Between Fear and Freedom

Between Fear and Freedom:
Cultural Representations of the Cold War

Edited by

Kathleen Starck

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This book first published 2010

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-1859-3, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-1859-9

To all those seeking to make sense of the Cold War's legacies in their life

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is a very personal book. Like many other scholarly projects it grew out of a wish to comprehend my own life. I was born and grew up in the German Democratic Republic, a country that no longer exists. Over the past twenty years I have learned the most extraordinary facts about this country and its people, about the nature of its dictatorship, about the Stasi and about the courageous people who opposed the system. Many of these facts seemed to have nothing to do with my life in that country. Notwithstanding, while I spent a reasonably happy childhood and youth on the beaches of the Baltic Sea, the Berlin Wall existed, people were spied on, imprisoned and killed, there was no freedom of speech or of the press, and travelling to Western countries was virtually impossible. Moreover, I hardly ever questioned the way we were force fed ideology in virtually all areas of everyday life.

Twenty years on, I ask myself how that was possible. Why is it that I am still unable to reconcile my personal memories and emotions with the historical facts that keep emerging? And what is my identity?

I have found that many of my questions can be answered when the context in which the GDR existed is considered. A great number of the political decisions were made not in the GDR but elsewhere. As were the rules of politics for the Federal Republic of Germany and those of many other Eastern and Western countries. I have come to understand that my own "little life" in that small country was merely a tiny piece in the vast jigsaw puzzle of a global power struggle.

In order to find out more about the logic of this conflict and the strategies employed to influence the lives, thoughts, and emotions of ordinary people, I organised an international conference on Cold War cultures. Some of the insights presented there were so fascinating that I decided to ask the presenters to further develop their papers for a collection of essays.

So, first of all, sincere thanks to the contributors who have made this book possible and who have remained uncomplaining about my never ceasing requests for changes. I would also like to thank the University of Osnabrück for its financial support and Peter-Lars Wenzel for his help with the manuscript. Finally, I owe a very big "thank you" to my favourite discussion partner, Gregor Kern, for his questions about "life on the other side" and his unfailing patience and encouragement.

INTRODUCTION—
WHY COLD WAR CULTURES MATTER

KATHLEEN STARCK

The end of the Cold War does not merely demarcate the finishing of the superpower conflict, but also divides generations into those born before and after. For many of the younger generation, born at the end of the 1980s, the Cold War is firmly relegated to "history," something that happened long ago. In fact, when I asked first-year students at the beginning of a lecture to briefly explain what the conflict was about, there was a prolonged silence and much shrugging of shoulders. What this generation "benefits" from instead is a re-appropriation of Cold War symbols by popular and youth culture as well as the fashion industry. One encounters posters, t-shirts, hats, coffee mugs and alarm clocks with Cold War propaganda slogans, with portraits of Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Karl Marx, Vladimir I. Lenin, Henry Kissinger, John F. Kennedy, Checkpoint Charlie in East Berlin and even with images of Tiananmen tanks;[1] bags adorned with the Soviet, Czechoslovakian, Yugoslavian or GDR flag; computer games such as *Red Alert*, *Soviet Strike*, *Code Name Panzers: Cold War* and cinema blockbusters, based on Cold War comics, such as *The Watchmen*, to name but a few examples. In the same way that any meaning of the superpower conflict has disappeared for today's student generation, these Cold War representations have been turned into signifiers without a signified.

The repercussions are more overt in the realm of politics. As political scientist Nadia Arbatova has recently argued, most current problems between Russia and the European Union/the West are rooted in the 1990s, when the reasoning on both sides of the former Iron Curtain was still very much guided by Cold War models of political thinking.[2] Moreover, although twenty years of living in a post-Cold War world might be considered long enough to overcome the divide between the former superpowers and their respective allies, contemporary political, economic, scientific and social/cultural leaders still belong to a generation which was

thoroughly socialised by the Cold War. These, in turn, are the people parenting, educating, managing and governing the above student generation.

Thus, while these lines are being written the German media abound with a myriad of discussions centred on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The overriding points of interest are still the incompatibilities between Germans on both sides of the former border and what efforts and time it is going to take to eliminate these differences. I have also met Russian colleagues who place great emphasis on the acknowledgement of a (post-) Cold War Russophobia in the West on the one hand and the recognition of Russian academic achievements on the other. In a similar vein, a Romanian colleague admitted to still feeling somewhat patronised by Western colleagues at international conferences. Other colleagues argue in a 2002 publication (rather polemically) that the Cold War is not over yet and that the Western "brainwashing" (Dubravka and Booker 2002, 5) continues and in the process accuse the US academic discipline Slavic Studies of resembling Said's Orientalism (Dubravka and Booker 2002, 2): "Now, with the Cold War ostensibly over, the Western propaganda machine rolls on continuing to declare Soviet socialist realism so bad that it should not be read" (Dubravka and Booker 2002, 5). Meanwhile angry demonstrators in the United States are seen brandishing posters in protest of Obama's planned health reforms, denouncing him and his politics as "socialist" and "communist," thus reviving well-known Cold War fears.[3]

All these examples demonstrate that the effects of Cold War socialisation are still very much with us. What is more, in these instances it is of little matter whether Russophobia really exists/ed, Western scholars are behaving condescendingly towards their Eastern colleagues (or if this perception might be a construction of the Eastern mind) and whether Obama is a "dangerous socialist." What is of significance, though, is the fact that these ideas and emotions are consequences of the Cold War and the cultures it produced. In addition, these consequences are not merely played out at the level of individuals but have contributed tremendously to the different nations' psychologies. So, although the younger generation might not necessarily be aware of it, their lives are still very much affected by the Cold War.

In order to understand phenomena such as the above, it is crucial to grasp just *how* the Cold War with its ubiquitous presence has socialised people on both sides of the Iron Curtain for more than two generations. One vital strategy in obtaining this knowledge is to look at Cold War cultures. The conflict gave rise to cultural representations in virtually all areas of social life, not just in Europe and the US but globally. The most

apparent fields are politics and propaganda, yet many less obvious domains were shaped decisively by the struggle, from cinema to sports to sexuality, religion, and race. This is due to the manifold aims of Cold War cultural products as well as the conditions of their production. They were directed, for example, at proving superiority over the enemy, at demonstrating the evilness of the other side, and to warn of enemies within one's own nation. After more and more archives are being opened, it has also become evident how strongly involved many governments were in generating specific Cold War cultures. Historian Jessica Gienow-Hecht has pointed out that never before or after the Cold War did governments invest so much money, thinking, and other resources into cultural diplomacy.[4] In the words of David L. Andrews and Stephen Wagg,

> culture became a vehicle through which—in the absence of more conventional forms and frequencies of military engagement—the competing communist and capitalist orders sought to assert their civil, ideological, and moral ascendancy (Andrews and Wagg 2006, 2)

because "it provided an abundant and emotive landscape upon which claims for moral and ideological supremacy were aggressively advanced" (Andrews and Wagg 2006, 3). David Caute even uses the term "culture war" (Caute 2005, 1), "not merely . . . a military conflict deterred, held in reserve, but also the continuous pursuit of victory by other means" (Caute 2005, 5). He maintains that the Soviet Union, due to its fear of freedom, lost the *Kulturkampf*—in spite of its ability to reduce illiteracy, produce the first man in space and ballet companies such as the Bolshoi Theatre, win Nobel Prizes, international chess tournaments and athletic contests, and build impressive laboratories (Caute 2005, 2). This is supported by Walter L. Hixson when he writes that one key to answering the question of how the United States and its allies contributed to the disintegration of the Soviet empire is to be found in the analysis of the role of cultural infiltration (Hixson 1998, 230), a conviction shared by Yale Richard, former cultural officer in the United States Information Agency, in his recent memoirs (Yale 2008, 1).

If these scholars point to the critical role of culture during the Cold War on the basis of case studies in the fields of sports (Andrews and Wagg), cinema and the stage (Caute) and cultural exchange (Hixson, Richard), historical theorists have likewise come to recognise the importance of culture to understanding the Cold War. Thus, Yale Ferguson and Rey Koslowski indicate the potential of analysing cultural perceptions of leaders and their followers (under "culture" they subsume ideology, national characteristics and race) as well as these leaders' use of culture as

a tool (Ferguson and Koslowski 2000, 170). They cite the famous kitchen debate at the 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow as a turning point marking "a transformation of the Cold War itself—a move, or expansion, of the arenas of competition from the military and political to the economic and cultural" and conclude that "popular culture itself became political" (Ferguson and Koslowski 2000, 170) thereby functioning as a "soft power," which might have "played a much greater role in the end of the Cold War as previously acknowledged" (Ferguson and Koslowski 2000, 171). A change in Cold War studies has also been pointed out by Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbendam:

> The entry into this field by scholars from disciplines such as sociology, literature, and media studies [one might want to add cultural studies] has been complemented by a gradual (if at times surprisingly reluctant) "cultural turn" on the part of diplomatic historians themselves. (Scott-Smith and Krabbendam 2003, 3)

Thus, in an attempt to embrace the "cultural turn" in Cold War studies as well as the great variety of Cold War cultural representations, this book includes essays on film, propaganda, conspiracy theories, education, music and ethnicity, music videos, comic books, architecture, fiction, autobiographical writing, as well as the theatre and introduces examples from eight countries and cultural areas from different phases of the Cold War.

The first chapter includes essays on one of the most productive areas of Cold War culture—the cinema. Jan Rek explores how Socialist Realism was first installed in Polish cinema and subsequently lost its influence. Moreover, he demonstrates how the Cold War context "led to the odd cultural convergence in the Eastern Bloc—and Polish Socialist Realism in particular—and American cinema." Sanna Peden analyses the issue of Cold War Finnish national identity in Aki Kaurismäki's films *Shadows in Paradise* and *Ariel*. She argues that the increasing Westernisation and the decreasing importance of Finlandisation are inadequate strategies in narrating Finnish national identity. Hilary Dannenberg looks at American fears of foreign invasion as portrayed in the science-fiction films *Invaders from Mars*, *War of the Worlds*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *It Came from Outer Space*, and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. She focuses on the corporeal presentation of the Other and traces the advance of a new kind of narrative, which uses the Other to reflect on human behaviour and on a threat from within American society. Kathleen Starck provides a close reading of Cold Warrior characters in the films *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* and *Fail Safe* and claims

that there is a close connection between the characters' hypermasculinity and the, from today's perspective, warped logic of Cold War politics.

Cold War politics is also the focus of the second chapter, which presents examples of propaganda and conspiracy theories. Giorgio Signori examines US propaganda films from the end of the 1940s to the mid-Fifties. He establishes a crucial link between the kind of propaganda disseminated through these films—assuring the population that a nuclear war can be survived—and US domestic policy. Gérald Arboit shows how Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy* influenced the debates around Pius XII's attitude to fascism. Outlining the origin of the so-called *Pius Wars*, Arboit discusses the Soviet involvement in producing them and the "mistakes" the Holy See made in response. He argues that the Pope's *silences* were a phenomenon of the Cold War rather than a fact of World War II history. Matthew Gray takes us outside the Western/European world and into the Middle East as a Cold War battleground, where both the United States and the Soviet Union intervened. He investigates the political language that the Cold War context generated in (state) propaganda and conspiracy theories produced by the wider Middle Eastern society.

The third chapter considers the ways the Cold War affected popular cultures. Uwe Zagratzki's essay attests to an antagonistic cultural struggle between the emerging American youth culture of rock'n'roll and the establishment of the McCarthy era. Focusing on Elvis Presley's affiliations with African-American traditions, Zagratzki illustrates the authorities' othering of the singer as well as his subsequent (forced) assimilation as a strategy of dealing with American Cold War fears about gender and race identities. Oliver Lindner turns to the music industry during the late Cold War. He looks at the ways mid-Eighties music videos, which had become icons of popular and youth culture during the decade, took up and negotiated Cold War issues. Marta García Carbonero offers insights into the field of architecture as a site of the Cold War. Although the sphere of architecture is not commonly associated with popular culture, García Carbonero's claim that buildings are among the most visible symbols of the Cold War as well as the fact that they are, at least visually, accessible to everybody, shall justify the inclusion of her essay in this chapter. She concentrates on an iconic Cold War place—Berlin—and follows the post-war reconstruction of the city in East and West and reveals how the planning, erection and also destruction of buildings were and still are used as propaganda. With Matthew J. Costello's essay we return to an archetypical domain of popular culture. If the featuring of the Cold War in comic books of the Fifties and Sixties is to be expected,

Costello introduces re-imaginations of the superpower conflict in recent publications. He pinpoints major themes of American Cold War self-identity in contemporary comic books, and contends that these function as critiques of the roles which the US government, globalisation and Westernisation play in today's Cold War's legacies.

The final chapter presents literary examples of Cold War cultures. Jana Nittel investigates a Cold War cultural institution. Looking at how James Bond literally embodies the conflict, she analyses the relation between violence and the male body in Ian Fleming's Bond novels. Geoff Willcocks' essay draws attention to the trauma of transition experienced in the revolutionary Romania of 1989. His reading of Caryl Churchill's 1990 play *Mad Forest* points to the pain and uncertainty the events caused to ordinary citizens. Finally, Martins Kaprans studies uncertainty in contemporary post-socialist Latvia. He examines autobiographical writings of the intelligentsia and identifies strategies of self-positioning with regard to the Soviet experience, concluding that these oscillate between victimisation, resistance and habituation.

Taken together, these individual studies provide a glimpse of the heterogeneity of Cold War cultures around the world. It could be argued that it is necessary to categorise them according to what phase of the conflict and what "player" produced them. Possibly that is one of the future tasks of the study of Cold War cultures. What is evident from the essays included here, though, is that the ways in which the Cold War influenced all of us are boundless and that the conflict's legacy is not going to go away any time soon.

Notes

1. For an illustration of the impressive variety see the following webshops: www.zazzle.com/cold+war+gifts;
www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb_ss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=cold+war+%2B+mug&x=0&y=0;
www.cafepress.com/redbuddha/678486;
www.thechestore.com/index.php?PARTNER=000CheBanner (all accessed 13 November 2009).
2. Arbatova, Nadia. "Russia and the West: Time to Step out of the Cold War Shadow," keynote presented at the Annual Aleksanteri Conference, Helsinki University, 31 October, 2009.
3. See, for example, Tea Party Express Takes Washington by Storm. *FoxNews.Com*, 12 September, 2009, www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/09/12/tea-party-express-takes-washington-storm/ (accessed 13 November, 2009).

4. Gienow-Hecht, Jessica. “What Leaders Can Learn from the Past: Cultural Diplomacy, Civil Society and the Limits of the Cold War,” keynote presented at the Annual Aleksanteri Conference, Helsinki University, 30 October, 2009.

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FILM

THE RISE AND FALL OF SOCIALIST REALISM IN POLISH CINEMA (1949-1956)

JAN REK

In this essay I have the following aims: first, to demonstrate the role of contextualisation in detecting the intertextual connections between different cultural texts; and second, to show how the political and social environments of the Cold War led to the odd cultural convergence in the Eastern Bloc—and Polish Socialist Realism, in particular—and American cinema.

Demonology, according to Michael Rogin (Rogin 1984, 2-3), has a separate niche within the framework of social psychology. Its phenomena signal and reflect the prejudices and fears that harass a given community. They are manifested by apparitions in the shape of demons that enter our dreams and haunt us at night. In the collective imagination, these may be elements of representations produced in the given culture, but they always have the face of an alien. The historical and social contexts establish the level of "harmfulness" and determine the hierarchy of the aliens. Depending on the historical environment, some demons haunt more, some less, and some seem not to haunt at all.

In the history of the Polish nation, various demons have been constructed. From the historical point of view, they consecutively took the faces of a witch, a heterodox (non-Christian), a German, a Jew, a Russian, and finally, within the political discourse exercised by right-wing groups quite recently, a post-communist sympathiser of Soviet ideology. Their appearance is not a matter of coincidence, but rather motivated by current developments and needs. The task of demons is to trigger a state of threat. By alerting the population to either the actual or potential threat of losing integrity, they are intended to integrate and unite members of a given community. From this very point of view, the production of demons is a concealed extension of a state-building activity. In the early years of the Cold War, demons took the shape of foreign intelligence operatives, spies, and saboteurs. In the "weakest" version, they were rich peasants, opponents of collectivisation in the Polish countryside.

In 1945, Poland fell under the supervision of the Soviet Union and was forced to accommodate to the economic system based on central planning and state ownership of the means of production. All industries were nationalised, including the media. The entangling of cinema and cinematography with the institutionalised system of social communication occurred first in the USSR. At the first All-Russian Convention of Soviet Writers in 1934, the programme of Socialist Realism (SR), based on the current political doctrine and with an active participation of Andrei Zhdanov, one of Stalin's closest associates, was formulated. *Pravda*, the Moscow newspaper, published the general outline of its assumptions. It said:

> The basic method of Soviet artistic literature and literary criticism demands truthfulness from the artist and a historically concrete portrayal of reality in its revolutionary development. Under these conditions, truthfulness and historical concreteness of artistic portrayal ought to be combined with the task of the ideological remaking and education of the labouring people in the spirit of socialism. (*Pravda* 6 May, 1934, translation by Jan Rek)

The aims of SR were "truthfulness" and the "concrete portrayal of reality;" the task of literature was to "depict reality . . . not in a dead, scholastic way," not simply as "objective reality," but as "reality in its revolutionary development" (Zhdanov 2002, 427). According to Anatoli Lunacharski,

> the Socialist Realist . . . does not accept reality as it really is. He accepts it as it will be. . . . A Communist who cannot dream is a bad Communist. The Communist dream is not a flight from the earthly but the flight into the future. (Lunacharski 1988, 327)

These rather tight requirements imposed on text production by the Soviet authority, limited the traditional, mostly Romantic, freedom of artists. In effect, they forced them to carry out tasks according to a fixed scheme and conventions. This limited freedom was the consequence of reconfiguring the vision of the world produced in these texts to match the new audience's competence, aesthetic taste and expectations.

SR was rooted in nineteenth-century realism (Robin 1992, 78; 81). Clark is right in saying that "strictly speaking, the only thing that was absolutely new about Socialist Realism was the term itself" (Clark 2000, 33). In the 1930s, however, it was designed to appeal to a mass audience. The "revolted masses" (Ortega y Gasset 1932) that backed the Bolshevik October Revolution in 1917. The new rulers understood that to keep power, they had to win the favour of the masses who had been politically

ignored, disinherited from social privileges, and deprived of access to high culture under the Tsars. SR gave peasants and workers the chance to see characters similar to themselves represented as heroes in films like Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike* (1924) or *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). What is more, SR cinema—as one of the effects of the "filmic colonisation of Russia" (Benjamin 1999, 13)—was one of the most decisive factors in building national identity. As Susan Buck-Morss says, "no other medium could transmit this turbulent collective" (Buck-Morss 2000, 147).

The end of WWII resulted in the New World Order and the beginning of the Cold War between the US and the USSR. As the colonisation of new allied territories continued, so SR dominated film production in all the Eastern Bloc countries (Liehm and Liehm 1977, 47-8; 76-77; 116-7; 133-40).

In 1949, several conventions of Polish artists working in the theatre, cinema, music and the arts, including writers and architects, took place. At the convention of filmmakers in Wisla, Poland, the authorities of cinematography ordered them to follow the programme of SR in film practice, too, thus determining the character and tone of film production in years to come (Stachowna 1996, 10). As a result, positive characters in feature films were constructed as guards of the social order. Working class people and/or poor peasants in the countryside were the heroes, and their actions in defence of the state and public property always led to happy endings.

Contrary to the prevailing Polish film criticism after 1989, I do not think that the history of cinema can be explained in a deterministic way. That is, I do not believe that the final shape of individual films, their meanings produced, and also their reception, are the results of the pressures of external conditions (Lubelski 1992, 93-111). In 1949 and later, the instructions of the Polish cinematography authorities were realised in film practice, but the problem of whether or not the film directors deliberately accepted these SR goals coming out from them, falls within the range of psychological issues difficult to rationalise. Even if this perspective was right, the question of the degree of their willingness and acceptance to fulfil the SR programme would arise. Discussions on the subject could go on and on with no chance to verify their results. Accepting the fact that there was no alternative to making SR films, we have no choice today but to recognise them as products of the SR programme that one way or the other was internalised first. This is an indisputable fact, no matter what political context is engaged in defining it. Therefore it makes more sense to analyse the functioning of SR cinema in

the social space than debating its origin in terms of state intervention in the film production in Poland at the end of the 1940s.

To begin with, I would like to point out that since the "heroic" SR film dramas offered audiences a comforting vision of the world, they fulfilled an important psychological need—to feel safe, protected, and connected by common bonds, even if those feelings were illusive and phantasmagorical (Rek 2004, 159-60). In his concept of hope, Ernst Bloch of the Frankfurt School stressed that people long for "world-improving dreams," and that this disposition is connected with hope as "the most human of all mental feelings and only accessible to men . . . [leading] to the furthest and brightest horizon" (Bloch 1986, 75). If Bloch was right, then it seems reasonable to say that SR films allowed the viewers to fulfil their wishes in the sphere of imagination (Weissenborn 1998, 76; Gaines 2001, 139).

Exploring cinema from a psychoanalytic perspective, one of its traits can be recognised: the capability to set in motion the mechanism of substitution, enabling a film to become a tool for collective therapy through identification (Friedberg 1989, 36-45; Helgason 1997, 275-89; Gabbard 2001, 365-9; Mackey-Kallis 2003, 161-6). Starting from this position, Susan Buck-Morss has developed her concept of two phantasmagorias. She writes:

> . . . in the East, the dream-form was a utopia of production, whereas in the West it was a utopia of consumption. But both share intimately the optimistic vision of a mass society beyond material scarcity, and the collective, social goal, through massive industrial construction of transforming the natural world. (Buck-Morss 1995, 3)

SR cinema produced representations which made the idea of success one of its frequent motifs. The film narratives presented stories with main characters who always managed to achieve their goals. Their activities mostly as workers and peasants, leading to favourable results in terms of public business, were instrumental in unifying the audiences around the need to face aliens as the perfect embodiment of adverse forces.

The vivid memory of war cruelties prompted Polish film directors after 1949 to use Germans in military uniforms, or Poles collaborating with them as villains, as in the Stanisław Wohl film *Two Hours* (1946) or in the Wanda Jakubowska film *The Last Stage* (1948). In the later period, stories were mainly located in heavy industry factories such as iron and steel plants, coal mines, etc., and the events in which the characters participated, were subordinated to technological advancement in the process of modernising the state. Then, the alien took the form of a saboteur, or a foreign intelligence agent, who brought the production to a

halt as in the Jan Rybkowski film *First Days* (1952) and in the Maria Kaniewska film *Not Far From Warsaw* (1954). Villains of the same type sabotaged a stud farm run by the state in the Stanisław Urbanowicz film *The Chase* (1954), or pursued the aim of organising a spy network as in the Jan Koecher film *Career* (1955). The villain of stories located in the countryside was always a rich peasant as in the Jerzy Kawalerowicz film *The Village Mill* (1952).

At first glance, the films appeared clichés of the pattern(s) being used few years earlier in Soviet cinema, for instance in the Mikhail Romm film *Secret Mission* (1950), in the Grigori Alexandrov film *Meeting on the Elbe* (1949), or in the Mikhail Kalatazov film *Conspiracy of the Doomed* (1950). They also represent a polarised world, which separates one party, valorised positively as "ours," from the other, valorised negatively as "theirs," and which accepts a rather primitive, simplified axiology that one side of the conflict is unquestionably correct. This pattern was established in the Soviet cinema and by the process of osmosis and/or command spread across national cinematographies of the allied group, as stated by the majority of most Polish film criticism (Stachowna 1996, 10).

Paradoxically, an analogical pattern functioned in the American cinema of the Cold War period. The William Wellman film *The Iron Curtain*, which tells the story of a Russian spy in Canada, who goes over to the Western side, was made in 1948. Then came Edward Ludwig's film *Big Jim McLain* (1952), starring John Wayne, who, as the House Un-American Activities Committee investigator, attempts to break up a communist espionage chain in Hawaii. This was followed by a whole series of Hollywood science-fiction films that produced subversive messages on the demons related on a connotative level to the Reds and/or communists. Such as:

- The Christian Nyby film *The Thing from Another World* (1951) about American scientists at an Arctic research station who discover a spacecraft from outer space with a creature that some time later starts feeding on its victims' blood.
- The William Cameron Manzies sci-fi film *Invaders from Mars* (1953) who, by cerebral implants, take control of the townsfolk, making them cold and inhuman.
- The Gordon Douglas sci-fi film *Them!* (1954) about a man's encounter with a nest of radiation-gigantised ants that attack Los Angeles.

- The Jack Arnold film *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957) whose hero is contaminated by a radioactive cloud that makes him shrink more and more.

These film phenomena raise doubts regarding the idea that the patterns of SR narratives used in the Cold War period, apart from the nominative consequences, are of Soviet origin. The pressure of socio-political contexts makes the viewers see the relations between main characters as reflecting the dichotomy in the real social space. So it is justified to think that the origin of the SR convention was motivated by external factors, arising from the existence and the competition of two powers wishing to dominate. In other words, the characters of the same type, being distinctly defined in terms of national identity, may become real heroes or evil villains, depending on whose interests they represent in a given film in the eyes of the audience. From the point of view of Russian or Polish film viewers, great honour was never conferred on the American agent or intelligent officer if presented as a character in a Russian or Polish film, whereas the same type of character presented in an American film was constructed and played in a way to be appreciated by the American audience.

In American cinema, the *glasnost* era, initialised in 1985, was the beginning of the end of Cold War rhetoric (Belton 2002, 211). In Polish cinema, however, this actually started as early as 1956. After Stalin's death in 1953, Khrushchev began a process of de-Stalinisation to promote a course of reforms by denouncing the "cult of personality," even accusing Stalin of mass terror and crimes committed in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. These events inspired the power struggle within the Communist Party in Poland and then undermined its hegemony. Open political debates developed along with workers' discontent with austerity, led to the Poznan Uprising in June 1956, and the changing of the guard of top authorities. Then the Hungarian Revolution, too, had an impact on the entire Eastern Bloc. These transformations contributed to the erosion of SR rhetoric in Polish cinema. The symptoms of this erosion were visible in, among other films:

- *End of the Night* (1956), directed by Julian Dziedzina, Pawel Komorowski and Walentyna Uszycka (fledgling graduates of a film school) about a gang of young boys who rob a grocery, steal a dozen or so bottles of liquor and go out on the town.

- The Andrzej Munk film *Man on the Tracks* (1956) about the investigation of the death of an old locomotive engineer, carried out by a group of communist officials.
- The Jerzy Zarzycki film *Lost Affection* (1957) about an ex-superproductive worker who, despite receiving recognition as a mother of a large family, can hardly make ends meet. The last scene showing an empty tram going down the city is valorised symbolically; its driver was thrown out by a gang of drunkards.
- The Aleksander Ford film *The Eighth Day of the Week* (1958) about a young couple, Agnieszka and Piotr, who, through almost the entire film, are looking for an apartment to rent.

From a psychological point of view, the loss of credibility and the decline in importance of the SR programme motivated by the social and political contexts, must have been like a personal failure for the directors. The kinds of ideological opportunism, loyalty and even political expediency to the past regime were found in their activities. In the new situation—which was marked by an opening up for international trade, cultural contacts between East and West, access to Western literature and movies, art shows and music including jazz and rock-and-roll—they were seen as the ones who had become too fervently allied with the former authorities. Some of them, such as Jan Rybkowski, overcame their past affiliation with SR films and continued their profession; others, like Maria Kaniewska, turned to making films for children only, or, like Stanislaw Urbanowicz, made only educational films. Still others, like Jan Koecher, abandoned their profession and simply stopped making films. The Kawalerowicz film *Shadow* (1956) is an example of the most original break from SR conventions.

What is remarkable about this film is its narrative structure. It uses the voice-over/flashback formula, referring to the American *film noir,* but clashing with the techniques commonly used by Polish cinema in that period, i.e. presenting events from the point of view of the omniscient narrator.

Shadow opens with a scene of a man committing suicide by jumping out of a train which is going at full speed. He falls onto his face, smashing it beyond recognition. The following subjective accounts are intertwined with an account of the objective narrator. The use of the voice-over/flashback technique from the position of other characters, takes away credibility from the film's story.

Poster for *Shadow* (dir. J. Kawalerowicz, 1956), printed with permission of Kadr.

The first account occurs in occupied Warsaw during WWII. The character who died by jumping out of the train may have led two underground groups to fight against each other, groups that, without knowing about one another, were organising an armed assault against a shopkeeper believed to have collaborated with the Germans. The other flashback narration is loosely connected with the first one. It suggests that the character may have been a protector of an alleged double spy, who had been giving away valuable information to a band of followers still loyal to the political order that preceded the communist takeover. Finally, the third flashback recounts the events that directly precede the narrator's story in the opening sequence of the film. It suggests that the character opted for death in order to avoid being arrested by the police for cooperating with saboteurs who had set fire to a coalmine.

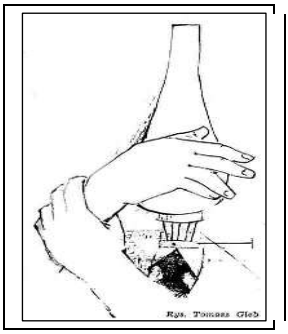
The certainty is taken away from all the subjective relations: they have the status of unreliable narrations (Booth 1983, 158-9; 176). As a result of the narrative structure, the film story is deprived of continuity. The plot, with its multiple changes of the narrative mode, breaks the linear order of events. This coerces the viewer to treat the story with caution, or, at least, with some doubt. It imposes and builds a distance between the negative main character and the audience, detaching them particularly from the events presented from his point of view. What is more, it prompts us not to treat this story seriously all the way through, because its credibility may be questionable.

This scepticism is advisable because still other forms of textual organisation of the film signal the director's play with SR cinema, or more precisely, a game with its conventions. In *Shadow* the motif of a head and face appears. The massacred face presented in the opening episode of the film has a double meaning. Its first meaning is motivated realistically, that is it results from the event: the man jumps out of the train and then dies.

The other meaning refers to one of the most important poems of the post-war period, Adam Wazyk's *Poem for Adults*. It was the first to violate the principles of SR poetry and literature by not honouring "humble" work.[1] When the text appeared in August 1955 in an issue of *Nowa Kultura*, a literary weekly, it was accompanied by a peculiar drawing by Tomasz Gleb. It showed a man whose head was an oil lamp, covering his face with his hand.

I do not wish to identify all of the potential meanings the drawing presented in Wazyk's text may have invoked and produced in readers. But I suspect that they may have oscillated between seeing it as ironic or as taunting the rhetoric of the authorities and the media. The limitations of the freedom of speech must also have occurred to them.

The visual motif of the face and head likewise appeared at an exhibition of a group of nine painters, including Maria Jaremianka, that opened in Cracow almost a year earlier. The "subversive" paintings questioned the directives of SR aesthetics. For instance, the leitmotif of Jaremianka's works was a human body broken into fragments through, among other things, the effect of multiplication. Amongst them, a special place was taken by heads and faces, whose regular, realistic form had been distorted. The exhibition did not have the character of an artistic "putsch" yet, but the works it presented were marked by the sin of "disobedience" (Kotula and Krakowski 1966, 242-3).



Nowa Kultura 1955, no 34.

Within this context, the visual motif of a head and face as presented in Kawalerowicz's *Shadow* almost a year after the premiere of Wazyk's *Poem for Adults* and the exhibition in Cracow, reflected the recent acts of disagreement about SR art. These camouflages signalled that the domination

of SR as an aesthetic programme was drawing to an end. One epoch was ending, and a new epoch was beginning.

The originality of *Shadow* is based on its somewhat diversionary and subversive character. It tells the story of a saboteur-protagonist who acts mysteriously and secretly against society, which was one of the SR clichés. *Shadow* is a diversion in the sense that Kawalerowicz uses the convention of SR cinema in terms of theme, motifs, types of characters, setting and costumes. At the same time, however, he ironically distances himself from SR. He blows it up from within, mocking the convention Polish cinema used in that period, and the strategy of reading films that the audience had gotten used to.

Kawalerowicz's farewell to SR aesthetics was not an immediate break with the formula he had used in his earlier films. Rather, he freed himself from the dominating pattern(s) gradually, pretending to respect SR while, in fact, renouncing it. At first glance, it appears that he is still following the SR tradition. But if we read the text more closely and contextualise it, we rather may conclude that he intended the SR conventions to be viewed as irony and as a signal to the audience that it was all a game.

The discreet, camouflaged and perverse character of this polemic stood a chance of reaching the viewers on the condition that they know how to read texts organised according to postmodern formulas. Only then could the play with convention be perceived as a pastiche, the "imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language" (Jameson 1998, 5), as a form realising and forging the SR style at the same time. *Shadow* is indeed such a case. It pretends to be an SR film, using a stylistic mask as "an external profile *for another*, the shaping of the self not from within, but from without" (Bakhtin 1984, 294, original emphasis). Kawalerowicz negotiated with a film convention as Jean-Luc Godard did a few years later (Rek 2008, 53-68; 143-146; Landy 2001, 11-7; Kavanagh 1973, 51-6). The negotiations reflected the process of the erosion of Cold War cinema which, under the SR label, lasted from 1949 to 1956.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the following points: First, the Kawalerowicz film *Shadow*, which marked the end of SR cinema in Poland, broke away from the film convention that dominated in the Cold War period, while outwardly adhering to it. That "dual meaning," however, could be understood only within the context of the cultural environment of the time. Only then the intertextual connections help the text disclose its subversive character. Second, the general conventions of Cold War cinema and the pattern(s) it gave birth to, created an analogy between Russian and Eastern European cinemas and American cinema on