

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation will discuss the perception of Polish Cinema in English-language literature. During the collection of my secondary data, which concentrated mainly on English-language books but also includes newspapers and Internet resources, I encountered many interesting issues. These are divided here into three categories discussed in three chapters: 'Stereotypes and Errors' that result from the lack of knowledge thus causing misunderstandings, 'Deficiencies' about the absence of some films and directors in the English-speaking world and 'Different Perspectives' that reveal some interesting comparisons. The judgements applied to define these sections are respectively: accuracy (correctness of the facts), novelty (unknown trends) and originality of ideas (absent in Polish film criticism).

During my research I have discovered the main factors distorting the perception of Polish cinema. I talked about them during my presentation entitled 'English-Language Critical Engagements with Polish Cinema' during the 'Polish Cinema in an International Context' conference held in Manchester in December 2009. Most of these issues are addressed in Chapter One, which outlines the problems that English-language authors seem to have with the Polish language, the background political issues and the lack of knowledge about some of the periods of Polish cinema. Many facts included therein about early Polish cinematography are taken from *Historia filmu* by Płażewski (2001). The history of Polish cinema is presented and this part of the dissertation can also be treated as an introduction to the subject. Books about Polish films and filmmakers are also listed and briefly discussed in this chapter. The chapter also discusses stereotypical perceptions of Polish cinematography in the West reflected in English-language film literature. The chapter is divided into two smaller parts. The first one is called 'History of Polish Cinema' and the second one 'Political Issues'. The errors and misunderstandings which are discussed in this chapter are mostly caused by the lack of knowledge about the different areas.

Chapter Two concentrates on Polish 'cult films', which are mostly comedies. These films are usually completely unknown in the West and ignored by the English-language film literature. This chapter tries to bring these issues closer to the reader. The subject is a black hole and in Western film criticism it is also still just a niche area. A lot of information in this chapter comes from *Leksykon polskich filmów fabularnych* by Słodowski (1997) and also *The Cult Film Reader* by Mathijs and Mendik (2008) which concentrated on the idea of the cult film. The chapter explores little known and overlooked Polish filmmakers such as Piwowski, Bareja, Machulski and Pasikowski, and their films. It is divided into two parts, 'Polish Cult Comedies' and 'Other Polish Cult Films', and reviews cult films which throughout the years proved to be very important for the Polish national identity.

Chapter Three deals with a very interesting comparison between Andrzej Wajda and Krzysztof Kieślowski present in English-language literature but absent in Polish film criticism. It outlines the different ways they both portrayed politics, religion or national issues in their films. In Poland the only person who ever compared them, as two people he knew, was the actor Jerzy Stuhr. However, there is no tradition in Polish film criticism of comparing their work and this new perspective on their films is very refreshing. In this chapter many English-language authors were used as sources. This chapter is divided into three parts, each of which examines different issues in both directors' work, starting with politics, through religion and finishing with the concept of nationality and the ways Wajda and Kieślowski addressed them.

Finally, I summarize all these issues at the end of this dissertation and look closely at the image of Polish cinema disclosed by English-language literature. I concentrate not only on the accuracy and faithful representation of Polish cinema but also at some analyses present in the English-language film criticism. However, accuracy is very important as the lack of it is unprofessional and shows the attitude of some English-language authors who disregard a few important issues. Therefore it is important to pay attention to details in the field of research.

The goal of this dissertation is to show all the different aspects regarding the image of Polish cinematography that are revealed in English-language literature. This way, I wish to prove that the study of the cinematography of a different country is given a wider perspective if one knows more about the country, its language, history and habits. Without this knowledge, only a part of the subject can be accessed and the whole picture can never be seen. It also helps to become familiar with the film criticism of the country to see how it perceives certain issues. However, at the same time it is good to look from the outside, with a different perspective, because it widens horizons and allows us to see things more clearly.

My argument is based on the following question: is it possible to get a true image of Polish cinematography in English-language literature in spite of cultural, political and social isolation? At the beginning it seemed that the answer would be a negative one based, for example, on the fact that the number of books about Polish films in university libraries I visited was much smaller than publications about, for example, French cinema. This fact was already clearly visible just by looking on the shelves and suggested that the perception of Polish films would be weak. However, with time my attitude towards this problem had to change.

Deeper analysis proved that this perception was scattered but wide and present also in those mentioned books about French cinematography. Some Polish directors who worked abroad were mentioned in publications about French or American cinema. Therefore even though my methodology concentrated on books about Polish cinematography and Polish filmmakers, including the scripts of their films, and especially their introductions and afterwords, I looked for information about some of the directors in world film literature. References in all those books directed me to the next ones. I also tried to verify the information found with Polish sources.

CHAPTER 1 – STEREOTYPES AND ERRORS

The Polish language is quite complicated, especially for English-speakers, both grammatically as well as in terms of pronunciation. In addition to that there are many other problems concerning the stereotyping of Polish cinema in English-language film literature, especially the lack of early films, the presence of films only from the post-war period or also problems connected with the Iron Curtain issues. These are all strongly inter-connected with each other, and political reasons are often the origin of these problems.

The main language problem is the lack of the use of Polish diacritics within English-language contexts. It might seem unimportant but it does make a big difference in pronunciation and does not appear to be a problem with filmmakers from other countries such as France (for example François Truffaut and André Téchiné) or Spain (Luis Buñuel). The question raised is why is it possible to use French or Spanish diacritics (for example ç, é or ñ) while Polish diacritics (such as ą, ć, ę, ł, ń, ó, ś, ź and ż) are ignored?

Therefore, Kieślowski throughout the English-language film criticism appears as Kieslowski, Polański becomes Polanski and the most well-known Polish Film School in Łódź becomes a non-existent place called Lodz. Some could also complain about Kraków, which was usually translated as Cracow in English. Recently, however, with the fashion for just removing Polish accents in British English, it has changed to Krakow. I hope it is just a fashion that will pass, as did the trend for changing Polish names into more English sounding versions. Another problem is the misspelling of Polish names. In one of Roman Polański's biographies by Parker from 1993, Andrzej Wajda is called Wadja throughout the whole book thus sounding more Russian than Polish. Another example is Andrzej instead of Andrzej misspelled in 'The Independent' review of *Katyń* by Wajda. Then in *Gazetas* (2000) in the chapter called 'Revisioning History: Contesting Colonialism' two different diacritics are confused and Kieślowski is called Kiesłowski; Lech Wałęsa becomes Waleśa; and Wajda is twice correct (*ibid*, p. 316) but then twice misspelled as Wadja (*ibid*, p. 317).

The last major problem is the declension of nouns or in other words the use of cases in the Polish language, with which most of the English-speaking authors are not familiar. That is why sometimes there are misunderstandings in the translation of titles. For example, *Przygoda na Mariensztacie* in the book by Ford, Hammond and Kudy (2005) was translated into *Adventure in Marienstacie*. Mariensztat is a name of a part of Warsaw, which in this title was declined, and because the locative case of 'Mariensztat' is 'Mariensztacie', this misspelled form was used for the English title, even though it should be *Adventure in Mariensztat* using the first, nominative, case. However, *Dolina Issy* by Wajda, using the genitive case of Issa in the same book, was correctly translated into *Issa Valley*.

Another problem connected with the titles is in their spelling that somehow seems hardly ever corrected when it would be simple enough to ask any Polish-speaking person, even someone not interested in cinema, to proof read them. For example in Rivi (2007, p. 61) Kieślowski's *A Short Film About Killing* is misspelled in Polish as *Krótki film ozabijaniu* when there is no such word as 'ozabijaniu' in Polish. The correct title is *Krótki film o zabijaniu* as these are two different words. Also, unlike in English, in Polish titles only the first word and names are capitalised and the rest of the words are written in lower case letters.

More information and better knowledge of Polish realities would also help in the future to avoid such mistakes as the one in the review of *Katyn* by Wajda from 'The Guardian'. Peter Bradshaw wrote there that the general's wife was played by Jan Englert, a well-known Polish male actor, who actually played the general. Danuta Stenka played his wife. Simply knowing that all Polish female first names end with an 'a' and all male first names with a consonant would have helped prevent the need to amend this article on the very same day – a need probably caused by e-mails from amused Polish readers. I intend to concentrate my studies on explaining such misunderstandings.

1. 1. History of Polish Cinema

Polish cinema became better known and visible to the world after the Second World War (Chaudhuri, 2005, p. 26), in the mid-50s (Manvell, 1966, p. 144), through Wajda's films and other members of the so-called 'Polska szkoła filmowa' – Polish Film School (Hibbin, 1969, p. 88). Polish films became fashionable once again in the 70s (Hill and Church Gibson, 1998, p. 476) following the birth of the 'kino moralnego niepokoju' – a term used for the first time by the director Janusz Kijowski in 1979 and then repeated by Wajda himself, and usually translated into English as 'cinema of the moral concern':

'After a comparatively sterile period in the mid-1960s to early 1970s, Polish cinema once again burst onto the world stage in the late 1970s and early 1980s with an impressive outpouring of artistically and socially meaningful films, labelled by the filmmakers themselves as the 'cinema of moral concern'.'

However, the absence of Polish Cinema from the pre-war period is very obvious in English-language film criticism. The cinema industry in Poland started to develop before the end of the Nineteenth Century and before the two World Wars (Płazewski 2001). At the same time as the Lumière brothers patented their invention in 1895, Kazimierz Prószyński constructed his 'pleograf' that could both film and project short black and white, silent films. Four years later, he improved it and called it the 'biopleograf', and three years later he started the first Polish film company. He did not stop improving his older inventions and built new ones – such as the 'aeroskop' (first hand-held camera), the 'telefot' (allowing the sending of pictures over long distances) or the 'kinofon' (allowing the simultaneous recording of sound and images) – until his death in a concentration camp in 1945.

The first Polish cinema theatre was opened in 1899 in Łódź and it was called 'Teatr Żywych Fotografii' (the Theatre of the Living Photographs). Then other cinemas were opened throughout the whole country, showing, amongst other films, Polish melodramas with Apolonina Chałupiec, who later made her career as Pola Negri in Hollywood, where she worked with Charlie Chaplin and apparently became engaged to Rudolf Valentino – at least so she claimed in her diaries, after his death.

Bolesław Matuszewski made the first Polish documentary films and Kazimierz Prószyński made the first non-documentary films featuring a future very well known actor of the pre-war cinema era, Kazimierz Junosza-Stępowski. In 1910 Władysław Starewicz was the first person in the world to make an animated film, filming dolls frame by frame. The first Polish feature film was a silent comedy *Antoś po raz pierwszy w Warszawie* (*Anthony for the first time in Warsaw*) released on the 22 October 1908.

The last Polish silent film was *Wiatr od morza* (*Wind from the Seaside*) released on 25 December 1930. A new era in the history of cinema started with sound. Krzysztof Prószyński was one of the pioneers in this area as well, making the first sound films in England (from 1913) and then in the US (from 1918). The very first Polish sound film was *Moralność pani Dulskiej* (*The Morality of Mrs. Dulska*) based on the play by Gabriela Zapolska and directed by Bolesław Niewolna in 1930.

In Poland, between the wars, there were two kinds of films – sentimental melodramas and musical comedies. Adaptations of Polish literature and patriotic films were also popular because the country had just regained its independence after years of annexation. However cinema itself was treated as simply another form of entertainment, not art. As in many other countries, there were film studios with their stars such as Jadwiga Smosarska, Mira Zimińska, Mieczysława Ćwiklińska, Hanka Ordonówna (called Ordonka) and Aleksander Żabczyński, Adolf Dymśa, Eugeniusz Bodo, Ludwik Solski or Franciszek Brodniewicz. Most of them died during the Second World War, which had already halted their careers.

During the Second World War cinemas in Poland showed German propaganda films so the Polish underground boycotted them and even attacked the cinemas with gas bombs. The cinema industry was almost completely destroyed, as were most of the pre-war films as well. A few filmmakers filmed the battles and fights in Poland and Europe, which were later gathered together as documentary films – *Kronika oblężonej Warszawy* (*Newsreel from besieged Warsaw*) or *Kroniki wojenne* (*Newsreels of War*).

In the chapter, 'Film Stars Do Not Shine in the Sky Over Poland: The Absence of Popular Cinema in Poland' (Skwara, 1992), in the book *Popular European Cinema* there is an explanation of the situation after the war. Before the war popular cinema existed and the 'stars shined', however after the Second World War Polish cinema became state-owned and political. Lenin called it 'the most important art' (Liehm and Liehm, 1980, p. 1.) and it was made into an instrument of propaganda.

Right after the war the first Polish film school was created in Łódź where filmmakers were supposed to learn how to make socialist-realist films. However, because students there were allowed to watch films from western countries (Cousins, 2004, p. 253), (something normally forbidden in the ordinary cinemas), in order to learn from them, they also learnt how to avoid socialist-realistic rules. In 1947 the first Polish post-war film was released, called *Zakazane piosenki (Forbidden Songs)* by Leonard Buczkowski, a popular pre-war director. Then Wanda Jakubowska made the first film about the Holocaust called *Ostatni etap (The Last Stage)* and released it the same year, followed by *Ulica graniczna (Border Street)* by Aleksander Ford – his first post-war film. Then Ford started to work on his next picture, *Piątka z ulicy Barskiej (Five Boys from Barska Street)* with Wajda as his assistant (Manvell, 1966, p. 145).

Ford later agreed to become an 'artistic supervisor' of Wajda's debut *Pokolenie (A Generation)* that was released in 1955 and turned out to be the first part of Wajda's trilogy, followed by *Kanał (Kanal)* in 1957 and *Popiół i diament (Ashes and Diamonds)* in 1958. In 1960 Wajda directed his first film concentrating on the present reality and not past history – *Niewinni czarodzieje (Innocent Sorcerers)*. It was written by Jerzy Andrzejewski, author of *Ashes and Diamonds* and co-written by Jerzy Skolimowski, who also co-wrote *Nóż w wodzie (Knife in the Water)* with Roman Polański and Jakub Goldberg. However both these films – *Innocent Sorcerers* and *Knife in the Water* - were soon condemned by the party leader, President Władysław Gomułka, who said that they 'displayed the kind of thinking for which there is no place anywhere in the Communist world' (Parker, 1993, pp. 68-69).

Polański's debut *Knife in the Water*, released in 1962, was nominated for an Oscar in 1964. It was the first Polish film ever nominated for the Oscar award. Polański did not get the award but this nomination opened the door to the West for him. He moved to Paris and in 1965 he directed *Repulsion* with Catherine Deneuve – his first film made in England, co-written by Gerard Brach. A year later he made another film in London in cooperation with Brach, called *Cul-de-Sac* with Catherine Deneuve's sister, Françoise Dorléac. Both films were very successful and his career in the UK looked very promising. However, his next film *Dance of the Vampires*, with his wife-to-be Sharon Tate, which he finished in 1967, was not that successful.

When Martial Law started some of the Polish filmmakers decided to stay in the West (Parkinson, 2002, p. 235). A few years later change was in the air and the end of communism was approaching. In 1989, after the first democratic elections since the loss of independence in 1939, Poland became a free country again. One era finished and another one began. Some of the Polish filmmakers became involved in politics, for example Andrzej Wajda, who had been a member of *Solidarność* (Solidarity) and between 1978 and 1983 was President of the Polish Film Association. Between 1989 and 1991 he was a senator of the Republic of Poland. From 1992 until 1994 he was also a Member of the Presidential Council for Culture. In 1994, Wajda founded the Centre of Japanese Art and Technology in Krakow and a year later was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun in Japan.

After 1989 Wajda made *Korczak* in 1990, *Pierścionek z orłem w koronie* (*The Ring with a Crowned Eagle*) in 1993 and *Wielki tydzień* (*Holy Week*) in 1995 – all of them about the Second World War. Then in 1996 he unsuccessfully tried to adapt a modern book *Panna Nikt* (*Miss Nobody*) by Tomek Tryzna. After a break he adapted a Polish epic *Pan Tadeusz* (*Pan Tadeusz: the Last Foray in Lithuania*) in 1999 and in 2002 Fredro's play *Zemsta* (*The Revenge*) with Roman Polański in one of the main roles. In 2005 he participated in a project called *Solidarność, Solidarność* and directed one of 12 segments called *Człowiek z nadziei* (*Man of Hope*).

Then he made *Katyn*, about the massacre of Polish officers, which was nominated for an Oscar for the Best Foreign language film in 2008. This film became popular again and many television stations around the world screened it at the beginning of April 2010 following Polish president Lech Kaczyński's death, together with almost 100 officials, in a plane crash in Smolensk while they were going to Katyn to pay homage to the victims of the massacre.

Wajda's last film to date *Tatarak (Sweet Rush)* was nominated for the Golden Berlin Bear Award in 2009. It was a screen version of a short story by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz integrating Krystyna Janda's reminiscences of the last few months she had spent with her late husband Edward Kłosiński, the famous cinematographer and often Wajda's co-worker. He is the only Polish filmmaker to obtain an honorary Oscar for Lifetime Achievement, in 2000. He donated it to the Museum of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. He was also awarded an honorary Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 2006 for his contribution to cinema.

Roman Polański, who left Poland during communist times and was not too welcome there, decided to stay in Paris after 1989, where he lived with his wife, actress Emmanuelle Seigner, and two children. He had left the United States in 1978 to avoid imprisonment for a statutory rape conviction and never went back. As a French citizen he was protected against deportation to the USA. However, in 2009 he was arrested in Switzerland and then granted house arrest in his Swiss residence where he still remains while awaiting a decision from the California Superior Court Judge. He made only two films in Hollywood: *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *Chinatown* (1974). All his other English-language films were shot in Europe. He also continued to act and one of his best roles in the 90s was in *Una pura formalità (A Pure Formality)* by Giuseppe Tornatore with Gérard Depardieu in 1994. Then he appeared in Wajda's *The Revenge* in 2002 and we could have also seen him in *Rush Hour 3* (2007) by Bratt Ratner set in Paris. In 2002 he adapted Władysław Szpilman's book *Pianista* as *The Pianist* and won his first best director Oscar.

As he could not enter the United States of America and attend the ceremony, Adrien Brody accepted it in his absence and Harrison Ford handed it to him in Paris. In 2005 he directed Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. He was in the middle of directing his last film *The Ghost* (2010) when he was arrested and he finished it by giving directions from his house. His films inspired other well-known Polish directors such as Zanussi, Kieślowski and Holland.

Krzysztof Zanussi was always more than just a filmmaker. He happily expressed his opinion on different social issues showing himself as a great humanist and enjoyed authority and respect in Poland. However, with time, like Wajda, he lost his ability to communicate with his public. He is now the director of the Polish Film Studio TOR and a professor of European film at the European Graduate School in Switzerland where he conducts a summer workshop. In 1996 he made yet another feature about post-war times in communist Poland called *Cwał (At Full Gallop)*. His last film to date was *Rewizyta (Revisited)* made in 2009 'revisiting' characters of his old films *Barwy ochronne (Camouflage)* and *Constans (The Constant Factor)*.

Krzysztof Kieślowski entered new times in Poland with his *Dekalog (The Decalogue)*, based on the Ten Commandments, which was screened on Polish television at the end of 1989. It was sold to many countries all around the world and opened the door to France where he found the money for his future films. In 1990 he made *La Double Vie de Véronique (The Double Life of Véronique)* which gained a nomination for the Golden Globe. In 1993 and 1994 he worked on his trilogy called *Trois couleurs: Bleu, Blanc et Rouge (Three Colours: Blue, White and Red)* which explored the virtues symbolized by the French flag: Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood (Dobson, 1999; Cousins, 2004; Chaudhuri, 2005). All these screenplays were written in collaboration with Krzysztof Piesiewicz that started in 1985 when they made *Bez końca (No End)* together. Then Kieślowski announced his retirement but was still working with Krzysztof Piesiewicz on three scenarios: 'Heaven', 'Purgatory' and 'Hell', hoping to pass them on to some young directors. He died on the 13 March 1996 after a heart attack and open-heart surgery.

Agnieszka Holland stayed in the West and then moved from France to the States. She is the most well known Polish female director but has never considered herself as a feminist and believes that her films talk about cross-gender issues. She wrote a script for Wajda's *Korczak* and she also collaborated on Kieślowski's *Three Colours: Blue and White*. In 1990 she directed a Polish-German-French co-production *Europa Europa* based on a biography of Solomon Perel for which she won the Golden Globe award and was nominated for an Oscar. In 1992 she made *Olivier, Olivier* in France, in 1993 the English-American co-production *The Secret Garden*, and in 1995 the English-French-Belgian-Italian co-production *Total Eclipse* about two French poets: Rimbaud and Verlaine. In 1997 she directed *Washington Square* and in 1999 *The Third Miracle*, both shot in the USA. In 2002, Holland made a German, Polish, Canadian and American co-production *Julie Walking Home*. In 2006, after working for four years for American TV, she directed again a cinema film *Copying Beethoven*. Then she made *Janosik. Prawdziwa Historia (Janosik: A True Story)* in Poland in 2009. Currently, she is working on a German-Polish co-production *Ukryci (Hidden)*. Like Polański, Holland has Jewish roots and therefore they are cosmopolitan citizens of the world but who were both brought up in the Polish tradition.

The three major Polish directors to date and the best known in the world are indisputably Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Zanussi and Krzysztof Kieślowski (Paul, 1983; Wyver, 1989; Thompson and Bordwell, 1994; Hill and Church Gibson, 1998; Parkinson, 2002; Coates, 2004). The first two are still alive, the third died in 1996. Nevertheless, all three of them always enjoyed great respect in Poland, not only as film directors but also as cultural authorities (Aitken, 2001, pp. 225-226). Very often they were asked for their opinions and they were always willing to talk about the contemporary problems of Polish society. After 1989 they started to appear on many television programmes, giving many interviews. They have become a 'conscience of the nation' (Wyver, 1989, pp. 219-220):

'These films, together with others by Zanussi and by younger directors like Krzysztof Kieślowski and Feliks Falk, acted as a kind of national conscience, questioning at a time of great uncertainty the moral and political implications of different courses of action.'

All three of them gave lectures at Film Schools in Poland and around the world. Moreover, very often, discussions about cinema changed into discussions about life and death, religion and spirituality. Often, too, they were asked by young people 'how to live' (jak żyć) and tried to answer it (Zawiśliński, 2007, p. 254). Andrzej Wajda was always seen as a patriot and an anticommunist, Krzysztof Zanussi as a Judeo-Christian philosopher and Krzysztof Kieślowski as a metaphysical spiritual guide. This situation was extraordinary and could only be compared to the impact that Andrei Tarkovsky's words and later films, forbidden in secular communist Russia, still have on young filmmakers around the world. Therefore, this spiritual or moral kind of cinema was always connected with the system, even though it did not really appear in Czechoslovakia or Hungary, but was very visible in Poland, Russia and China (Orr, 1998, p. 8). The cinema in Poland was more than just entertainment. It was a means of speaking to the people in spite of censorship, to let them know that they were not alone and to tell them how to live with a clear conscience. Kieślowski's *The Decalogue* is a good example of this trend, as is almost every film made by Zanussi (Deleuze, 2000, p. 71) and many of Wajda's films.

The Eastern system was always different from the Western, not only politically, but also culturally. After the Second World War Polish cinema became state-owned and had to follow a political line. The film system was centralised and belonged to the government. In France Charles de Gaulle was trying to do the same with the French film system in the mid-60s. He wished to be able to control it but did not achieve that goal (Roud, 1999, p. 138). The new political situation in 1989 also affected the production system. Political censorship was replaced by economic and identity problems.

Before 1989 artists and the public communicated with each other above the censors' heads, by using the language of metaphors, but once they regained their freedom of speech, the artists lost contact with their public. They were allowed to talk about everything but the public seemed to have become uninterested in what they wanted to express (Coates, 2004, p. 268):

'(...) filmmakers also had to discard habits to smuggling subversion in Trojan Horses of allegory, parable, and allusion, either because the resultant works could become incomprehensible to non-native audiences or because such strategies were no longer necessary (...).'

As Andrzej Wajda had said, the viewers turned away from the Polish filmmakers towards more entertaining American films (Murawska, 2005):

'Suddenly, the screens were dominated by American entertainment to the extent of something like 95 percent. As a result, audiences turned away from the kinds of films that we used to make.'

The school system was also different. The first Polish Film School called Leon Schiller's National Higher School of Film, Television and Theatre in Łódź, affectionately known as 'Filmówka', was opened on 8 March 1948 in Łódź. Actors could also learn their profession at the Theatre Academy which moved in 1949 from Łódź to Warsaw. In 1977 The Faculty of Radio and Television at the University of Silesia was opened. In addition, after the change in the political system in 1989 two private film schools appeared: in 2001 the Andrzej Wajda Master School of Film Directing and, in 2004, the Warsaw Film School of Bogusław Linda and Maciej Ślesicki.

The Polish Film School system moved from socialistic government-regulation towards free market capitalism. The School changed over the decades. There was a time when only postgraduate students from other departments could apply. It was a place where students could learn the practical side of filmmaking. Alongside theoretical studies there were opportunities to make films, using the school's cameras, materials and facilities. Now the access to film materials is much easier thanks to the digital revolution and many people in Poland have become filmmakers without finishing any film school studies. To get into Łódź Film School one used to have to go through three levels of examinations. First, one had to show some work – photographs, poems, short stories, drawings – to be marked by the exam panel. Then some candidates were invited to the second level – the oral exam. During this examination the panel asked various questions to check the candidate's intelligence, their ability to associate ideas, and their skills of description.

Some of the questions asked during this examination later became famous. Kieślowski, who managed to pass the entry exam at his third attempt, gave an example of the question he was asked – what are the means of mass communication. He understood it as means of transport as he had not much knowledge about the mass-media but fortunately for him the panel took his answer as a joke (Kieślowski, 1995, p. 31). Following the Oral Examination 30 or 40 candidates were chosen for the last level of the examinations. The last stage was a practical one – acting skills for future actors, work with actors for future directors, or work with the camera for future cameramen.

Studying at Łódź Film School took, and still does take, four years. Afterwards students leave the school with a Master of Art Degree. Currently there are the following departments: the Film and Television Directing Department, the Film and Television Cinematography Department (including the Animation Department), the Acting Department and the Film and Television Production Managers Department. The school is still funded by the government and Polish students study for free (except for paid part-time) but overseas students have to pay.

Łódź Film School was the birthplace of Polish National Cinematography and a place where many Polish directors, cameramen and actors learnt their professions. Later they made careers in Poland and abroad, including Hollywood. Polański studied at the Łódź Film School, but never graduated, because even though his project was accepted, he failed to write an accompanying thesis and never got the certificate. The best-known graduates from Filmówka are obviously Wajda, Zanussi and Kieślowski. Another one was Jerzy Skolimowski. There was a time when Skolimowski was appreciated for his directing, writing and acting skills but he seems to have been forgotten now, both at home and abroad. His last film *Cztery noce z Anną* (*Four Nights with Anna*) from 2008 was his first film made after a 17-year break since he made *30 Door Key* in 1991, based on the novel *Ferdydurke* by Gombrowicz. During that time he mostly acted in other people's films. Unfortunately, the film was not well received. Currently he is filming a European co-production called *Essential Killing*.

Another group of famous Filmówka's alumni are cameramen. Sławomir Idziak who worked in Hollywood filming such films as *Gattaca* by Andrew Niccol in 1997, *Proof of Life* by Taylor Hackford in 2000, *Black Hawk Down* by Ridley Scott in 2001 (nominated for an Oscar for Best Cinematography), *King Arthur* by Antoine Fuqua in 2004, or *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by David Yates in 2007. Piotr Sobociński was known before his death in 2001 thanks to his cooperation with Kieślowski (nominated for an Oscar for Best Cinematography to his *Three Colours: Red*), Ron Howard (*Ransom*) or Jerry Zacks (*Marvin's Room*) in 1996. Paweł Edelman worked as a cameraman on such films as *Ray* by Taylor Hackford in 2004 or *The Pianist* in 2002 (nominated for an Oscar for Best Cinematography), *Oliver Twist* in 2005 and *The Ghost* in 2010 by Roman Polański. Andrzej Bartkowiak also left the school and emigrated to the USA where in 1981 he started to cooperate with Sidney Lumet on most of his films until 1993. He later worked with such directors as James L. Brooks (*Terms of Endearment*) in 1983, John Huston (*Prizzi's Honor*) in 1985, Joel Schumacher (*Falling Down*) in 1993, Jan de Bont (*Speed*) in 1994, Barbara Streisand (*The Mirror has Two Faces*) in 1996 and Taylor Hackford (*The Devil's Advocate*) in 1997. He is now working as a director on his sixth action film called *Dark Deal*.

Only two well-known Polish filmmakers studied elsewhere – Agnieszka Holland graduated from Prague Film and TV Academy FAMU and Janusz Kamiński got his Masters Degree from The American Film Institute. He is now known as Steven Spielberg's cameraman (Oscar in 1993 for *Schindler's List*, 1997 – *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* and *Amistad*, Oscar in 1998 for *Saving Private Ryan*, 2001 – *Artificial Intelligence: AI*, 2002 – *Minority Report* and *Catch Me if You Can*, 2004 – *The Terminal*, 2005 – *War of the Worlds* and *Munich*, 2008 – *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*) but he also worked with Diane Keaton (*Wildflower*) in 1991, Cameron Crowe (*Jerry Maguire*) in 1996, Kathryn Bigelow (*Mission Zero*) and Julian Schnabel (*Le scaphandre et le papillon / The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*) – both in 2007. He directed two films and he is currently working on his third film called *The Night Witch* and at the same time he is working with Spielberg on his new film called *Interstellar*.

Only three of Filmówka's pupils won Academy Awards – Zbigniew Rybczyński in 1983 for Best Animated Short (*Tango*), Wajda in 2000 with an honorary Oscar *In recognition of five decades of extraordinary film direction*, and Roman Polański in 2002 for *The Pianist*. Polański was nominated before in 1964 for his debut *Knife in Water*, in 1974 for *Chinatown* and in 1980 for *Tess*. Wajda was also nominated three times – in 1977 for *The Promised Land*, in 1980 for *Young Girls of Wilko* and in 1982 for *Man of Iron* – before he was finally awarded an Oscar.

Other Polish Oscar winners are the two art directors Ewa Braun and Allan Starski, awarded in 1994 for *Schindler's List* by Spielberg and composer Jan A. P. Kaczmarek awarded in 2004 for his music to *Finding Neverland* by Marc Forster. In addition, a few of other Polish directors were nominated – but never received the award – in Best Foreign Language Film category: Jerzy Kawalerowicz in 1966 for *Faraon (Pharaoh)*, Jerzy Hofmann in 1971 for *Potop (The Deluge)* and Jerzy Antczak in 1976 for *Noce i dnie (Nights and Days)*. And in 1995 Krzysztof Kieślowski was nominated in Best Director category for directing *Three Colours: Red*.

After 1990 there were about thirty films a year made in Poland but now it is around fifteen. After Kieślowski's death no other Polish director became popular abroad. Only a few films aroused any interest in the world, such as *Męska sprawa (A Man Thing)* by Sławomir Fabicki from 2001 nominated in 2002 for an Oscar in Best Short Film / Live Action category or *Katedra (The Cathedral)* by Tomek Bagiński nominated for an Oscar in 2003 in Best Short Film / Animated category. There were few very good debuts, for example *Edi* made in 2002 by Piotr Trzaskalski or *Pręgi (The Welts)* by Magdalena Piekorz from 2004 but a lack of money did not allow these directors to spread their wings. Little surprise then that there has been no great interest in Polish cinematography or Polish filmmakers in the West of late.

1. 2. Political Issues

Geographically, the European continent reaches the Ural Mountains. Within such a perspective Poland considered itself for a long time as a part of Central Europe and considered the European part of Russia as Eastern Europe (Coates, 2004, p. 265).

'In the central question of a globalized, multicultural, and postmodern reality is that of the ecology of identity – which identities are sustainable and/or worth sustaining – the events of 1989 posed it with particular intensity to the inhabitants of what was once known as 'the Other Europe', who consider themselves 'Europeans' but who may not necessarily be seen as such by Western neighbors anxious to separate themselves from a perilous 'Wild East'.'

The 'Iron Curtain' cut off many European countries during the Cold War and for many years Western Europeans got used to thinking about them all as 'Eastern Europe'. So nowadays, Poland has to accept an 'Eastern European' label, together with such countries as the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Despite this, I will call them all 'ex-communist countries'.

It is very easy to find anthologies of French, German or Spanish cinema, but ex-communist countries are usually put in one box. There are not many English-language books mentioning Polish cinema as a whole. They rather concentrate on the post-war period or various themes (for example *Women in Polish Cinema* by Mazierska & Ostrowska from 2006). Except for that, Polish cinema is placed alongside other ex-communist cinematographies, often treated as one. This confuses the readers and does not help them to distinguish between them. In one of the reviews of *The Double Life of Veronique* by Kieślowski that appeared in the programme of the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television (now called the National Media Museum) the Polish ex-capital Kraków was confused with Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. Very often Polish directors are compared in English-language film criticism to Western directors, and their films to the well-known classics. It is probably caused by the need for a better understanding and a need for the assimilation of the 'great unknown' – reality and life behind the 'Iron Curtain' (Coates, 2004, p. 266):

'If it must also interrogate the phrase 'behind the Iron Curtain' itself, however, this is because it may be as misleading as the references to 'East European cinema' that often accompanied it, though less because the particular always eludes and defies generalization than because of the glaring inadequacy of the generalization in question. After all, there were at least two Iron Curtains: the one separating Western from Eastern – or East Central – Europe; the other, separating that area from the Soviet Union.'

And so Andrzej Wajda was named, together with other directors of 'the tradition de qualité' (Aitken, 2001, p. 226) on the list which also includes the Italian and Spanish directors. He was also compared to Hungarian director Miklós Jancsó by Paul (1983, p. 64). Andrzej Wajda was also mentioned by Hill and Church Gibson (1998, p. 444) together with Krzysztof Kieślowski in their canon of 'great European directors'.

In 1998 Orr compared Kieślowski's *A Short Film About Love* with Nicholas Ray's *In a Lonely Place* (p.145-146), Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (p. 146) and Neil Jordan's *Angel* and *The Crying Game* (p. 147); his *Three Colours: Blue* with Atom Egoyan's *The Adjuster* (p. 63), Jean-Luc Godard's *Vivre sa vie* and Michelangelo Antonioni's *The Red Desert* (p. 63) and also Peter Weir's *Fearless* (p. 64); and his *Three Colours: Red* to *Raise the Red Lantern* by Zhang Yimou (pp. 98-99). Then in 2001 Wilson drew a comparison between *Three Colours: Red* and François Truffaut's *Baisers volés* (p.121), *Three Colours: Blue* and Luc Besson's *Nikita* (p. 79) or Claude Sautet's *Un Coeur en hiver* (p. 105) and his *Dekalog VII* and Eric Rohmer's *Conte d'hiver* (p. 56). In 2004 Coates compared his *Three Colours: Red* to *The Tempest* by Shakespeare (p. 276) and in 2006 Stojanowa confronted his *Camera Buff* with *Closely Observed Trains* by Jirí Menzel (p. 77).

Despite similarities his originality is also perceived. Kieślowski was a pioneer of many new solutions in filmmaking. He was the first director who turned two of his television films of *The Decalogue* into feature-length cinema releases in 1988 (*A Short Film About Love* and *A Short Film About Killing*). It had never been done before by any other director but after that three of the films of the French television series *Tous les garçons et les filles de leur âge* were

also made as features films in 1994 – *L'Eau Froide* by Olivier Assayas, *Trop de Bonheur* by Cédric Kahn and *Les Roseaux Sauvage* by André Téchiné (Powrie, 1999, p. 9). His *Blind Chance* was also a first film using the idea of the possibilities in one person's life – 'hypothetical plots,' (Thompson and Bordwell, 1994, p. 748), later used for example by Tom Tykwer in *Run, Lola, Run* or by Peter Howitt in *Sliding Doors*. Kieślowski was as well the first director who originally used fades – in *Blue* not to mark progress in time or flashback but to take us back to the exact same moment (Dobson, 1999, p. 239) and in *White* without clarifying whose vision we see (Cook and Bernik, 1999, p. 322).

Kieślowski's films made in France – *The Double Life of Veronique* and *Three Colours* trilogy – are also very often used as an example of successful European co-productions (Coates, 2004, p. 217), in contrast to so called 'Euro-pudding' – named after the International English title of the film *L'auberge Espagnole* by Cédric Klapisch from 2002. However, the problem of these films' nationality appears (Hill and Church Gibson, 1998, pp. 442-443). Kieślowski's crew was usually mixed – Polish, French and Swiss – and the actors came from the different countries of his co-productions (Ezra, 2004, p. 15). But his own situation was quite clear (Powrie, 1999, p. 20). He was a Polish director, living in Poland and making most of his films there until the political and economical situation changed. When he could not find money anymore and French producers offered him free rein, he decided to go to France (Thompson and Bordwell, 1994, pp. 748-749). However, he never moved there and was continuously returning home afterwards. He used to repeat that he was Polish and did not intend to move to France or to the USA. However, some authors (Wilson, 2001) list him in books about French cinematography, just because the French gave money for the productions of his later films.

In sum, there are not many English-language books about Polish cinema. Only a few works concentrate on the Polish Cinema as a whole: *World Cinema 1: Poland* by Frank Bren (1986), *The Modern Cinema of Poland* by Bolesław Michałek and Frank Turaj (1988), *Polish National Cinema* by Marek

Haltof (2002) and *Polish film. A Twentieth Century History* originally written in French by Charles Ford and later translated and contributed to by Robert Hammond, with additional material by Grażyna Kudy (2005).

The most comprehensible for English-speakers are the more recent ones: *Polish National Cinema* by Haltof and *Polish film. A Twentieth Century History* by Ford, Hammond and Kudy. They both discuss the pre-war period often overlooked in other books about Polish cinema. In spite of some errors and lack of Polish diacritics in a few places, these are very meaningful books which explain the many historical facts that have had an impact on Polish films as the history of Polish cinema has always been inseparably connected to the history of the country. To make his book even more understandable, Haltof divides the history of Polish Cinema into 8 chapters. The first chapter, 'Polish Cinema before the Introduction of Sound', describes its early years from the end of the Nineteenth Century to the beginning of the Sound Era in 1930, which he writes about in the second chapter 'The Sound Period of the 1930s'. The third chapter is called 'Polish Films – Whose Dreams? Cinema and the Political Construction of Polish National Identity after World War II' and concentrates on the first few years of the Polish post-war reality, as does the fourth chapter 'The Poetics of Screen Stalinism: Socialist Realist Films' which stops in 1954. That was when the term 'The Polish Film School' was first used, as we learn from the fifth chapter 'The Polish School Revisited'.

The sixth chapter is called 'Adaptations, Personal Style, and Popular Cinema between 1965 and 1976' and is the only one that shows the time period chosen by the author himself. The seventh chapter 'Camouflage and Rough Treatment: The 'Cinema of Distrust', the Solidarity Period, and afterwards' describes the period of Solidarność (Solidarity) and concentrates on thirteen years, from 1976 till the change of the system in 1989. That is where the eighth chapter 'Landscape after the Battle: The Return of Democracy' starts. This is also where the chronological chapters end.

The last three chapters are more subject-orientated. Chapter number nine 'The Representation of Stalinism in Polish Cinema' returns to the Stalinist

period and the way it was shown in Polish films. Chapter number ten, 'National Memory, the Holocaust, and Images of the Jew in Post-war Polish Films' describes Jewish themes in Polish cinema. In addition, chapter number eleven 'Polish Films with an American Accent' talks about Polish action films. These three chapters, as well as the first one, appeared in newspapers or other books (Falkowska and Haltof, 2003) before they became parts of this book, which explains some concerns about the way he divided the history of Polish National cinema in his book.

Haltof avoided the term 'kino moralnego niepokoju' (cinema of moral concern) and called it 'kino nieufności' (cinema of distrust) after Mariola Jankun-Dopartowa, which is much wider and better fits the chapter which surveys thirteen years of Polish cinema. Considering that he dedicated two chapters to the much shorter post-war period (1945-1954) it seems rather surprising that he did not write two chapters instead: one about 'cinema of moral concern' and another one about the 'cinema of distrust'. Especially since the first term is much better known and often used by English-language authors.

The term 'kino nieufności' (cinema of distrust) proposed by Jankun-Dopartowa (1996, p. 108), and after her by Haltof, is supposed to refer to the whole period of the Komitet Obrony Robotników KOR (Worker's Defence Committee) and following it Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy 'Solidarność' (Independent Self-governing Trade Union 'Solidarity'), from the beginning in 1976 to the victory in 1989.

In other books the term 'cinema of moral concern' appears as 'cinema of moral urgency' (Thompson and Bordwell, 1994, p.748), 'cinema of moral anxiety' (Powrie, 1999, p. 236), 'cinema of moral conscience' (Aitken, 2001, p. 225) or 'cinema of moral unrest' (Cousins, 2004, p. 424). This situation is caused by the difficulty in translating the Polish word 'niepokój' (concern, anxiety, unrest). However, they all refer to the Polish term 'kino moralnego niepokoju' which describes a five-year period in the history of Polish cinema from 1976 until 1981 (Michałek, 1983, p. 188).

Another very interesting position on the English-language market is *Polish film. A Twentieth Century History* originally written in French by Charles Ford and later translated and contributed to by Robert Hammond, with additional material by Grażyna Kudy. The first half of this book concentrates on early Polish film, both silent and with sound, and often mistreated in other books about Polish cinema.

The other half contains a history of post-war Polish films. In 'Introduction' we find a brief lesson on Polish history, very useful because the history of Polish cinema was always inseparably connected with the history of the country. From the 'Preface' one can learn about the difficulties that the authors met trying to print the book. Its very first version was in French by Charles Ford, and even though the interest in Polish cinema was always quite developed in France, it was hard to find a printing house because of political reasons. Then Robert Hammond translated and adapted the book and together with Grażyna Kudy – a Polish student of Charles Ford – they finally managed to find a publisher in America. The chapters are divided into four parts (Ford, Hammond and Kudy, 2005, p. xi):

'The first three chapters are the Silent Era. Chapter 4 and 5 (covering the first sound films) and throughout 8 (covering World War II and the post-war years) take the history through a period of continual political upheaval, while the last chapters relate the renaissance and freedom achieved in the last years of the century.'

The first chapter is entitled 'The Silent era' and is divided into three sections. 'Filmmakers Without a Country' mentioned not only Kazimierz Prószyński, but also less known people, such as Aleksander Hertz and his Sfinks Motion Pictures. 'Theories and Experiments' talked about Karol Irzykowski and Wiktor Biegański. 'Poland on the World Scene, 1920-1930' familiarized readers with Władysław Starewicz, Jan Kiepura and Pola Negri.

The second chapter, 'Poland speaks: Sound films, 1930-1940', has two parts: 'Adjustments to Sound' (about dubbing and Yiddish films) and 'Films and their makers' (about Romuald Gantkowski and Michał Waszyński among

others). The third chapter called 'World War II and the Postwar years' is divided into three parts again. 'The War' and documentary films from this period, 'New Times, New Ideas' about the state control of the cinematography, and 'Postwar Directors' about Aleksander Ford, Wojciech Jerzy Has, Andrzej Munk and Jerzy Kawalerowicz.

'Renaissance' – the fourth chapter of the book – is the longest and contains six parts. 'The Backdrop, 1968-1980' about Łódź Film School, documentary and animated films. 'Unfulfilled Promises' are about Jerzy Skolimowski, Walerian Borowczyk and Andrzej Żuławski. 'The Directors of Note' are Krzysztof Zanussi, Roman Polański and Andrzej Wajda. 'The Comet and the Sun' talks about Andrzej Wajda again and Krzysztof Kieślowski. 'Totalitarian Nightmare, 1981-1985' concentrates on Wojciech Marczewski, Piotr Andrejew and Agnieszka Holland. The last chapter of the book, 'Cut! Dissolve to Fade-Out' by Grażyna Kudy, talks about modern Polish cinema at the end of the last century.

The rest of the book contains 'Filmography' by Grażyna Kudy and two appendices. 'Filmography' lists Polish, English and Yiddish titles of Polish films, together with the most important information about each movie – such as its producer, director, writer and actors, as well as the year of production. It is very similar to 'Appendix 1: Notes on Title Translation', but there we only find the titles and production's year. Then we have titles only, listed in 'Appendix 2: The Albany Catalogue. Polish Films Passed Through the New York State Department of Education, 1921-1965'. At the very end of the book we find 'Chapter Notes', then short 'Bibliography' and an 'Index' with all the names mentioned in each chapter.

Polish Film is an important book familiarizing English-speaking readers with the most important facts of Polish cinematography in a very approachable way. However, even though the authors, especially Polish Grażyna Kudy, tried to use Polish diacritics and avoid the errors of most of the other books in English, we can still find some of them there. For example in the chapter 'Poland Speaks' the authors talk about Leonard Buczkowski and his

adaptation of Stanisław Żeromski's *Wierna rzeka (Faithful River)* from 1936 but the picture illustrating it is from 1983's version by Tadeusz Chmielewski with Małgorzata Pieczyńska and Franciszek Pieczka.

In spite of some errors and the lack of Polish diacritics in a few places, this is a very significant book which explains many historical facts that have had an impact on Polish films. The first half of the book concentrates on pre-war films. This is rather unusual in English film criticism which usually only appreciates Polish post-war films by known directors such as Andrzej Wajda or the two Krzysztofs: Zanussi and Kieślowski, and forgets about the big Polish pre-war stars such as Pola Negri or actor-singer Jan Kiepura and the great directors such as Wiktor Biegański, Józef Lejtes and Juliusz Gardan or animator Władysław Starewicz.

Apart from the above mentioned books about Polish Cinema in general and notices about it in separate chapters of collections, we also find books about individual Polish directors; especially about Wajda (Michalek, 1973; Eder *et al*, 1982; Wajda, 1989; Falkowska, 1996; Orr and Ostrowska, 2004; Falkowska; 2006), Polański (Butler; 1970; Bisplinghoff, 1979; Kiernan, 1980; Leaming, 1982; Polanski, 1984; Wright Wexman, 1985; Parker, 1995; Bird, 2002; Cronin, 2005; Feeney and Duncan, 2005; Orr and Ostrowska, 2006) and Kieślowski (Kieślowski, 1995; Garbowski, 1996; Coates, 1999; Wilson, 2000; Žižek, 2001; Kickasola, 2004; Haltof, 2004; Insdorf, 2006).

Sometimes we can also find the scripts of the most popular films of these three directors – Wajda's *A Generation* (by Bohdan Czeszko), *Kanal* (by Jerzy Stefan Stawiński) or *Ashes and Diamonds* (by Jerzy Andrzejewski); *Knife in the Water* (by Polański, Jerzy Skolimowski and Jakub Goldberg), *Repulsion* and *Cul-de-sac* (by Polański and Gérard Brach) or *Rosemary's Baby* (by Polański); *The Decalogue: The Ten Commandments*, by Kieślowski and Piesiewicz – together with ones made by Zanussi (i.e. *In Full Gallop*) or Holland (i.e. *Olivier, Olivier*).

Other listed Polish filmmakers include Wanda Jakubowska, Aleksander Ford, Wojciech Jerzy Has, Jerzy Kawalerowicz, Andrzej Munk, Feliks Falk, Ryszard Bugajski, Wojciech Marczewski, Walerian Borowczyk, Andrzej Żuławski and a few lesser known ones. Furthermore, the actor Maciek Cybulski is usually also named in connection with Wajda. and with Kieślowski – the cameraman Sławomir Idziak, the composer Zbigniew Preisner and the actors: Bogusław Linda, Mirosław Baka, Olaf Lubaszenko or Grażyna Szapołowska. Nevertheless, there is obviously a need for more books about the subject.

Some of the English-speaking authors became experts in Polish cinema, for example John Orr writing about Andrzej Wajda, Roman Polański and Polish cinema in general; Paul Coates and Slavoj Žižek exploring the cinema of Krzysztof Kieślowski, or Phil Powrie and Emma Wilson discussing his French films while examining the history of French cinematography. Extensive analyses of Polish films were also written by Julia Dobson in the chapter 'Nationality, Authenticity, Reflexivity: Kieślowski's 'Trois couleurs: Bleu' (1993), 'Blanc' (1993), and 'Rouge' (1994)' (Powrie, 1999) and by Paul Coates in the chapter 'East-Central European Cinema: Beyond the Iron Curtain' (Ezra, 2004).

However, it is sometimes hard to agree with some of their suggestions, for example that in the end of his trilogy Kieślowski decided to save his characters (Dobson, 1999, p. 244). Instead, we should look at it from the other side, from the end itself – Kieślowski told us three stories of people who survived. Another example is the misunderstanding of the numbering in *The Decalogue* in Coates (2004), narrowly discussed in chapter three in the subsection about religion in Wajda's and Kieślowski's films. Also very interesting is a dialogue established by Julia Dobson and Paul Coates with their colleague John Orr. When Orr and Dobson write about the ending scene of *Three colours: Blue* by Kieślowski, they both visualise it as an underwater scene, even though 'the glass' (Orr, 1998, p. 64) or 'the screen' (Dobson, 1999, p. 240) could be seen as just a window, not a fish tank in which the heroine of the film is drowning. And then both Orr and Coates

noticed Kieślowski's inclination for 'triple narration' (Orr, 1998, p. 29) or as Coates (2004, p. 268) narrowly explains it, his fascination with parallels, both in one character's life (for example in *Blind Chance* and *The Double Life of Veronique*) or different characters of the same story (for example in *A Short Film About Killing* and *Three Colours* trilogy).

CHAPTER 2 – DEFICIENCIES

Viewers in the West can see Polish cinema as dull and too sad, always bringing up some serious questions and issues. However, the truth is that there are many great Polish comedies that are unknown to the Western public. Therefore there is a significant lack of knowledge in this field similar to the fact mentioned earlier relating to the absence of the early years of Polish cinematography.

Pre-war Polish cinema was similar to any other new-born cinema in the world. Most of the films were divided into two categories – tragedies and comedies – because this new form of art was strongly based on experiences of the theatre. Tragedies were seen as pure art and comedies as pure entertainment. Early films used not only theatre's genres but also their actors who often acted in a very emotional way, especially in the era of silent films. When sound films started to be popular, these actors had to change their way of acting and get rid of some habits that had become grotesque. They did not need to speak so loudly or act in such an exaggerated manner to be heard and seen in the last row of the theatre. Now when the camera was so close to them they needed to learn to express their emotions in a more delicate manner so as not to become ridiculous.

That was also the issue with the comedies. Funny dialogue and situations became more important than simple gags and funny faces. For comic actors what they said became as important as how they said it. That is why many comics or vaudeville actors started their careers in the cinema. It was also a great time for dancers and singers as musicals became very popular. Even non-musical films often included some dancing or singing scenes, or both, just like in the Bollywood cinema of today. With time western filmmakers abandoned that tradition and only rarely use music or dance in non-musicals.

Among the many cabaret performers who successfully started their careers in films, there were also a couple of radio comics from Lvov. They were called Szczepko and Tońko and they had their own show on-air, 'Wesoła

Lwowska Fala'. Their real names were Kazimierz Wajda (Szczepko) and Henryk Vogelfanger (Tońko) and their alter egos were based on a similar idea to Laurel and Hardy – a couple of very different friends, physically and mentally, illustrating the saying that 'opposites attract'. In 1936 they debuted in two comedies by Michał Waszyński – *Włóczęgi (The Tramps)* and *Będzie lepiej (Happy Days)*. In both films they speak in typical dialect from Lvov and in *Happy Days* they sing their best known song 'Tylko we Lwowie' about their beloved city.

Pre-war cinema was full of musicals and comedies. Films such as *Każdemu wolno kochać (Everyone May Love, 1933)* with Adolf Dymśa and Mira Ziemińska, *Czy Lucyna to dziewczyna? (Is Lucyna a Girl?, 1934)* with Eugeniusz Bodo and Jadwiga Smolarska, *Paweł i Gawęł (Po and Joe, 1938)* or *Robert i Bertrand (1938)* – both with Eugeniusz Bodo and Adolf Dymśa – were full of songs which later became big hits. For example 'Ach śpij, kochanie' from *Po and Joe* sung by Bodo and Dymśa or 'Już nie zapomnisz mnie' from *Zapomniana melodia (Forgotten Melody)* from 1938 performed by Aleksander Żabczyński. Henryk Wars, the most popular composer of that time, composed music for both of them.

Aleksander Żabczyński, who usually played dramatic roles in melodramas and patriotic films, also played a few comic roles in 'comedies of errors' with nice songs and funny scenes based mostly around misunderstandings regarding clothing and changing roles. Franciszek Brodniewicz was another well-known and esteemed melodramatic actor, who from time to time successfully played in comedies. So even though these two actors – Aleksander Żabczyński and Franciszek Brodniewicz – were rather seen as tragic heroes, they could still act with success in comedies. However, when typical comic actors like Eugeniusz Bodo or Adolf Dymśa tried their chance in tragedies or patriotic films the public usually rejected them. They both came from popular cabarets such as Qui Pro Quo where both performed. Eugeniusz Bodo was also a member of Morskie Oko, Cyganeria or Cyrulik Warszawski and Adolf Dymśa was a theatre actor, playing in the theatres of Warsaw, Grodno and Mińsk.

Most of the actors such as Eugeniusz Bodo or Adolf Dymsza and such actresses as Mieczysława Ćwiklińska or Jadwiga Smosarska became famous thanks to their comic roles and after the war they were still popular. Bodo played in one of the first post-war comedies *Skarb (The Treasure)* from 1949 by Leonard Buczkowski about accommodation problems in war-ravaged Warsaw. The first Polish colour film called *Przygoda na Mariensztacie (Adventure in Marienstadt)* from 1954 also by Leonard Buczkowski – a known pre-war director – was a comedy too. It was about a young couple of bricklayers rebuilding the Polish capital. Both of these films though were full of communistic propaganda.

Soon the first directors of the so-called 'Polish Film School' started to make their films. They had just finished at the Łódź Film School and started their debuts. One of the most known was Andrzej Munk whose films are sometimes described as ironic versions of serious films made by Andrzej Wajda, his colleague from Łódź. Two of his films were comedies about the war: *Eroica* (1958) and *Zezowate szczęście (Bad Luck)* from 1960 in which he showed Polish anti-heroes who became heroes because of their fear, stupidity or big talent as wheeler-dealers. These films opened a large discussions about Polish martyrdom.

The next great post-war comedy touching on the similar subject of accidental heroism was *Giuseppe w Warszawie (Giuseppe in Warsaw)* from 1964 by Stanisław Lenartowicz with Zbigniew Cybulski and Elżbieta Czyżewska as brother and sister. She is a member of the underground during the war and one day she meets an Italian soldier Giuseppe and steals his gun. He follows her to her apartment where she lives with her brother and decides to stay there until he gets his gun back. The next comedy with the same theme was called *Jak rozpętałem Drugą Wojnę Światową (How I Unleashed World War II)* from 1970, by Tadeusz Chmielewski, about an unlucky Polish soldier who believes that he started the Second World War by shooting first at a few German soldiers on the 1 September 1939. Then he travels around the world, changing his identity to avoid death and finally comes back to Poland and becomes a hero of the underground army.

Another trilogy of comic films was a history of two feuding families who after the war decided to live next to each other, not to look for new enemies but to live with the ones they already know. That is the beginning of the first part of the trilogy *Sami swoi (Our Folks)* from 1967 by Sylwester Chęciński. In the end their children fall in love with each other and finally get married, reconciling both families. In the second part, called *Nie ma mocnych (Take It Easy)* from 1974, their granddaughter gets married and in the third one *Kochaj albo rzuć (Big Deal)* from 1977 they all go to America to visit a member of the family in Chicago. A few years later Sylwester Chęciński made another 'cult' comedy called *Rozmowy kontrolowane (Calls Controlled)* from 1992 with Stanisław Tym who plays the same character as he did in *Teddy Bear*, just few years earlier, in 1981. This time he accidentally becomes a hero of Solidarity during Martial Law. At the end of the film he accidentally destroys the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, a symbol of communist times. It is a first comedy about Martial Law and the Solidarity mythology, using the same idea that was earlier used to make fun of the mythology of Second World War heroes.

Tadeusz Chmielewski also returned to comedies by making *Nie lubię poniedziałku (I Hate Mondays)* from 1971. This film shows Polish reality through eyes of an Italian businessman who gets involved in situations that are completely incomprehensible, at least to him. And *Bad Luck* by Andrzej Munk also became a subject of story continuation in *Obywatel Piszczyk (Citizen Piszczyk)* in 1989 by Andrzej Kotkowski. This film describes the life of Piszczyk, the main hero of *Bad Luck*, between 1952 and 1960. He is still unlucky, gets involved in politics against his will and as usual ends up in prison. Sociological comedy also become popular, especially two films by Roman Załuski: *Kogel-mogel (Hotch-Potch)* from 1988 and *Galimatias, czyli Kogel-mogel II (Topsy Turvy, or Hotch-Potch II)* from 1989. They are both about a country girl who comes to Warsaw to study. She wants to stay in the city but in the end falls in love with a country boy and they both return to the countryside. Both films were comedies of errors using the city-countryside contradiction and both became very popular.

Currently, there are also two more popular comedy directors. One of them is Marek Koterski and his films about frustrated Polish intellectuals: *Dom wariatów* (*The House of Fools*, 1985), *Życie wewnętrzne* (*Inner Life*, 1987), *Porno* (1990), *Nic śmiesznego* (*Nothing Funny*, 1995) and *Ajlawju* (1999). Lately he made *Dzień świra* (*Day of the Wacko*, 2002) – a great satire on the state of the modern Polish intelligentsia which also satirises the sociological and political situation – and *Wszyscy jesteśmy Chrystusami* (*We're All Christs*, 2006) about Polish alcoholism and martyrdom syndrome. Another one is an actor Olaf Lubaszenko who debuted his directing career with *Sztos* (1997) and then in 2000 made *Chłopaki nie płaczą* (*Boys Don't Cry*), in 2001 *Poranek kojota* (*Coyote's Morning*) and in 2002 *E=mc²*. All his films are sociological comedies about Polish gangsters and their relations with Polish politics.

2. 1 Polish Cult Comedies

Most post-war Polish films are very serious and deeply involved in the political situation of the country. However, in the history of the cinema of Communist Poland we can also find examples of great comedies. Some of them are known as Polish cult comedies. Unfortunately this phenomenon is not fully described yet in Polish film literature but we can find separate sentences and phrases (quoted below) in different books about such films. They become a legend and never get old. People watch them repeatedly, each time finding new meanings. Then next generation watch them and appreciate them as well. The dialogues start to be used in everyday life. Polish people quote from the films in different situations and everybody who has seen these films knows exactly where each quote comes from. That is also why more and more people want to watch these films again – to be able to recognize the quotes and to avoid feeling isolated in groups of fans. As Eco (1986, p. 198) demonstrated in his essay 'Casablanca: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage' a 'cult film' has to 'provide a completely furnished world so that its fans can quote characters and episodes'.

The term 'cult film' is very often abused 'by fans, reviewers and film historians alike' (Paszyk 2009, p. 2) and it remains hard to define. 'Definitions of a cult movie may vary from book to book as far as certain details are concerned, but some of its features are inarguable. For one, they cannot be a part of mainstream cinema.' (*ibid*). As Jancovich (2003, p.1) noted, cult is 'largely a matter of the ways in which films are classified in consumption'. And (Bruce 1989, p. 84) stated that cult films are not made by directors but turned into 'cult' by the public. In other words, they can only 'happen' or 'become' cult.

According to Mathijs and Mendik (2008, pp.1-11) cult film is 'defined through a variety of combinations that include four major elements': *anatomy*, *consumption*, *political economy* and *cultural status*. Then they stated that not all of them need to be fulfilled together but each of them is of high significance in what makes a film cult. Polish cult comedies fulfil each element at least partly. In *anatomy* that will be intertextual and nostalgic.

In *consumption* – active celebration, communication and community, liveness and commitment. In *political economy* – promotion and reception. And in *cultural status* – allegory and politics.

Cult films are most often horror, science fiction and fantasy films but Mathijs and Mendik (*ibid*, p.15) also list absurd comedy, surrealism, pastiche, musicals and satire. In Poland, inversely to other countries, most cult films are comedies. As Mathijs and Mendik (*ibid*, p. 20) explained that in the case of cult films the ‘circuits of reception were accelerated by video, television and other media’ and it involves ‘a signifying practice between film and audience’ (*ibid*, p. 88). Both statements are true in the case of Polish cult comedies that are the source of numbers of quotes that entered the everyday language and were firstly watched on video and now are circulating on DVD.

In Poland very good examples of these elements are fan clubs organising such events as happenings, Cult Film Festivals and Overnight Film Marathons during which they watch films that can be considered a ‘sign of the times’ creating a specific nostalgia for communism. This concerns especially Stanisław Bareja’s films and their fans. ‘Bareizm’ was a negative term first used by Polish film director Kazimierz Kutz in the beginning of the 1970s (Łuczak 2001, p. 27). It was then a synonym of kitsch, of films without any artistic value. However, with time it began to have a more positive connotation. Nowadays this term is used as a symbol of a great film style and of the auto-ironic sense of humour that was present in Bareja’s films.

According to Bałowska (1998, p. 3) in Poland there is a lack of publications about ‘cult films’ and they are limited to single chapters in books or journal articles in film magazines. She also discussed the fact that the adjective ‘cult’ is overused in Polish reality by journalists and film distributors calling newly released comedies ‘cult’. She labeled Iluzjon cinema in Warsaw as a place where ‘cult films’ are shown and people watch the same films over and over again. She also mentioned Maciek Cybulski as a ‘cult actor’, called a ‘Polish James Dean’ by film critics because he died young and also became a legend.

In Syska (2005, p. 102) we also read that in Poland 'cult films' are the ones made by Marek Piwowski, Andrzej Kondratiuk and Stanisław Bareja. These three directors were given the status of cult comedy directors, each one mostly for one film each. In Lubelski (2003, p. 535) we read that in Poland the cult films phenomenon exists only in a limited dimension and it concerns such movies as *Rejs (The Cruise, 1970)* by Piwowski, *Hydrozagadka (Hydroriddle, 1971)* by Kondratiuk and films by Bareja, especially *Miś (Teddy Bear, 1981)*. Their fans know these films by heart, scene-by-scene, and dialogue by dialogue. But each of these directors made other greatly appreciated films as well.

Bareja was one of the most productive ones. He made among others *Mąż swojej żony (Husband of His Wife, 1961)*, *Poszukiwany-poszukiwana (Man – Woman Wanted, 1973)*, *Nie ma róży bez ognia (A Jungle Book of Regulations, 1974)*, *Brunet wieczorową porą (Brunet Will Call, 1976)*, *Co mi zrobisz, jak mnie złapiesz (What Will You Do When You Catch Me?, 1978)* and two cult TV series - *Alternatywy 4 (1983)* and *Zmiennicy (1986)*. Each of them has their own fans but *Teddy Bear* – further discussed below – plays the main role in Polish pop culture. Piwowski also made another comedy called *Przepraszam, czy tu biją (Foul Play, 1976)* and later a bitter love story *Urowadzenie Agaty (Hijacking of Agata, 1993)*. And Machulski is still making feature films. He also directed two mini TV Series called *Matki, żony i kochanki (Mothers, Wives and Lovers)* in 1996 and 1998. In 2005 he made one of 12 episodes of a joined film *Solidarność, Solidarność* titled *Sushi*.

First of the above-mentioned films, *The Cruise* by Marek Piwowski, is entirely filmed on the boat on the Vistula River trip. A well-known comedian Stanisław Tym plays the main character. He does not have the money to pay for the trip so he gets in saying that he is an entertainment coordinator who will keep the passengers busy with cultural events and contests. And that is truly what he is doing during the whole trip. The humour comes from the dialogue and scenes improvised by the non-professional actors who were cast mostly because of their look. One of the best known scenes is a dialogue between two characteristic actors, Jan Himilsbach and Zdzisław Maklakiewicz.

They sit and slowly talk about Polish films saying that they are boring because nothing ever happens and there are not many dialogues in them. They compare them to American movies, full of action, and at the same time they replay a typical boring Polish scene but do so by making it looking funny in a very intelligent way.

This film was seen by Polish critics as a metaphor of Polish society at the beginning of the seventies. Stanisław Tym plays the role he was given by the captain with a growing confidence and he starts to like the power he has over people. Soon, however, he can no longer control the passengers who start to organise their own cultural events, balls and contests. The result is the same kind of chaos as there was in the country that was supposed to be a paradise on Earth, a fast growing ideal society but which was in reality just a charade. This film also tries to talk about the relation between cheap entertainment and art, nature and culture. In one of the scenes passengers discuss the idea of the synthesis of psychic strength with art. In another scene they try to have a democratic discussion and voting but, as in the communistic reality, it all becomes a farce and a subject of manipulation.

After this film Jan Himilsbach and Zdzisław Maklakiewicz appeared together in many films, such as *Wniebowzięci* (1972) – co-wrote by Himilsbach – and *Jak to się robi* (*How It Is Done*, 1974) – co-wrote by Maklakiewicz – both by Andrzej Kondratiuk. Jan Himilsbach also played in *Skorpion, Panna i Łucznik* (*Scorpio, Virgo and Sagittarius*, 1973) by Andrzej Kondratiuk and *Dziewczyny do wzięcia* (1972) by his brother Janusz Kondratiuk. Zdzisław Maklakiewicz started his career much earlier, in such films as *Giuseppe in Warsaw* (1964) by Stanisław Lenartowicz, *Pierwszy dzień wolności* (*The First Day of Freedom*, 1964) by Aleksander Ford, *Salto* (*Jump*, 1965) by Tadeusz Konwicki, *Rękopis znaleziony w Saragossie* (*Saragossa Manuscript*, 1965) by Wojciech Jerzy Has, *Dzięcioł* (*The Woodpecker*, 1970) by Jerzy Gruza, *Hydroriddle* (1970) by Andrzej Kondratiuk or *How I Unleashed World War II* (1970) by Tadeusz Chmielewski.

Hydroriddle by Andrzej Kondratiuk is about a super hero called AS (Ace) who is trying to find out what is happening with water in Warsaw during the summer. Usually during hot summer months there were many pipeline failures and as a result there was no water coming from the taps. He finds out that evil Dr. Spot is trying to dry out the Vistula River. This film is full of nonsense dialogues and surrealist humour and is a parody of American super hero movies.

And *Teddy Bear* by Stanisław Bareja is a story of a man played once more by Stanisław Tym. He and his ex-wife have a joint bank account in London and he wants to get there before her to pick up the money. However, when he gets to the check control they do not let him through because a few of the pages from his passport are missing. He realizes that his ex-wife did it and tries to find out the quickest way to get to London before her. He finds a lookalike and wants to use it to fly to England. But getting a passport in communist Poland was a big problem. Only the chosen ones could get them for the period of the visit abroad and on their return they had to give the passport back. Therefore, the government decided each time whether a person could or could not go abroad.

One of the best known scenes involves a young post worker who is supposed to connect the main hero's phone call to London but apparently she has never heard about the place and tells him that there is no such city in Poland. She can only find Łądek Zdrój in her telephone directory book but not Londyn (London in Polish). The humour here comes from different spellings of the word and from the division of Europe by the 'Iron Curtain' causing a lack of knowledge of 'the other side' in young people. Other scenes contain a sharp satire on Polish daily reality in the eighties, such as the lack of the main consumer products and the need to wheel and deal to survive day by day. In the end, our hero gets the money and gets back to Poland but the ending is full of absurd and surrealist images. Stanisław Tym, who played in both *The Cruise* and *Teddy Bear* co-wrote the latest, as well as two sequels to *Teddy Bear* – *Calls Controlled* (1991) by Sylwester Chęciński and *Ryś* (*Richie*, 2007) which he also directed.

Another comic writer co-writing with Bareja was Jacek Federowicz who helped him with *Man – Woman Wanted* (1973). He performed as an actor in two of his films too – *The Marriage of Convenience* (1967) and *A Jungle Book of Regulations* (1974). He also played in *Do widzenia, do jutra* (*Goodbye, Till Tomorrow*, 1960) by Janusz Morgenstern, *Walkover* (*Walkover*, 1965) by Jerzy Skolimowski, *Polowanie na muchy* (*Hunting Flies*, 1969) by Andrzej Wajda and two TV series: *Wojna domowa* in 1966 and *Alternatywy 4* in 1986. But he was most of all the author of very amusing political texts recorded and distributed on cassettes through the so called 'underground' during and after Martial Law, until 1989 when he was finally able to performed it live on stage and on air.

The youngest, but already appreciated by his viewers, director is Juliusz Machulski. His filmography contains such great comedies as *Va bank* (1981), *Kingsajz* (*King Size*, 1988), *Va bank II, czyli riposta* (1985), *Déjà vu* (1989), *Girl Guide* (1995), *Kiler* (1997) and *Kiler-ów 2-óch* (1999), *Pieniądze to nie wszystko* (*Money Is Not Everything*, 2001), *Superprodukcja* (*Superproduction*, 2003) and *Vinci* (2004). All of them use Hollywood clichés turned around and used for purely comic purposes but at the same time most of these films have a double meaning and a very serious message.

For example *Sexmission* describes a future society where men were eliminated or castrated (which is called 'naturalization') and women are reproduced by parthenogenesis. Two men were hibernated in 1991 and wake up in this world just to find out that they are the only male humans on Earth. Her Excellency decides they need to be 'naturalized' so they run away just to find the secret hidden villa of Her Excellency who is, in fact, an impotent man dressing as a woman. At the end of the film we see a result of their sabotage in the babies' hatchery – the first new born baby-boy. Now everything should go back to normal.

Machulski's *Kingsajz* (Polish pronunciation of the word 'king-size') addressed the problem of the lack of passports in a similar way to *Teddy Bear*. It is a story about dwarves who take a special potion to grow because in this way

they can get away from their home country Szuflandia (Drawersland) and get to the Kingsajz – their land of promise. To stay big they have to drink Polococta every day. Comrades who rule Szuflandia want to stop dwarves from running away to the world of humans so one day they send an agent to Kingsajz who destroys the factory of Polococta. In the meantime, the daughter of a human woman and one of the dwarves tries to retrieve a recipe of the potion that will let her father and her dwarf-lover stay human forever. Szuflandia in this film is a symbol of Poland and the whole communist bloc where people lived squashed up in drawer-like flats and had to live almost like dwarves, while people in the West lived like real king-size humans, enjoying life and luxury. That is why the dwarves try to get their passes to the king-size world.

The end of the film is bittersweet – even though all the characters become human and take a trip by train to the countryside, they soon realize that the train is just a toy and when the camera moves away from it we can see a boy playing with it at the foot of Warsaw's Palace of Culture and Science, formally named by Stalin. This symbolic ending was very prophetic because soon people from the East realized that the West is not a paradise on earth and living 'king-size' does not necessary bring happiness.

All Machulski's comedies made before 1989 tried to describe our real world in costume: science-fiction in *Sexmission*, fantasy in *Kingsajz*, pre-war Poland in *Va bank* and *Va Bank II*, or pre-war Russia in *Déjà vu*. After 1989 he unsuccessfully tried to make a patriotic film *Szwadron* (*Squadron*) in 1992 and after this failure he returned to comedies but then started to use Polish reality (*Kiler*) and even mixed his invented characters with real people (especially in *Kiler-ów 2-óch*). Like other directors he just did not have to hide behind costumes or metaphors any more. However, unlike them he was much more successful. His *Kiler* and *Kiler-ów 2-óch* were big hits in Polish cinemas, viewed by much bigger audiences than the new films by Wajda, Zanussi or even Kieślowski (www.boxoffice.pl).

2. 2. Other Polish Cult Films

Apart from the cult comedies there are also a few serious Polish films that later became cult films. They were made by Władysław Pasikowski who debuted in 1991 with *Kroll*. His next two films were *Psy (Pigs)* from 1992 and *Psy 2. Ostatnia Krew. (Pigs 2)* from 1994. All three of them are called cult films but his latest films – *Słodko-gorzki (Bitter Sweet)* from 1996, *Demony wojny według Goi* from 1998, *Operacja Samum* from 1999 and *Reich* from 2001 – never got that status. Still some quotes from *Operacja Samum* are as deep in public awareness as the ones from *Kroll* and both parts of *Pigs*. Pasikowski's secret was to talk about reality in a rough way. His films are mostly about soldiers or police officers and mafia members. They were very 'macho' and full of violence and bad language. There were not many female characters in them, and the ones that were there, were portrayed in a very negative and sexist way (Mazierska and Ostrowska, 2006, p. 116) but for a long time feminism was a generally taboo word in Poland and in Polish film (Kuhn and Redstone, 1994, p. 316):

'The almost total absence of engagement with feminism in the Polish film industry can be understood only within the context of the country's social, political, and cultural history, which in the last two hundred years has been turbulent and violent, with a long period of partition in the nineteenth century, a brief period of interwar independence followed by Nazi occupation, and then the imposition of Soviet Communism in 1945. In conjunction with the fervent espousal of Roman Catholicism, the national identity is complex, but must provide the context for any consideration of a political nature, such as feminism.'

These films were rooted in the new reality and proved to be what the audience was waiting for. Pasikowski's films were devoid of the symbols and poetry so often present in other directors' films and instead they proposed a brutal reality. Bogusław Linda acted in all of them, an actor who 'modernized "Polishness", a mixture of romanticism, fatalism and defiance' (Stojanowa, 2006, p. 105). He was also one of Kieślowski's favourite actors and acted in many of his early films. However, it was thanks to Pasikowski's films that he became the biggest movie star of the 90s in Poland.

Pasikowski's debut *Kroll* was about the problem of the so-called 'fala' (wave) in the Polish army consisting in the tradition of treating new soldiers as servants by the ones that has been in service for longer. The tradition caused many suicides and was loudly discussed in the 1990s. Bogusław Linda played Lieutenant Arek, whose task, together with Corporal Wiaderny, played by Cezary Pazura, was to find and bring back to the unit a deserter called Marcin Kroll played by Olaf Lubaszenko. Polish critics called it 'a sour, furious film' and also 'the first American film of Polish production' but the young viewers accepted it enthusiastically and for the first time in a long time there were queues in the front of Polish cinemas.

Both parts of *Pigs* were Polish crime thrillers about the lives of the ex-members of the Polish 'milicja' (militia) as the 'policja' (police) was called in communist Poland. Bogusław Linda played Franz Mauer and both Olaf Lubaszenko and Cezary Pazura appeared as well as members of his team. One of the most controversial scenes of the first part is the parody of the ending of Wajda's *Man of Iron* that for many Polish critics symbolized the end of certain ideals. The second part was a box-office hit with attendance similar to the one for *Schindler's List* which had played just a year earlier in Polish cinemas.

Two TV series – *Stawka większa niż życie* (*More Than Life at Stake*) and *Czterej pancerni i pies* (*Four Tank Men and a Dog*) – are now also considered 'cult'. Both black and white, shot and screened in the 60s, they are now regularly shown by various TV stations and are invariably successful. Both are set during the Second World War and show the craftiness of a Polish war spy hiding behind code name J-23 and the heroism of Polish soldiers in a tank crew and their courageous dog Szarik. They were also both marked with a small dose of pro-Soviet and pro-Russian propaganda.

In communist Poland there were some films halted by censorship and kept on the shelves of the production departments. For that reason they were called 'półkownicy' (shelfers) from the word 'półka' (shelf). The best known

are *Ósmy dzień tygodnia* (*The Eighth Day of the Week*) by Aleksander Ford (1958), *Ręczę do góry* (*Hands Up!*) by Jerzy Skolimowski (1967), *Diabeł* (*The Devil*) by Andrzej Żuławski (1972), *Spokój* (*The Calm*) by Kieślowski (1976) and his *Blind Chance* (1981), *Kobieta samotna* (*A Lonely Woman*) by Agnieszka Holland (1981), *Matka Królów* (*Mother of Kings*) by Janusz Zaorski (1982) or *Przesłuchanie* (*Interrogation*) by Ryszard Bugajski (1982).

One of the best known of them was another film by Andrzej Żuławski: *Na srebrnym globie* (*On the Silver Globe*) based on *The Lunar Trilogy* by his granduncle Jerzy Żuławski. The production was almost finished with only 20 percent of the filming left when a new nominated Vice-Minister of Cultural Affairs Janusz Wilhelmi stopped it in 1977. He shot down the project and ordered all the materials, costumes and reels destroyed. However, a member of the crew saved it all and Żuławski finished his project 11 years later. He filled in the narrative gaps with a commentary and the film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 1988 (Pietrasik, 2006, pp. 442-451).

Some of the other Żuławski films became 'cult', for example *L'important c'est d'aimer* (*That Most Important Thing: Love*) with Romy Schneider (1975), *Possession* with Isabel Adjani (1981), *La femme publique* (*The Public Woman*) with Valérie Kaprisky (1984), *Mes nuits sont plus belles que vos jours* (*My Nights Are More Beautiful Than Your Days*) with his then wife Sophie Marceau (1989) or *Szamanka* (*The Shaman*) with Iwona Petry (1996). The common denominator of all of his films is controversial sexualism and the fact that he pushes his actresses to strip emotionally. However, some critics say that he has an ability to discover and 'rediscover' such actresses and they usually play the best parts in his films.

Another 'cult' director is Jan Jakub Kolski who is called the founder of the 'magical realism' trend in Polish cinema. Most of his films were located in mythical countryside and shot in his home town of Popielawy. The best known of them are *Pogrzeb kartofla* (*Burial of a Potato*) from 1990, *Jańcio Wodnik* (*Johnny the Aquarius*) from 1993, *Cudowne miejsce* (*Miraculous Place*) from 1995, *Historia kina w Popielawach* (*History of Cinema in*

Popielawy) from 1998, *Jaśminum (Jasminum)* from 2006 or *Afonia i pszczoły (Afonia and honeybees)* from 2009. In all of them magic coexists with reality and nobody seems to be surprised by miraculous events.

His *History of Cinema in Popielawy* tells the story of an inventor who constructed his own 'kinematograf' before the Lumière brothers and is evidently based on the life of the Kazimierz Prószyński. Two of his films – *Daleko od okna (Keep away from the window)* made in 2000 and *Pornografia (Pornography)* based on the novel by Witold Gombrowicz from 2002 were not part of his magical realism series but with them the director was trying to change his style and to try something different. However, four years later he returned to his well-known world of the countryside in his films.

In the book by Mathijs and Mendik (2008, p. 372) censorship in the UK is also mentioned as a one of the factors causing a 'cult' reaction, but they only mentioned 'violent imagery' and 'sexual imagery', no politics was involved. In Poland a few films made and released in 1989/1990 became 'cult' for political reasons. It was the moment of transition from communism to capitalism and they were talking about the things that were important for Poles at that time. The best examples are *Ostatni dzwonek (The Last Schoolbell)* by Magdalena Łazarkiewicz, *Marcowe migdały (March Caresses)* by Radosław Piwowarski and *Ucieczka z kina 'Wolność' (Escape from the 'Liberty' Cinema)* by Wojciech Marczewski.

Ucieczka z kina 'Wolność' was mentioned by Pietrasik (2006) in his *Afterword to Sova* (2006) where he widely discussed Polish political censorship and used it as an example of a film about the subject. He also mentioned there the first screen version of the book *The Pianist* by Szpilman, later filmed by Polański. It was co-written by Polish poet Czesław Miłosz and called *Robinson warszawski (Warsaw Robinson Crusoe)* but then dramatically changed by the censors and released in 1950 as *Miasto nieujarzmione (Unvanquished City)*. As a sign of protest against it Miłosz, who was later awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, removed his name from the credits.

CHAPTER 3 – DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

In the book *Polish Film. A Twentieth Century History* by Charles Ford, Robert Hammond and Grażyna Kudy there is a chapter called 'The Comet and the Sun'. It talks about Andrzej Wajda and Krzysztof Kieślowski, calling the first one 'the sun' of Polish cinematography and the other one 'the comet' in its sky. It is a very interesting comparison which is sadly absent in Polish film criticism. Wajda appeared in Polish cinema right after the war and remains an important figure today. Whereas Kieślowski started making his feature films quite late but managed to make a quick and sudden career in the world of cinema. Now they are the two most recognized Polish directors abroad.

Polish actor Jerzy Stuhr worked with both of them. He was Kieślowski's friend and when he started to direct films himself many people saw him as a continuator of his ideas. Especially when in 2000 he filmed one of Kieślowski's old scripts – *Duże zwierzę (Big Animal)*. And his earlier films – *Historie miłosne (Love Stories)* and *Tydzień z życia mężczyzny (A Week in the Life of a Man)* were both inspired by and dedicated to his friend.

Stuhr also knows Andrzej Wajda very well. He played in many of the plays and films directed by Wajda. He compared his relations with both these directors and while with Kieślowski it was a friendship, with Wajda it is more confrontational. He noticed that Wajda's sense of a mission was very strong (Miklos, 2001, pp. 242-246). Andrzej Wajda remains the most important personage in Polish cinematography (Paul, 1983, p. 256) and throughout his years in Poland gained the title of Master. This title is used only for him not just by journalists but also by other filmmakers and many film critics.

However, some say that the most significant director from an international perspective was Krzysztof Kieślowski: 'By the time Solidarity was voted into office in 1989, Kieślowski had become one of the most famous directors in Europe.' (Thompson and Bordwell, 1994, p. 748). Another example of the appreciation of the greatness of Kieślowski's work is a quotation about his

lifetime achievement in film: 'It's very seldom that a filmmaker comes along who uses the medium as originally as Dovzhenko or Jean Vigo, but in Poland in the 1970's that's exactly what happened.' (Cousins, 2004, p. 424). He also stated that his *A Short Film About Killing* became Kieślowski's 'best work to date' (*ibid*, p. 425) and Orr (1998, p. 29) called it 'a masterpiece' and described it as 'powerful and savage' (*ibid*, p. 9).

It seems that while Wajda always was most appreciated in his homeland because of the historical subjects he usually tackled, Kieślowski was more acclaimed abroad than in Poland. Even though Wajda was also popular in different countries and he received an Oscar for Lifetime Achievement in 2000 his films were focussed on national issues while Kieślowski was dealing with more universal subjects. However, he remained popular with the Polish audience and was rather underestimated by the critics. Therefore it is hard to decide which of them should be called the greater figure of Polish cinema.

3. 1. Politics in Films by Wajda and Kieślowski

As mentioned before Kieślowski's films were always more appreciated abroad than in his native Poland. It was caused partly by political reasons because he refused to take sides in a clear division of 'us' and 'them' in his films, being aware that the world is not black and white. He was ahead of his time because in Poland at the time nobody or at least not many realised that yet. So even after the change of the political system some film critics considered him a traitor. However, young people considered him their spiritual guide because he was able to talk about the world around them without taking sides. Moreover, the youth around the world was able to understand his very emotional films.

In 1996 in the June edition of the American *Premiere* magazine Harvey Weinstein, co-founder of Miramax Films, wrote an article about the late Krzysztof Kieślowski called 'To Smoke and Drink in L.A.' where he said that Kieślowski always concentrated on 'human nature' (Weinstein, 1996, p. 35). His close co-worker and actor in many of his films Jerzy Stuhr also noted that Kieślowski's films were mostly about human experience (Miklos, 2001, p. 200). In communist Poland it was almost impossible to ignore politics. The society was divided into two camps and you had to support one of the sides (*ibid*, p. 220). He also mentioned that in the communist time before 1989 even anti-politics became politics (*ibid*, pp. 220-221).

Wajda always believed that our history and experience define us as human beings but Kieślowski believed more in human nature. However, even Wajda appreciated Kieślowski's choices and intuition. In the afterword to the script of *Heaven* by Kieślowski and Piesiewicz (2002, p. 128), Stanisław Zawiśliński quotes Andrzej Wajda admitting Kieślowski found the right direction:

'While during the Martial Law we were all lost and disoriented, only Kieślowski knew where to go... He went actually upstream Polish film tradition... We wanted to take an attitude towards the society and the history. He then chose to look at the modern life through the prism of psychology and spirituality. It turned out that he was right...'

However, Zawisliński also adds that back then many were against Kieślowski (*ibid*). He tried to avoid politics in his films and some Polish critics criticized him for it. Even *No End* – a film about Martial Law – was not strictly political but rather human. In times when everybody had to be involved in politics it was quite courageous of Kieślowski to avoid this subject in his films. Instead he concentrated on people and tried to show that there are things which do not depend on politics and which are the same both in a communist country and in a western democracy.

Meanwhile most of Wajda's films were about Polish history and politics. He was also always involved in Polish politics and in 1989-1991 becoming even a senator in the Polish Senate. Many times he was writing petitions, starting campaigns and expressing his opinions in political matters. His last film *Katyń* from 2007 is a very good example of his thinking about cinematography as a 'mission to the nation'. In 1940 Soviet soldiers bestially murdered over 22,000 Polish officers and citizens in the woods of Katyń near Smoleńsk in Russia. They were shot in the back of their heads and the dead bodies were thrown into a mass grave that was discovered in 1943 by the Nazis but the Soviet authorities denied all responsibility. In communist Poland the subject of the Katyń massacre was forbidden. For 50 years people were not allowed to mention it and if it was mentioned, the blame was thrown on the Nazis.

Wajda's *Katyń* was a very important film to the director himself. His father was assassinated there and he and his mother did not know for a long time what really happened to him. Only in the beginning of the 1990s, when communism ended, was the truth revealed. Wajda wanted to make a film about it for many years and finally in 2007 he managed to finish it and release it. Critics agreed that even though it was not a great movie, rather a tombstone, it was very important for Polish people. Especially so for the young ones who did not know the modern history of their country well enough.

At the beginning of Kieślowski's *Double life of Veronique* there is a scene with a monument of Lenin taken away on the van. That gives us information

that this story takes place at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, probably in 1989/1990 when communist monuments were taken down or destroyed. However, this information does not seem to be very important in this movie. Unless we look at it as an image of one girl's life in two places – an Eastern European country like Poland and Western France – and how it could look like. Kieślowski dedicated this film to his daughter Marta. He once said that he was always writing letters to her so she could read them even when he was not around. He was writing to her about important things such as how to live and what is important in life. This film seems to be one of the 'letters' to his daughter. The young heroine of this film could be just one person, who leaves Poland for France (Yue, 1997-2009). Even though she disappears from her country forever, as if she was dead, she starts a new life in another one, enriched by her experiences. Coates (2004, p. 272) made a similar remark.

Moving from the Eastern to Western Europe, now so easy to do, has a big impact on the people who choose to do so. Maybe Kieślowski wanted to warn his daughter about life in the West, so similar and at the same time so different? Maybe this is still the same girl she was before but she has to adapt to new circumstances? She tries to learn from her own mistakes. Having so little in one place makes her appreciate what she can get in another.

In summary, as Coates (*ibid*, pp. 266-267) noticed – using films by Wajda and Kieślowski as examples – politics was always present in the cinema of the countries that were part of the Soviet bloc and it was impossible to escape from it. Even when some filmmakers made an apolitical film, it was always understood and read by the critics and the members of the public as a political statement, full of hidden symbols and messages. This situation changed just in 1989 after the change of the political system.

3. 2. Religion in Films by Wajda and Kieślowski

Wajda is a representative of Polish old school patriotism that followed three virtues: God, Honour, Fatherland (Bóg, Honor, Ojczyzna). Therefore the Catholic religion, as the most popular in Poland, is present in a natural way in his films. He is not a religious director though, as for example Krzysztof Zanussi could be seen as. Wajda uses mostly Catholic symbols, as they are very vivid in Polish awareness. A cross hanging upside down from the bombed church's wall in *Ashes and Diamonds* or a rosary passed from a victim to his sister in *Katyń* – these are just symbols used in a similar way to the national ones such as the emblem of the crowned-eagle in *The Crowned-Eagle Ring* symbolizing free Poland or a white horse in *Ashes and Diamonds* (Wajda, 1989, p. 64) and by the viewers they are just treated as part of Polishness.

Kieślowski was more connected with religion than Wajda especially at the start of his film career. In 1983 the government authorities refused him approval to film John Paul II's visit to Poland (Kieślowski and Piesiewicz, 2002, p. 127). He wanted to film it from the perspective of the people waiting for the Pope to come and the Polish Episcopate did not support this idea. Therefore, he was always looking for a different way of showing religiosity.

Even his *The Decalogue* was not treated in a simply religious way but rather as a matter of good or evil and with time he evolved from Polish Catholicism towards metaphysics. Kieślowski was using allegories rather than symbols, not necessary connected with the Polish identity but they were more universal. For example, a character appearing in all parts of *The Decalogue* played by Artur Barciś was by some read as a guardian angel watching the characters, their conscience, Jesus Christ or God himself. However, for example for *Cousins* (2004, p. 425) he was a symbol of death:

'(...) Instead the films are like parables, using reversals of fate, family taboos, social unease and the recurring appearances of a young man who perhaps symbolizes death, to explore human values in modern Polish life'.

Western viewers and critics were confused by the numbering of the *Ten Commandments*. Paul Coates in *European Cinema* (Ezra, 2004) devoted a few paragraphs to this subject. In his chapter 'Kieślowski: the end of necessity' we read that 'The relationship between the commandments and the individual, fifty-minute stories is vexed, as each appears to activate – not necessarily 'illustrate' – more than one.' (Coates, 2004, p. 269). And indeed, each commandment is connected with another so we can find more than one in each episode but the structure of the TV series is based on the idea of illustrating them one by one. In the chapter 'Dekalog and The Decalogue' Coates (*ibid*, p. 273) writes about the differences between the Biblical Ten Commandments and the Deuteronomy version without realising that Kieślowski and Piesiewicz just followed the Ten Commandments version of the Catholic Church, memorized by heart from the Roman Catholic catechism by every child in Catholic Poland. Therefore, it is a version neither from Exodus nor from Deuteronomy but the Traditional Catechetical Formula.

The main difference lies in the fact that Commandments numbers 1 and 2 become one (Number 1) and Number 10 is divided into two (9 and 10). That is why even though the Ten Commandments really consist of more than ten orders, they concentrated only on the main ten, skipping 'You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them' or 'You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's', and followed the Vatican's version below from the Catechism of the Catholic Church .

Exodus 20 2-17	Deuteronomy 5:6-21	A Traditional Catechetical Formula
1. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.	1. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.	1. I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.

<p>2. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.</p>	<p>2. You shall have no other gods before me.</p>	
<p>3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.</p>	<p>3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.</p>	<p>2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.</p>
<p>4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.</p>	<p>4. Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy.</p>	<p>3. Remember to keep holy the LORD'S Day.</p>
<p>5. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may belong in the land which the LORD your God gives you.</p>	<p>5. Honor your father and your mother.</p>	<p>4. Honor your father and your mother.</p>
<p>6. You shall not kill.</p>	<p>6. You shall not kill.</p>	<p>5. You shall not kill.</p>

7. You shall not commit adultery.	7. Neither shall you commit adultery.	6. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.	8. Neither shall you steal.	7. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	9. Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor.	8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.	10. Neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not desire anything that is your neighbor's.	9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
		10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

For every viewer in Poland it was obvious and raised no questions because Poland was always very Catholic. However, in the secular Western world and in English-language film criticism few authors had addressed this issue before (Campan, 1993; Žižek, 2001) and got confused by the numbering. Even Cotes, who mentioned the Catholic numbering system, as its example gave the Deuteronomy version instead of the version from the Roman Catholic Catechism which is more accurate. Therefore, even though he was the closest to the truth, he still missed the point and misled the readers.

Also both Kieślowski and Wajda used religious symbols but in a different way. When Kieślowski used the words from St. Paul's Tenth Epistle to the Corinthians in the ending of *Three Colours: Blue* (Cousins, 2004, p. 428), he did that because he strongly felt a part of European Christian tradition. Therefore Kieślowski treated Christian symbols as signs of being a person brought up in a certain culture (Coates, 2004, p. 269). Whereas Wajda used them more as signs of being part of Polish culture. That explains why Kieślowski was better understood abroad and Wajda was rather commended for being persistent in illustrating his vision of Polish patriotism.

3. 3. Nationality in Films by Wajda and Kieślowski

The matter of nationality in Wajda's and Kieślowski's films is quite similar to their position towards religion. Polish nationality was always a very important issue for Wajda and influenced his perception of the world. However, Kieślowski was able to rise above his nationality and to become a citizen of the world. He used to say that 'in the end everybody suffers the same from a toothache – a Pole and a Swiss, a communist and an anarchist.' (Zawiśliński, 1994, p. 38). He was more interested in the human condition as such, in people's feelings, fears and joys than in the discussion about national issues so often started in the society by many of Wajda's films.

The nationality of films and filmmakers is a very vivid issue even now when Europe has united and runs so many institutions to promote European cinema as a whole, such as 'Eurimages' and 'Media programmes', so that European films can compete with American ones. The nationality of films is not the subject of my thesis but it is hard to deny that it is a very popular issue that still causes problems (Hill and Church Gibson, 1998, pp. 442-443):

'What determines the national identity of a film when funding, language, setting, topic, cast and director are increasingly mixed? How can we classify films such as Louise Malle's 1992 film *Damage* (French director, Franco-British cast, English settings), Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Three Colours* trilogy (*Blue*, 1993; *White*, 1993, *Red*, 1994; made by a Polish director with French funds and a Franco-Polish cast), and Lars von Trier's 1996 film *Breaking the Waves* (Danish director, Norwegian-European funds, British cast, Scottish setting)? However, despite the fluidity of national boundaries, the majority of European films are perceived as having a clear national identity, especially when it comes to particular movements and filmmakers.'

It is interesting that Poland was sometimes compared to Hungary (Coates, 2004, p. 267). The reason given was the fact that according to English-language literature these two countries delivered the best films of the Eastern-European bloc before the end of the system in 1989 (Paul, 1983, p. 4). Such directors as Wajda were praised for being able to talk about their national issues in a way that was interesting to viewers abroad (*ibid*, p. 64).

Russian director Valery Todorovsky, author of the hit Russian musical *Stilyagi (Boogie Bones)* explained some problems encountered by many filmmakers, also Russian ones (Faraday, 2000, p. 173) whose films are often not even shown in cinemas.

'When I speak about making entertaining movies, I don't mean that I want to go into competition with Steven Spielberg. I just mean that I want my movies to be shown in movie theatres. Because in fact not all pictures [in Russia today] are being made for the theatres. I want to make films that pull in people who'll pay money for the chance to see them. They must be made in such way that a regular kind of person [normalnyi chelovek] will find something in interesting in them. Because I know that a huge number of Russian movies are made in a way and on subjects that make sure no one will find them interesting. I want to make films like, for example, Kieślowski [the recently deceased, émigré Polish director of the *Three Colors Trilogy*], who's quite a serious artist but people want to pay and see his films. He made films of a kind that were intelligible to people'.

Therefore the conclusion emerges that one can be successful in both making films rooted deep in ones nationality if one knows how to give it a universal meaning (like Wajda) as by concentrating from the beginning on universal issues and questions (like Kieślowski) as long as one is consistent.

CONCLUSION

To summarise, I have tried to gather the information about Polish cinematography in English-language literature in one place to see what should be corrected, what is missing and what is really inspiring. For an English-speaking reader these books are the only source of information about Polish cinematography and it was interesting to see what can be found if one decides to learn more about the subject. Therefore I have looked for books mentioning Polish films in libraries and also on the Internet. People interested in the subject can find enough information to get a picture of the Polish film industry over the years. They can also find some books about Polish history useful, as these two aspects were always strongly connected, especially *God's Playground* by Davies (1981) and other books by this author who found a correct perspective to familiarise English-speaking readers with the complicated past of Poland as a country.

Generally, the image of Polish cinema is represented more widely than some of the other European national cinematographies such as, for example Czech, or even Greek or Portuguese, but it could still be improved. It is still far away from the interest that the French or Spanish cinematographies have gained over the years. There are many Polish films that the Western public could be interested in but it is not possible to see them. Therefore there is a need to show old Polish films in the UK. This way, scholars writing about Polish cinema could see the classics about which sometimes they can only read. In Poland Iluzjon Filmoteki Narodowej (Iluzjon Cinema of National Film Library) plays such a role by showing only old classic films. Younger Polish academics can also see older Polish films on TV Kultura (TV Culture) and other channels often showing old films. The knowledge of the past of certain cinematography is as useful as knowledge of the reality illustrated in it. As Paul (1983, p. 64) stated 'the outsider does not have to understand the cultural settings in depth to comprehend the message of the films (although to understand them *fully* perhaps does require such cultural familiarity).' However, in Liehm's words: 'the greatness of most good films that come from Eastern Europe is that they do not require any special reading.' (*ibid*, p. 64).

In this dissertation I used many English-language resources. My intention was to present a wide image of Polish cinema with all the knowledge and deficiencies in English-language film literature and to prove that there is still a need for more studies, books, MA or MPhil dissertations and PhD theses raising this subject. In Poland there exists a strong conviction that Polish films must be misunderstood abroad. It is popular especially in case of Polish cult comedies discussed widely in Chapter Two. People in Poland believe that these films are very inaccessible to those who never lived in the country and do not know its history. I wished to face this in my thesis as I believed it to be wrong because many of these films became cult films for younger viewers who never lived in the communist reality. Therefore apart from reading English-language texts I also started a film club showing Polish comedies to an English audience to see their reactions. While some linguistic jokes were sometimes lost in translation, situational tricks seem to be understood without any problems.

After collecting all secondary data, experimentation and observation I have changed my initial perspective on the issue and realised that Polish cinema is not systematically misunderstood in English-language criticism. Many books offer very good perspectives and both political as social context for their information. For example Parker (1984) in his book about Polański also provides information about the realities of those times. Many authors also show a very good understanding of the Polish mentality, especially Orr (1998, 2004, 2006) and Coates (1999, 2004). Good results are often obtained when authors from different backgrounds join forces. The best example is the book *Polish Films. A Twentieth Century History* by Ford, Hammond and Kudy uniting a French, an American and a Polish author. This way they can combined all three aspects mentioned in the above work: by making sure there are no mistakes, by exploring unknown areas and by finding new angles and meanings.

After deeper analysis of the sources about Polish cinema, in my thesis I have proved that in spite of the relatively small number of sources about Polish films, the reception of Polish cinematography in English-language film

literature, even though scattered, is solid and exhaustive. This result was achieved by the following methodology: tracking the literature about Polish filmography and looking for information about Polish directors and their films in the Index or Bibliography of any book about world filmography. Books about French cinema played an especially big part in the popularisation of information about Polish cinema. Because Polish directors such as Wajda and Kieślowski made some of their films in France, these publications became a gateway for English-language critics leading them to Polish cinema. The main weakness was the lack of accuracy shown in the language which leads to misunderstandings because English-language literature has a big impact on the world perception of Polish cinema and these small mistakes are later duplicated. Somebody who read Parker's book about Polański (1995) might look for information about 'Wadja' instead of 'Wajda' and will not find any information.

However, in sum, in spite of the 'Iron Curtain' and the fact of the cultural, political and social isolation, the image of Polish cinema in English-language literature is profound. It is worthwhile emphasizing that it was not easy to achieve and that the situation of English-language critics was not simple which can be illustrated, for example, by the problem of Kieślowski's *The Decalogue* and the numbering of episodes discussed in my thesis. However, it is also worth stressing that these differences helped English-language critics to perceive things not noticed by Polish authors.

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