek.

Domestication of Czech men does not mean, however, that they are represented as 'new men' as this concept is understood in the West, taking responsibility in equal measure for housework and bringing up children. Papoušek shows that the bulk of domestic work, including cooking, cleaning and looking after the children, is still done by women. As a result men come across as parasites or at best as trophies for which women fight among each other. We see it most acutely in the scene when the Homolka women dispute whom Ludva loves more, his wife or his mother.

Despite all the tensions and frictions and each member of the family claiming at some point that they are unhappy and their lives are wasted, the Homolkas do not come across as miserable or dysfunctional. It rather feels like their lives are a mixture of small problems and joys. Moreover, despite their lack of ambitions and achievements, they are not devoid of pride, which is located predominantly in the youngest generation; they believe they did all they could for the two small boys and the boys will make up for their shortcoming. Images of the Holy Family, decorating their house, on which they comment in the course of their conversations, suggest that the Homolkas perceive themselves as descendants of Christ's family (Waczków 1970: 8). Another source of their pride is their conviction that they are paradigmatic of Czech or even Czechoslovak society, as expressed by the grandfather who at one point says, 'I am the state'. Although this statement is treated with derision by the remaining members of the Homolka family, the director appears to endorse Mr Homolka's claim. Even the fact that he names his characters Homolka, which can be translated as Czechoslovak or Czech man, testifies to regarding them as the ultimate Czechs.

Ecce homo Homolka is a liminal film, rooted in the Czech New Wave and at the same time belonging to the cinema of 'normalisation'. The reason for its liminality is not only the date of its production but also the way it represents relations between older and younger generations, namely emptying it of any signs of the sons' rebellion against their fathers. Unlike in *A Blonde in Love* or *The Firemen's Ball* the children here do not attempt to taste freedom – they put up with their parents. It might be to do with the fact that they are older and better know their own limitations, or with the fact that the neo-Stalinist times are less conducive to rebellion. As I implied earlier, conflict between generations is largely replaced by war between the sexes. Father and son keep together, because they know that their women are against them. What also strikes one in Papoušek's film, when compared with the films of Forman or *Intimate Lighting*, is the lack of communal spirit. The Homolkas are a microcosm which does not interact with the outside world. The famous large balls where the young generation can meet their peers, assert their group identity and difference from their elders, are here replaced by domestic pleasures, most importantly watching television. Actually, the Homolkas do not watch television but not because they do not want to, but because their television set is broken. Indeed, Papoušek implies that if not for the failure of the television set, they would all be content.⁵ It is worth mentioning that television had very bad connotations in Czechoslovak and Polish anti-communist discourse. It was condemned as a transmitter of lies, as in the Polish anti-communist slogan from the first period of Solidarity, 'Television lies' (which paradoxically points to the failure of communism as a means of propaganda). Television is also seen as an

instrument of disintegration of identity, of changing the individual into a passive consumer, a member of a herd, easily lulled, manipulated and ultimately morally barren. The last assertion, as Robert Pynsent observes, frequently appears in Havel's writings (Pynsent 1994: 23–5). We can infer that Papoušek shares some of the criticisms Havel directs to television and consumer culture in a wider sense. For example, in the first scene of the film he alludes to the indifference and the herd mentality of Czechs by showing everyone visiting the woods running away when they hear a woman crying, possibly because she is raped. Yet, he also sees in consumer culture good points, such as providing human beings with (simple) pleasure, a value which the austere anti-communists such as Havel reject.

The two following instalments of the Homolka saga perfectly illustrate the social trends captured by *Ecce homo Homolka*, namely the relative cohesion of the average Czech family and its preoccupation with consumption. In *Hogo fogo Homolka* (1970) we encounter the Homolkas at the moment they acquire a new Skoda. This purchase, which in the 1970s testified to above-average prosperity, makes them so happy that the grandfather announces that 'from now on our life will be a fairytale'. After playing tourists for a while in Prague, visiting the Charles Bridge and the airport, and squabbling about where to go, they decide to visit the parents of Mrs Homolková (Ludva's grandparents). This visit, on the one hand, testifies to the importance of the intergenerational ties for ordinary Czechs, but on the other, to the younger generation treating their parents and grandparents as a heavy burden. When the Homolkas reach their destination, the father of Mrs Homolková is not there. He is at a hunting festival, after which he starts drinking with his friend and misses his relatives. They, annoyed by his absence, complain that their sacrifice is not appreciated and that they wasted their time that might have been spent on attending a football match. On the way home they stop to see the place where Mrs Homolková almost drowned when she was a child and one by one jump into the water. Not far from this spot the old man, exhausted from his drunken spree, collapses and probably dies without seeing his daughter. Although this conclusion is far from cheerful, *Hogo fogo Homolka*, in common with the first part in the Homolka saga, does not come across as a film about a crisis of the Czech family, but rather its strength and stability. Again, it feels as if for the Homolkas there is nothing in life but family; it is their only interest and purpose in life.

The last part of the Homolka saga, *Homolka a tobolka* (*Homolka and his Suitcase*, 1972) confirms this diagnosis. The Homolkas go on holiday to the mountains; this being their next step on the road to affluence. There two families want to exchange their rooms with them, because they were given one large room, rather than two separate ones. Although initially the Homolkas reject the offer of exchange, as the holiday gives them a chance to be together but separately and enjoy some privacy, in the end they agree, bribed with money and compliments. This exchange points to their greed, as well as to the fact that they do not need their privacy very much, they are happy together, all six of them, wives and husbands, children, parents and grandparents. The series of films about Homolka, in which little changes over a number of years apart from the growth in the living standard of the eponymous

family, constitutes for me a paean to the stability and health of the average Czech family. This effect is remarkable because Papoušek does not attempt to idealise his characters but instead focuses on their shortcomings.

Polish films of the 1970s about fathers and sons (real and surrogate) are dominated by the figure of a competitive and vicious father, familiar from *Knife in the Water* (Radkiewicz 2005). We can argue that in his only 'proper' Polish film (ironically in the times of its premiere regarded as un-Polish) Polański created a genre of his own that stayed in Polish cinema for good. Not surprisingly films of this kind erupted in the period known as 'the decade of the propaganda of success', when Edward Gierek was the Party leader. In this period Poland opened itself up to Western influences and became more consumerist and less egalitarian. The old socialist principle that citizens should roughly earn and possess the same amount of material assets was practically abandoned. Especially the Party dignitaries and those close to them (*nomenklatura*), as well as the new class of private entrepreneurs, became associated with obscene wealth and consumerist pleasures unattainable to ordinary citizens, instead feeding their frustrations and anger.

The imbalance between the goods to be achieved and the number of people aspiring to them, and the widespread (and not irrational) conviction that not necessarily the best person wins in Poland, created fierce and dishonest competition. Consequently, the 1970s are perceived as a time when Poles could gain much more in material terms than in any other postwar decade, but only by paying a heavy price for their affluence in terms of morality: betraying friends, family and values. The competition took place both between peers and, more often, along the generation boundaries, leading to mutual distrust and hostility. The state aggravated the generational conflict by promoting youth in its propaganda (because old people were associated with antiquated customs and bourgeois ideas), whilst in reality positions of power were occupied by the 'fathers', of which the most striking example was the Party itself, governed by people in their fifties and sixties.

The competition between younger and older men is especially prominent in the films belonging to the Cinema of Moral Concern, the main movement in Polish cinema of the 1970s. However, before I discuss some of the examples I want to consider one of the last films of the previous decade, *Polowanie na muchy* (*Hunting Flies*, 1969), directed by Andrzej Wajda. There are several reasons to consider it here. Firstly, its subject matter, visual style and ideology bear resemblance with some examples of the Cinema of Moral Concern. Secondly, it is a rare Polish film that represents an urban multigenerational family, therefore it invites comparison with *Ecce homo Homolka* which was made the same year. Thirdly, the main role of the young husband Włodek is played by Zygmunt Malanowicz, whom Polański cast as the student in *Knife in the Water*. Włodek was Malanowicz's most important role following Polański's film and in *Hunting Flies* his character refers on many occasions to his life as a student, so one is tempted to regard Włodek as the older version of Polański's protagonist. If so, did Włodek surpass people like Andrzej? My answer is negative. Not only does Włodek not have a yacht and a foreign car, but he has no car at all, and lives with his wife, his son and his in-laws in a small apartment whose

crampedness is heightened by Zygmunt Samosiuk's cinematography. He and his wife Hanka wait for a cooperative flat but it is suggested that it is the wife's parents who are paying the instalments for it. At home, unlike Ludva, for whose favours his wife and mother compete, Wajda's protagonist does not attract much affection from the women in his life. Hanka reproaches him constantly for not visiting the cooperative to push their case, as well as for not earning enough. The mother-in-law suspects him of breaking glasses and other 'petty crimes'. Moreover, the family treats him as a weakling as signified by getting vitamin injections from his wife who is a nurse. When he pulls down his pants and lies on the sofa, waiting for the injection, he seems to be totally defenceless and waiting to be castrated. At the same time, there is much less rapport between Włodek and the oldest man in the house, perhaps because Włodek is not his natural son, only son-in-law. The two men hardly speak to each other; the grandfather spends his days watching television while Włodek taps on his typewriter. The centre of everybody's attention is the youngest member of the family, Włodek and Hanka's son, whom everybody regards as exceptionally intelligent – as we might guess, in contrast to his father. For this clever child the role model is not his father but grandfather who fought in the war. He recites his war stories, and although his renditions sound slightly humorous, they convey the boy's sense of pride and identification with his grandfather. Because the younger couple wait for their own flat and have even bought some furniture for it, life with their in-laws appears very temporary and unsatisfactory, more so than the young Homolkas who have resigned themselves to living with the older generation. At the same time, Wajda is keen to emphasise that Włodek and Hanka are not very young. Włodek in particular looks as if more than eight years had passed since his younger version cruised on the Mazurian lakes in *Knife in the Water*.

Why did the student from *Knife in the Water* achieve so little in life? According to the prevailing interpretation of *Hunting Flies*, it happened because women thwarted him (see Głowacki 1969; Kajewski 1969; Chapter 4). In my opinion, however, women such as Hanka, Włodek's lover Irena and his female boss, although unsympathetic and caricatured, try to help Włodek to further his career and achieve something in life. If Włodek fails, it is not because women are standing in his way to self-fulfilment but rather because the older men do not stimulate him, and the younger regard him as a threat to their position or are too narcissistic to invest any interest in him. The second phenomenon is illustrated in an episode when Włodek approaches Irena's charismatic friend and ex-lover Ołubiec and tells him about his frustrations and ambitions, only to be told in the end to 'sod off'. The whole high society, which Włodek aspires to since befriending Irena, is depicted as utterly snobbish, mercenary and hypocritical. Nobody there is doing anything for free, all relationships are based on a precise assessment of whether the person can help in one's career. This statement refers principally to men; women ultimately prove less selfish than their partners. It even feels that they are able to sacrifice themselves to help their men, as do Irena and Hanka for Włodek. Yet Włodek rejects their sacrifice, not because he wants to achieve everything by himself but because the women's emotional investment in him lays bare his numerous inadequacies. Wajda suggests that Włodek's attitude might be widespread among men

by including, in the key scene of the party for Warsaw intellectuals, snobs and nouveaux riches, a male musical band who during their performance start to cry while singing 'O Mother, mother, what I am doing here?'

Films about surrogate fathers blossomed in the Cinema of Moral Concern, a movement of the second half of the 1970s, finishing symbolically in 1981, when martial law was announced. They conveyed the spirit of competition between old and young pertaining to this period and, as Dobrochna Dabert maintains, the need to find a stable value system in a world permeated by moral relativism (Dabert 2003: 107–15; see also Kornatowska 1990: 171–92). There are several types of surrogate fathers in this cinema. One is the 'perfect' surrogate father, best represented by John Lasocki (John Gielgud) in *Dyrygent* (*Conductor*, 1979), directed by Andrzej Wajda, and Karlik Habryka (Augustyn Halotta) in *Paciorki jednego różańca* (*Rosary Beads*, 1979), by Kazimierz Kutz. Lasocki is a famous Polish expatriate conductor, living in New York, who returns to Poland to guest-conduct a provincial orchestra. He immediately gains the trust of the musicians, who are inspired by his modesty and genuine love of music, contrasting with the attitude of their usual conductor for whom music is only a passport to career. Habryka is an old Silesian miner who refuses to move from his old house to a block of flats. Although, as Dabert notes, Habryka is not a role model for his own children who are very pragmatic about where they live, he represents authority for his grandson (Dabert 2003: 108). Neither Lasocki nor Habryka belong to mainstream Polish society. They normally live either outside Polish space (Lasocki) or time (Habryka) (on Kutz's character see Mazierska 2000: 184–5). Being detached from the problems of ordinary Polish people, they constitute a utopian model that cannot be emulated by their 'sons'. However, they are presented as important to them thanks to bringing moral anxiety in their lives and in this way helping them to discern between right and wrong.

The second type of surrogate father created by the Cinema of Moral Concern is a man who uses the success of his 'sons' to further his own career or substitutes their successes for his own victory. We find a paradigmatic example of such a father in *Szansa* (*Opportunity*, 1979) by Feliks Falk – a teacher of physical education named Janota (Krzysztof Zaleski) who, on being employed in a provincial college, attempts to make his subject a peak of the school curriculum. He achieves his goal but at the heavy price of forcing students to neglect other subjects, even blackmailing and tormenting them and leading one pupil to suicide, as well as antagonising other teachers, especially the gentle head of history. There is no doubt that Janota is not a man of spotless character but rather than demonising him, Falk accuses for his sins the harsh reality of the 1970s that does not allow ambitious men such as Janota flourish. There is no doubt that if the teacher used moral means to fulfil his objectives, he would be ineffectual.

The third and largest category of substitute father consists of men who are in positions of authority over younger men (or women) and are shown respect and trust by their 'children' but betray their trust. It happens because they turn out to be too selfish or weak to measure up to the expectations of a younger generation. Dabert labels men of this kind as possessing 'false authority' (Dabert 2003: 110–2). We find

them in *Aktorzy prowincjonalni* (*Provincial Actors*, 1978), directed by Agnieszka Holland, *Przypadek* (*Blind Chance*, 1981), directed by Krzysztof Kieślowski, *Barwy ochronne* (*Camouflage*, 1976), directed by Krzysztof Zanussi, *Matka Królów* (*Mother of the Kings*, 1982), directed by Janusz Zaorski and *Wielki Szu* (*Big Szu*, 1982), directed by Sylwester Chęciński. The men of false authority can be further divided into two groups. In one we find the old communists, such as Werner (Tadeusz Łomnicki) in *Blind Chance*. He comes across as a decent man, bearing a resemblance with the father figures of earlier Polish films, such as Olejniczak in *Under the Phrygian Star* and Szczuka in *Ashes and Diamonds*. However, his advice to trust the Party does not do the young man any good, because the Party is disgraced; joining it equals morally polluting oneself. Consequently, the 'communist father' from the films of the 1970s and 1980s proves to be a less charismatic and sympathetic figure than his predecessor in the films made twenty or so years earlier.

The second subcategory of men of false authority is comprised of narcissistic men who use their 'sons' as pawns in advancing their careers or as a means to boost their fragile egos. Sometimes they come across as deeply ambiguous characters in which cynicism combines with yearning for the idealism and honesty which the young men epitomise and which they themselves have lost. Such an ambiguous character is Jakub Szelestowski (Zbigniew Zapasiewicz), a well-established, middle-aged academic, who takes the role of mentor of Jarosław Kruszyński (Piotr Garlicki), his much younger colleague who is only beginning his academic career. Szelestowski attempts to demonstrate to Kruszyński that Polish academia is nepotistic and corrupt and if he wants to stay there and advance on the social ladder, he has to give up his idealism. However, it is not clear whether he does it to save Kruszyński from humiliation by people who are less well-disposed to him, and in this way help him to make a less painful transition to adult life, or to impress him with his insider's knowledge of academia, or to justify his own behaviour in the eyes of the younger man and his own. It is also possible that, as Dabert argues, deep down Szelestowski remains an honest and sensitive man and only plays an opportunist to test the moral conscience of Kruszyński (ibid.: 116). All these motivations are plausible. What is beyond doubt, however, is that Szelestowski comes across as a poisonous father, who destroys his son's good opinion about the world and himself.

In the 1970s and 1980s Zanussi also became the leading film author to explore relations within real families, again focusing on the father–son relationship. In *Życie rodzinne* (*Family Life*, 1970) and *Kontrakt* (*Contract*, 1980) the main issue is the sons' right and ability to lead an independent life, away from their overbearing, but also lonely and ultimately vulnerable fathers. In *Family Life* a young engineer, Wit Braun (Daniel Olbrychski), informed that his father is dying, returns home where his father (Jan Kreczmar) lives with his sister-in-law and an adult daughter, Bella. Before the war the father owned a large glass works that he inherited from his father of German origin. Now he has only a small and unprofitable workshop producing Christmas decorations that recently declined further due to an accident he caused. Bella makes clear to Wit that they survive by selling the family's possessions: antique furniture, paintings, even the garden. The decline of the Brauns' estate is matched by the

decline of the family itself. The father is an alcoholic who brews alcohol illegally in his workshop, Bella is a nymphomaniac who was previously sent to jail for 'debauchery', Wit and Bella's mother left home a long time ago to live abroad and the aunt is reduced to being their servant. The father wants Wit to stay at home and take over his business, appealing to his sense of duty and luring him with the prospect of having his own car, but the son refuses and leaves his family for good, to continue his life in Chorzów, an industrial town which epitomises the success of Polish postwar industry. Yet there are ambiguities in the resolution of Wit's crisis, and the viewer cannot be sure that Wit has left his past behind completely. For example, aboard the train back to Chorzów, 'Wit is suddenly aware of an uncontrollable twitch in his eye and recognises it as a prominent physical trait of his father. Thus this determined young man who has defied his bourgeois past and put his stock in the proletarian future is nonetheless aware that his conversion to a new class identity was perhaps less than complete' (Paul and Fox 1983: 121).

Several times the characters refer to the socialist policy of nationalisation that led to the economic and moral decline of the Brauns, destroying the 'Bly paradise' where sons learnt their craft from their fathers. Beyond their garden, on the grounds that previously belonged to them, there is now a new housing complex, comprising typical socialist blocks of flats that thwart their estate and factory. However, through the *mise-en-scène*, Zanussi demonstrates the superiority of the new, socialist mode of living over the old, aristocratic one. In particular, Wit's friend Marek (Jan Nowicki), with whom he visits his home and who is of peasant's origin, comes across as mentally more balanced and happier than Wit. It is largely through his eyes, those of an educated parvenu, that we look at the Brauns. Moreover, whilst the Brauns appear unable to produce anything, either in the sense of material production or biological reproduction, the 'socialist classes' are represented as fertile and thriving. The construction office, where Wit and Marek work, is doing very well and even receives commissions from Indian investors that are mentioned in the television news. When Wit goes out in the evening for a walk and gazes at the windows of the flats in a block, built on the field that previously belonged to them, he sees a young family with a husband, wife and a child in a brightly lit room. There is a poignant contrast between this image and Wit's family that lurks in a shadow as a bunch of vampires. On the whole, although there is sadness about Wit's final departure, we feel that he makes the right decision.

In *Contract*, Zanussi centres on a man in his twenties named Piotr (Krzysztof Kolberger) who is getting married to a woman of his own age. Although nobody forces them to tie the knot, the young couple behave as if they are marrying to upset their parents who are affluent and influential. The peak of their rebellion is their decision to have a church wedding, although none of them is religious. This act is meant to embarrass their parents who are close to the political establishment. Although superficially the young man despises his father for corruption, snobbery and consumerism, of which the clearest sign is a spacious house near Warsaw where he lives with his second wife, a deeper motif of Piotr's resentment appears to be his conviction that without his father's help he will be unable to start an independent

life. His anger, expressed by setting his father's house on fire, is thus an admission of his helplessness. If we regard *Family Life* and *Contract* not as a separate works, but as a kind of diptych representing the trajectory of a young Polish man during a different periods of socialism, then we can come to the conclusion that he had experienced infantilisation, changing from somebody able to leave his family home and take care of himself, to an individual who is incapable of leading an independent life and defines his fate and identity in relation to his father. This personal trajectory can be interpreted as a metaphor of the changing situation of young men over the decade of the propaganda of success. Ultimately, this trajectory testifies to the loss of social mobility of Poles.

In *Magnat* (*The Magnate*, 1986), Filip Bajon enters a similar territory as Zanussi in *Family Life*, representing a rich family with long traditions, led by Hans Friedrich von Teuss (Jan Nowicki), an aristocrat and industrialist, and a father of three sons, that disintegrates during the course of the twentieth century, partly because of the historical circumstances, especially the ascent of fascism, partly because of the idiosyncrasies of its members, leading to the abandonment of the traditional roles and relationships within the family. The measure of the von Teusses' transgression from the traditional model of the family is the fact that one of the sons has a quasi-Oedipal affair and later marries his father's second wife while the father is still alive. Although this event takes place before the Second World War, it can be regarded as symptomatic of Poland of the 1980s, when the hope of political and social transformation brought about by the brief victory of Solidarity was thwarted. This arguably led to the loss of any moral compass and consequently, to the breakdown of society, including the disintegration of its elementary cell – the family.

Family is also the main focus of the most famous Polish production of the 1980s, Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Decalogue* (*Decalogue*, 1988), a cycle of television films, each evoking a different commandment. This is not surprising as the purpose of most of the commandments is to regulate the private lives of believers. However, what strikes one is the level of transgression from the Christian norms that we find in the families depicted by Kieślowski. Betrayal, promiscuity, lying to one's partner and children, using members' of one's family to achieve selfish objectives, are rampant in them, not unlike in Bajon's *The Magnate*. As a result of these transgressions or, to use Christian terminology, sins, families disintegrate and fatherhood becomes problematic. For example, *Decalogue 2: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*, depicts a married woman who becomes pregnant with her lover while her husband is severely ill with cancer. She considers abortion but her decision in this matter hinges on her husband's chances of survival: she does not want to keep the baby if her husband remains alive. However, he almost miraculously recovers and becomes the father of a child who is not biologically his own. In *Decalogue 4: Honour thy father and thy mother*, a young woman, after discovering a secret letter written by her mother, begins to have doubts whether the father who brought her up single-handedly after the premature death of his wife is indeed her father. These doubts lead to an attempt to seduce her father, towards whom she had incestuous feelings even before she discovered the letter. In *Decalogue 7: Thou shalt not steal*, we find a six-

year-old girl who thinks that her grandparents are her parents, and regards her biological mother as her older sister, and who does not know her biological father, who gave up on her a long time ago.

The characters in these films repeatedly ask questions such as 'Who is my father?', 'Who will be the father of my child?', 'Is the child, who thinks I am his father, really mine?', forcing the viewer to consider the very meaning of fatherhood. While mothers in these films, as Alicja Helman suggests, come across as strong and decisive, governed by their almost naked animal instinct, fathers are portrayed as weak and easily deprived of their offspring (Helman 1999: 124–5). To put it differently, Kieślowski shows that mothers always remain mothers, but fathers can stop being fathers very easily. Thus *Decalogue*, whilst establishing the ten commandments as a moral ideal towards which Polish people should strive, also demonstrates that in the apparently ultra-Catholic Poland of the 1980s the reality and even the concept of fatherhood deviated significantly from the ideas contained in the Catechism. One reason for this deviation appears to be the inhuman environment of the housing estate where Kieślowski's characters lead their lives. In such an environment human bonds disintegrate and the atmosphere of distrust and suspicion grows. Moreover, although Kieślowski does not refer directly to the martial state, his films accurately capture the stagnant atmosphere of the late 1980s, the period of one of the deepest crises in Polish society (on society after martial law see Lewenstein and Melchior 1992).

Deserters, Holy Men, Tyrants and 'Little Moles' in Postcommunist Films

The end of the communist era had a great impact both on the actual situation of men and women in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and the perception of gender roles in society. Crucially, postcommunism is associated with promoting in cultural discourses and implementing through political and legal means a conservative vision of society, in which men and women fulfil traditionally feminine and masculine roles. Most authors equate this phenomenon with the rise of masculinism in Eastern and Central Europe (Wolchik 1991; Kligman 1994; Watson 1993, 1996, 1997; Molyneux 1994, 1996; Gal and Kligman 2000; Graff 2001). For example, Peggy Watson regards this shift as a reaction to the politics and ideology of communism that was perceived as sympathetic to women and claims that it advantages men and disadvantages women.

Traditional views of what 'normal' men and women are have acted as a vehicle for change in Eastern Europe, 'freedom' being associated with the freedom to more fully enact a traditional feminine or masculine identity, untrammelled by the constrictions of the socialist state. However, the changes which have been wrought now offer systematic advantage to men. Civil society means the empowerment of men and the enactment of masculinity on a grand scale. (Watson 1996: 217)

However, as Sharon Wolchik observes, many women in this region welcomed the return to conservative thinking about women and men's place, believing that it would help to overcome the uneven pattern of role change achieved during communist rule (Wolchik 1991: 204). My argument is that the shift towards the conventional approach to the division of labour between the genders within society did not have such a uniformly positive effect on men as Watson and others suggest. Indeed, we observe in the ex-Eastern bloc the rise of masculinism but at the same time a significant proportion of men acutely experienced the negative sides of the transformation which led them to regard the post-1989 period as worse than the times of socialism. The most negative and at the same time widespread of these side-effects was high unemployment (in Poland after 2000 in some periods exceeding twenty per cent). Unemployment affected men not less than women due to the disappearance of typically masculine jobs in heavy industry and high immigration to the West, especially after Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia joined the European Union. As a result of these factors 'postcommunist men' find it particularly difficult to fulfil the traditional masculine role of breadwinner, father and husband. Again, however, we should not overlook here the regional variations: the crisis of male employment was deepest in Poland, followed by Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Consequently, Poland was also most affected by mass migration in the 2000s.

While some men after 1989 have given up or postponed being fathers because they feel that they do not rise to the challenge of fatherhood on economic grounds, others have rejected it because such a role is in conflict with their chosen lifestyle of a single man, namely a man who avoids stable relationships with women. As Krzysztof Arcimowicz argues in reference to Polish postcommunist culture, the model of a single man is in vogue both among younger men and those in their thirties and forties, as it is associated with prolonged youth and complete control over one's life (Arcimowicz 2003: 212–15). The fashion for singlehood can be linked to the Westernisation of Central Europe, as suggested by adopting the term 'single' (*singiel* in Polish) to describe a man who chooses a single life. It could be argued that contemporary Polish, Czech and Slovak men are mimicking their Western colleagues by enjoying what Eve Sedgwick describes as 'ornamental culture' or even following them in rejecting patriarchy as an ideology that is more constraining than liberating (Ehrenreich 1995). Not surprisingly, men's refusal to be fathers, combined with women's anxiety about having children against the background of high unemployment, job insecurity and poverty, has led to further decline in the birth rate in Eastern Europe. After 1989, Poland and the Czech Republic were among the countries with the lowest birth rates in Europe, never exceeding 1.5 children per woman.

Polish, Czech and Slovak cinemas in the 1990s and 2000s reflect this trend of shunning fatherhood by rarely showing young fathers. Men in their twenties and thirties are usually single and they behave as if they were children themselves (see Chapter 4). We could also note an upsurge of men avoiding fatherhood in a more dangerous, even sinister way, by abandoning women who have children with them. Films including men of this kind or only alluding to them (because they are already absent when the young women count the weeks to the delivery of their babies)

erupted in Poland, where the new abortion law, introduced in 1993, was particularly restrictive in comparison with the previous legislation, making abortion illegal in most circumstances (Fuszara 1993). We can list here *Wesele* (*The Wedding*, 2004), directed by Wojciech Smarzowski, *Ono* (*It*, 2004), directed by Małgorzata Szumowska, *Farba* (*Paint*, 1997), directed by Michał Rosa and *Nic* (*Nothing*, 1998), directed by Dorota Kędzierzawska. The young impregnator (Maciej Stuhr) in *The Wedding* attends the wedding of the woman who became pregnant by him, but not as the groom but only to video her wedding with another man. In *Patrząc na ciebie Marysiu* (*I Look at You, Mary*, 1999), directed by Łukasz Barczyk, a young man (Michał Bukowski), who previously appeared to be in love with his charming fiancée, becomes anxious and uncommunicative when she becomes pregnant. He has a total mental breakdown during the wedding, which can obviously be interpreted as a sign of his difficulty to reconcile the expectation of his family to behave 'decently' and his fear of fatherhood. Another young man, appropriately nicknamed 'Młody' (The Young One) (Rafał Mohr) in *Egoiści* (*The Egoists*, 2000), directed by Mariusz Treliński, gets drunk and drugged up when his fiancée is in labour, which is a sign of his neurosis caused by moving from the state of being single to becoming a father. The most drastic case of avoiding responsibilities of fatherhood is depicted in *Nothing*, in which the husband (Janusz Panasewicz) first threatens his wife that he will punish her if she does 'something stupid', and then pretends that he is unaware of his wife's pregnancy with their fourth child. The conclusion to his irresponsible behaviour is hiding when the wife gives birth in the bathroom and then kills their newly born baby.

The negative value of a child for young Polish men can also be measured by the handsome price mothers and their families have to pay men to make them agree to become fathers officially. For example, the groom in *The Wedding* marries a young woman pregnant with another man in exchange for an expensive gift of a sport's car from his wife's family. It is also suggested that 'Młody' in *The Egoists* agrees to marry his pregnant girlfriend because she has rich parents able to support his lavish lifestyle. Women must also lower their expectations when they become pregnant out of wedlock, for example by marrying the least attractive man in the neighbourhood, as was the case of the heroine of *Torowisko* (*Track-way*, 1999), directed by Urszula Urbaniak. With the exception of *Nothing*, whose author makes us aware of the presence of the absent father, so to speak, and his callous behaviour, in the remaining films the man who refuses the paternal role avoids any judgement. Consequently, the impression is given that, unlike motherhood that is a woman's duty, fatherhood is a man's right, which he can take advantage of as he wishes.

In the Czech Republic, where the abortion law did not change after the fall of communism, the motif of a man frightened of fatherhood is subdued but also present. In *Šťěstí* (*Something like Happiness*, 2005), directed by Bohdan Sláma, we find Dasha, who has two small children with a man who, as her neighbour claims, abandoned her soon after the second child was born. The film starts when Dasha has an affair with another married man who, despite claiming that he loves her, does not want to take any responsibility for her and her children which leads to Dasha's mental breakdown.

When she ends up in a mental institution, pregnant with her third child, he installs in her old apartment his next, childless girlfriend. *Návrat idiota* (*Return of the Idiot*, 1999), directed by Saša Gedeon, presents the aftermath of an affair between a young woman and a man whose wife is pregnant. Although the circumstances of their encounter are not explained, one can guess that the lover gives the married man respite from the bonds of domesticity and alleviates his 'prenatal anxiety'.

Sluneční stát aneb hrdinové delnické třídy (*The City of the Sun*, 2005), directed by Martin Šulík, a Slovak director with a special interest in Czech topics, depicts four men made redundant after their factory is sold to a foreign company. Three of them have children and following their mothers' absence (one is an alcoholic, another works full time and the third one, who was previously a housewife, goes to hospital after an accident), they must look after them single-handedly. Although each man's circumstances are different, Šulík makes the point that full-time parenting does not come to them naturally; they have to overcome many external obstacles and internal barriers to reconcile themselves with this role. One of them fails, losing his sons and ending up in a psychiatric hospital. The men are best at playing with their children; providing for them, feeding them and acting as models for them proves much more difficult. Šulík makes us believe that there is a strong connection between man's general well-being and his ability to act as a father. A man 'injured' by unemployment, poverty or loss of a partner, finds it almost impossible to cope with paternity. In this respect women prove much stronger; they can better juggle many social roles.

As if to balance the number of men who do not want to or cannot be fathers present on screen and reflect the growing variety of models of family functioning in postcommunist countries (Račlaw-Markowska 2000), Polish and Czech cinema is awash with stories of men who become excellent surrogate fathers or single fathers. In Polish cinema we find such fathers in *Jutro będzie niebo* (*Tomorrow Will Be Heaven*, 2001), directed by Jarosław Marszewski, *Edi* (2002), directed by Piotr Trzaskalski, *Zmruż oczy* (*Squint Your Eyes*, 2003), directed by Andrzej Jakimowski, *Tato* (*Dad*, 1995), directed by Maciej Ślesicki and *Historie miłosne* (*Love Stories*, 1997), directed by Jerzy Stuhr. The number of these films appears particularly high against the background of rare movies featuring adoptive or single mothers made in a comparable period. Typically, the reason why a man is put in the position of a surrogate parent is the absence of the mother or her inability to look after her own child. In *Dad*, the father (Bogusław Linda), decides to take care of his eight-year-old daughter upon discovering that her mother is mentally ill and therefore a danger to her own child, and the girl's grandmother is a cruel monster who imprisons and abuses the child. In *Edi*, a homeless scrap dealer (Henryk Gołębiewski) is forced into single fatherhood by the brothers of a teenage girl, who became pregnant out of wedlock and concealed the true identity of her child's father, claiming that Edi impregnated her. One of several stories included in *Love Stories* depicts a priest, who decides to leave the Church when he discovers that he has a daughter in an orphanage. The ex-teacher in *Squint Your Eyes*, who left the big city to live in the provinces as a janitor, is looking after a girl who ran away from her own parents,

ing disgusted by their materialistic attitude to life. All the films about surrogate and adoptive fathers draw attention to the immense sacrifices made by men in order to look after their children (Mazierska 2006). Take, for example, the priest (Jerzy Tuhr) in *Love Stories*, who is faced with the choice between resuming his paternal duties, and losing his well-paid job and disgracing himself, or rejecting his daughter's plight and keeping his job. The choice is poignantly presented in his conversation with the bishop who tries to dissuade him from his decision, declaring the superiority of his duties towards God, the Church and his parishioners over the welfare of a 'bastard child'. Almost as difficult as that of the priest is the situation of Michał in *Dad*, who, despite using babysitters, still cannot reconcile parenthood with the busy schedule of a cinematographer and gradually loses job opportunities and falls into debt. Edi must look after a baby having virtually no money to live on. In cases when the man is not the biological father of a child, the directors also emphasise that the adoption is in the child's best interest. Surrogate fathers put their children first and are completely in tune with them. Neither do they grudge children for what they lost by becoming their carers. This is particularly remarkable in the case of Edi who is not only forced to take care of a child who is not his own, but is punished for the alleged 'sin' of sleeping with the baby's mother by being castrated by her brothers.

With the exception of Edi, who looks after a baby boy, all the other men care for girls aged between seven and eleven years. These men, who are usually deeply disillusioned with women, somehow project onto their 'little women' their ideals of womanhood. They want the little girls at the same time to treat them as their mentors, appreciating their intelligence and experience, and look after them. Their



Figure 3.6 Henryk Gołębiewski as Edi in *Edi* (2002), directed by Piotr Trzaskalski.

wishes are fulfilled: unlike adult women, who usually crave for themselves some independence and are more observant and critical of male vices, the 'little women' do not need any freedom and fail to notice men's weak points. In addition, thanks to being with the father, real or surrogate, they can show how mature and resourceful they are. Take, for example, the girl in *Tomorrow Will Be Heaven*, who looks after a man who literally and metaphorically got lost on the road, or Kasia in *Dad*, who cooks for her father, who is extremely clumsy in the kitchen. On the whole, the daughters of single fathers accept the place ascribed to them by Polish patriarchal tradition by becoming humble servants of men in exchange for the protection they receive from them.

The rapport between a man and a small child is often underlined by cinematic devices, especially placing the couple, consisting of a man and the child in one frame, even when they talk to each other, rather than using shot-counter-shot. There is also the tendency to poeticise their relationship by situating them against a landscape untouched by civilisation. Take, for example, the scene when Edi and the baby boy are lying near each other on the pier against the background of a pristine lake. Similarly, in *Squint Your Eyes*, the friendship between Mała and her ex-teacher develops against the beauty of picturesque lakes and forests of Suwalszczyzna region. Such use of mise-en-scène suggests the naturalness of the relationship between a man and a child and consequently, its priority over other relationships the child had in the past and might encounter later in her/his life. It feels like paradise regained.

Once the father takes an active role in taking care of a child, the mother or surrogate mother (such as the grandmother in *Dad*) must disappear from the picture. If she does not do so voluntarily, by dying of natural causes or moving to another town or country, she is annihilated. This event is represented as a positive solution to the problem, restoring the narrative equilibrium. Similarly, when the mother resumes her maternal role, the male carer of the child is required to vanish. This is the case with Edi, who is deprived of his surrogate son when his mother reveals the true identity of the child's father. However, this event is described as a heartbreaking injustice.

Surrogate fatherhood is also frequently featured in Czech cinema. The principal example of this phenomenon is *Kolya* (1996) by Jan Svěrák, which won an Oscar in 1996. Other Czech films about surrogate fatherhood include *Something Like Happiness*, Jan Hřebejk's *Divided We Fall* and *Cosy Dens*, and Svěrák's *Obecná škola* (*The Elementary School*, 1991). In *Kolya*, set in 1988, during the last months of the communist system in Czechoslovakia, the 55-year-old childless František (Zdenek Svěrák) enters into a fictitious marriage with a young Russian woman, Nadezda. When Nadezda heads for Germany and her mother dies, František is forced to look after Nadezda's five-year-old son Kolya. First he does so reluctantly, trying to pass the boy to the social services but gradually he warms to the boy and his new role as the child's stepfather. When the boy is finally reunited with his mother, who takes him to West Germany, they part as the best of friends, or like a real father and son who learnt much from each other, including some of each other's language. We even feel that the boy's place is with his surrogate father rather than his mother. As with *Edi*, the narrative is constructed in such a way that the surrogate father and natural mother cannot look

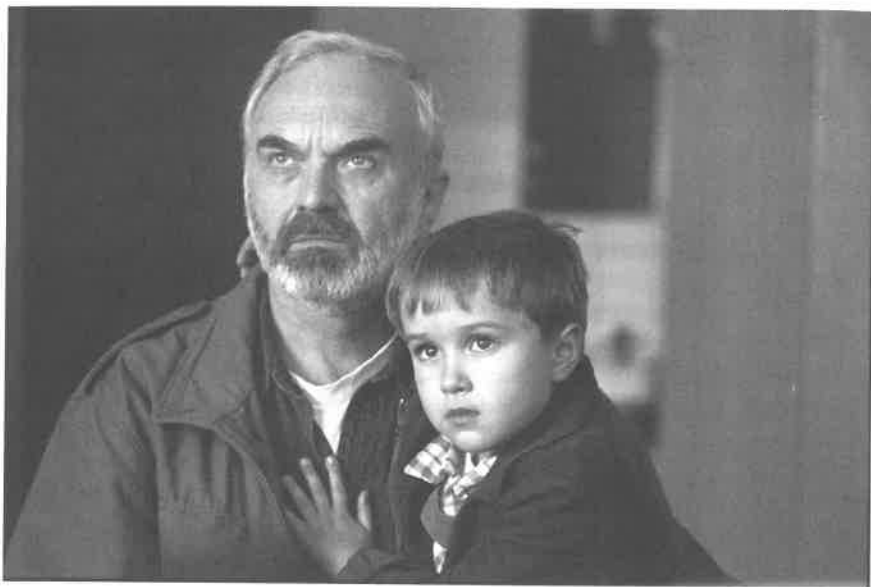


Figure 3.7 Zdenek Svěrák as František and Andrei Chalimon as Kolya in *Kolya* (1996), directed by Jan Svěrák.

after the child together; the ideal family for a child has to consist only of one parent. It appears that in order to get to grips with fatherhood, a man must do it on his own.

Kolya can be regarded simply as about 'how portentous, historical change can creep up on ordinary people with ordinary problems' (Graffy 1997: 47). It can also be seen as a metaphor for the changing positions of the occupiers and the occupied within the Eastern bloc. The Russians, who after the Second World War played the role of the fathers of the Czech nation, are now reduced to the role of the children, in need of help of the Czechs. Kolya, who is small, lost and defenceless in the unknown country, epitomises this situation, but he is not the only Russian who is reduced to such an infantile state. Another person in this position is his mother, who needs Czech documents to emigrate, as well as the Russian soldiers who nominally ensure order in Czechoslovakia but in reality come across as lost and at pains to be on good terms with Czechs. By contrast, František, who was previously thrown out of the philharmonic orchestra for anti-communist behaviour, is forced into the role of a patriarch and a guide for the young Russians lost in his country. He does so reluctantly but ultimately well. His behaviour foretells a new epoch in the Russian–Czech relationships, based on partnership between these two nations or perhaps even benevolent patriarchalism on the part of Czechs.

Against the backdrop of films previously discussed, *Something Like Happiness* is somehow different because it does not set father against mother but instead depicts the advantages for a child of having both parents or even an extended family. Toník (Pavel Liška), the surrogate father in Sláma's film, takes care of the two sons of Dasha, a mentally unstable woman who lives on the same housing estate as him. However,

he does not attempt the informal adoption on his own but with a woman whom he secretly loves, Dasha's friend Monika. Caring for Dasha's children makes Monika realise how important they are for each other. When the children are taken away from them, the whole family disintegrates. We find a similar situation in Hřebejk's *Horem pádem* (*Up and Down*, 2004), in which a childless couple, Franta and Mila, who are banned from adopting due to the man's past as a football hooligan, buy a dark-skinned boy from some people-traffickers. The presence of the baby changes Franta (Jiří Macháček) immensely; he becomes a caring and proud father for whom the child's race does not matter, and he is adamant to break with his old racist acquaintances. When the parents of the boy ask for their son to be returned, Franta's marriage disintegrates and he returns to his old ways as a football hooligan. In the last scene of the film we see him shouting racist slogans when watching a football match with his old mates.

The fact that in Polish films about surrogacy the mother must disappear to allow for the father to take care of the child, whilst in Czech films it is not necessary, can be regarded as the measure of the anti-female sentiment in the respective countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In Poland it appears to be much deeper and widespread, even affecting thinking about the woman's role in the family (Mazierska 2006). It is worth adding that the good surrogate or single fathers are typically the creation of younger directors, who at the time of directing the films did not have children of their own. It is thus plausible to assume that such an idealistic image of fatherhood has something to do with their lack of experience of real fatherhood.

After 1989 we also notice a proliferation of 'poisonous fathers' in Polish and Czech cinema, as indeed in the films of other ex-socialist countries – overpowering, cruel or at least authoritarian men who are unable or unwilling to understand their children and who bear responsibility for their problems. In Czech cinema we find them in the previously discussed *Cosy Dens*, as well as in *Mandragora* (1997) by Wiktor Grodecki (to which I will return in Chapter 5). Grodecki's single father who works in an old-fashioned, communist-style factory in a provincial town is so entrenched in his ideas about 'decent life' and so intolerant to his son's tastes and aspirations, that he drives the boy to an escape that ends tragically. In Poland we find poisonous fathers in a number of films, including Feliks Falk's *Komornik* (*Bailiff*, 2005), but the principle example is offered in *Pręgi* (*Welts*, 2004), directed by Magdalena Piekorz and based on the script of Wojciech Kuczok, a young writer who admitted that his story has an autobiographical dimension.

Piekorz's film is set in two time planes. In the retrospective it casts as the main character a boy named Wojtek who is physically and mentally abused by his single father (Jan Frycz). The suffering inflicted by the father reflects his conviction that in order to make a 'man' of his son, he must instil in him discipline and strength, and therefore punish him for the smallest misdemeanours. Such treatment traumatises the boy and eventually causes the breakdown of their relationship. Wojtek runs away from home, leaving his father a tape on which he records his grudges. Except for his father's funeral, they never meet again. Their final exchange of news is again mediated – on the same tape on which Wojtek recorded his complaints about his

father, the father records his last message to his son, telling him how sorry he was to learn about the boy's suffering. In the present time the adult Wojtek (Michał Żebrowski) reveals many of his father's traits. He lives alone and cherishes such virtues as cleanliness, discipline and endurance, and is full of contempt for people who do not adhere to his value system. However, Wojtek changes after meeting a young woman, who falls in love with him and tries to eradicate his vices inherited from his father. In the last scene he is shown awaiting the outcome of her pregnancy test. Thus, the director suggests, thanks to a woman the cycle of male loneliness and aggression might be broken.

We find a somehow different situation in *Wszyscy jesteśmy Chrystusami* (*We Are All Christs*, 2006) by Marek Koterski, largely based on the director's own life. Here the father (Andrzej Chyra and Marek Kondrat) is not cruel or authoritarian but is an alcoholic, which leads to the breakdown of his marriage and his son's continuous anxiety, shame and hatred. At one point the son even tells his father, 'I wanted you to die'. Father's alcoholism is also an important factor in the son's later drug addiction. However, unlike the authors of *Welts*, Koterski affords his characters time to mend their relationship. The film takes the form of a therapeutic session, with father and his adult son sitting next to each other and discussing their lives, complaining but also explaining themselves and asking forgiveness. Moreover, Koterski demonstrates that at certain stages of their lives father and son change their relationships: the son behaves as if he was the father, helping his father to survive a drinking binge, and the father then assists his son in his attempt to give up drugs. Thus *We Are All Christs* is perhaps the first Polish film that represents father and son as equal partners, able and willing to support each other in their everyday Golgotha.

It should be noted that the poisonous father in both Polish and Czech films is a figure firmly rooted in the communist past. This has partly to do with the fact that the young men who are in a position to judge their fathers were themselves children in the 1970s or 1980s. More importantly, however, the poisonous father reveals a socialist mindset: he is strongly attached to the values and traditions pertaining to communism and the ways 'things were always done'. The obvious conclusion is that bad parenting goes hand in hand with totalitarian ideology, therefore one can hope that fathers of the new epoch will be better.

Another type of father who harks back to the communist past is the domesticated father, overpowered by his wife and overlooked by his own children, treated as an anti-model. This type of man, familiar from the films by Forman, Menzel and Papoušek, returned in Czech cinema in the 1990s. We find him, among others, in *Return of the Idiot*, *Samotáři* (*Loners*, 2000), directed by David Ondříček, *Something Like Happiness* and *Príbehy obyčejného silenství* (*Wrong Side Up*, 2005), directed by Petr Zelenka. For example, the father (Pavel Marek) in *Return of the Idiot*, who is short, overweight and clumsy, is derided by his daughters who nickname him 'Little Mole'.⁶ He even searches at night for food, as did some older men in earlier Czechoslovak films—their appetite for food being a metaphor of their lack of any erotic fulfilment and domestic power, and a means to compensate for this deprivation. Hanka's father (František Němec) in *Loners* is so thwarted by his wife that he cannot even express his own

sentiments. It is the wife who tells him that he is happy – although he feels that he is not. Similarly, the father (Miroslav Krobot) in *Wrong Side Up* is regarded by his wife as a retard whose place should be in a mental asylum. Men in these films openly express nostalgia for the communist past and disappointment with the present. We find the clearest example of this attitude in *Wrong Side Up* where the father, who for several decades had worked as a reader on newsreels, is unable to free himself from the propagandist texts which he used to read. The father in *Something Like Happiness* betrays his mental belonging to the earlier epoch by advising his daughter, whose boyfriend left Prague for the US, that she should give up on him and enjoy her modest life in Prague. Interestingly, in the end the older men prove more in tune with times than their more 'progressive' spouses. For example, the father in *Wrong Side Up* turns out to be healthier than his wife who ends up in a mental hospital.

In Polish films, such as *Amok* (*Stupor*, 1998), directed by Natalia Koryncka-Gruz and *Dług* (*Debt*, 1999), by Krzysztof Krauze, the fathers come across as less senile and domesticated, but equally locked in the past and ineffective in their dealings with their adult children. In *Debt*, father's attachment to tradition is conveyed by him reciting verses from the Polish national poem *Pan Tadeusz*, in *Stupor* – by renovating religious sculptures. Their relatively slow pace of life and their lack of interest in consumerist pleasures is contrasted with their sons' desire to become rich virtually overnight. In both cases the fathers and, by extension, the generation of fathers, whom the sons scorn for their apparent naivete and backwardness, are vindicated. The sons lose morally and financially on their way to quick wealth and freedom. However, their ruin gives their fathers no comfort; it is a mutual loss for fathers and sons.

Sometimes it is Easier to See a UFO than One's Own Father: the Role of the Father in Polish, Czech and Slovak Film

I borrowed the title of the concluding section of this chapter from *Loners*. The words, 'Sometimes it is easier to see a UFO than one's own father', are uttered by Vesna, an immigrant from Macedonia who comes to Prague to look for her father whom she never met. Although they refer to her specific situation, they also ring true in relation to a large proportion of children in Polish and Czechoslovak films. They do not know their fathers; often they never met them or are not sure whether the men whom they address as fathers conceived them. On other occasions the fathers disappoint them so much that they hate them and are reluctant to call them by this title. Fathers and sons often compete with each other, as do the men of different generations; much more rarely do sons try to emulate their fathers and other elders. Yet even an absent or inadequate father proves very important for his child, especially for his son, because his lack or his failures influence the child's identity and his future behaviour. It can happen through allowing other men or institutions to fill the gap the father left, or

rough forcing the child to construct his identity in opposition to the missing or bad father, which typically leads to perpetuating the father's vices. Moreover, sometimes the gap is never filled; the child of the missing father feels a nobody.

Another important feature of the father, as represented in Polish and Czechoslovak films, is his position not next to, but against the mother. Rather than supporting his child's bearer and equally sharing the burden of parenthood, the father either withdraws completely from active parenting, or opposes the mother and usurps her place, becoming a single father. It feels like the father can spread his wings only when he has no competition from a woman. By and large, neither Polish nor Czechoslovak cinema propose a heartening image of fatherhood, whilst acknowledging the significance of this role for family and society at large. If we regard this assessment as true in relationship to the outside world, then in it we find an important reason why men in these countries avoid fatherhood more than their Western counterparts. The consequences of failure to be a good father are dire while any advantages are problematic.

Notes

- Engels emphasised the enslavement embodied in the family by noting that the word 'familia' originally referred to the total number of slaves belonging to one man (Engels 1972: 121).
- The idea that 'it is a man who engenders man' has a long tradition, beginning with Aristotle (Badinter 1995: 67–95).
- Unlike biological fathers, mothers are represented in Czechoslovak socialist realistic films as useful, but marginal – literally and metaphorically relegated to the kitchen.
- A connection between Schorm's protagonist, again played by Kačer, and Maciek Chelmicki is also noticeable in *Everyday Courage*. Schorm himself in an interview mentions Jerzy Andrzejewski as an important source of inspiration (Branko 1996: 69).
- The importance of the television in Papoušek's narrative is openly pronounced by the Polish title of his film, *Straszne skutki awarii telewizora* (*The Horrendous Consequences of the Television Failure*).
- Most likely the origin of this nickname is the popular Czechoslovak animated series, *Krtek* (*Little Mole*), beginning in the 1950s. Little Mole, being small, peaceful and shy, but resourceful, became one of the symbols of postwar Czechoslovakia.

CHAPTER 4

Larks on a String, or Men in Love

No love is possible in an unhappy world.
(Raoul Vaneigem 2001: 41)

Romantic Love and its Discontents

In its singlemindedness, love is weakness, melodrama, a need to suffer.
(Bataille, quoted in Botting and Wilson 1997: 44)

This chapter will analyse the love life of Polish and Czechoslovak men as represented in film. Yet 'love' means different things to different people, as well as in different periods and cultural contexts; therefore it is useful to map out the territory to be explored. Denis de Rougemont notes that, 'Classical Greek used at least sixteen terms to designate love in all its forms: *erōs* for physical love, *agapē* for altruistic love, *philia* for tender or erotic feelings, etc.' (de Rougemont 1983: 5). I will compare all types of loving relationships with 'romantic love', because I believe that this is a model of love that the majority of contemporary viewers have in mind when assessing the attitudes and behaviour of characters in films. Although 'romantic love' is by no means a straightforward concept, I will regard as its crucial component the conviction that love is the highest value in human life. As Susan and Clyde Hendrick put it:

The romantic focus was on love itself, love as the valued ideal, and one that sometimes seemed almost objectless. Religious thinking of the Middle Ages developed the view that 'God is love'. Romanticism stood that concept on its head and evolved as a philosophy that 'love is God'. Romantic love further developed the concept of sexual love as an ideal toward which all men and women could strive for fulfilment. (Hendrick and Hendrick 1992: 39)

Sex is usually regarded as a component of romantic love, as 'sex with love yields both pleasure and meaning' (ibid.:114), but it is possible to love somebody romantically without having a sexual relationship with this person. Indeed, some