guished from its Western counterpart in that "the hero must obey the laws of his mother or wife and perishes when he does not." This latter statement does not take sufficient account of the complex relationship between Achilles and his mother Thetis in The Iliad where Achilles comes to understand that disobedience to the mother, bought at the price of death, will, nevertheless, guarantee him honor among his countrymen. These criticisms aside this book is a shining addition to the field and one which should be read by everyone interested in the origins of one of the most persuasive of all Russian myths.

Adele Barker

Bolesław Michalek and Frank Turaj. The Modern Cinema of Poland. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988. xvi, 205 pp. $35.00 (cloth), $12.50 (paper).

For many filmgoers in the West, postwar Polish cinema is perhaps most closely associated with the films of its most renowned director, Andrzej Wajda—especially his visually sophisticated and emotionally powerful film trilogy of the war years, A Generation (1955), Canal (1957), Ashes and Diamonds (1958), and his more recent international critical and popular successes, Man of Marble (1977) and its sequel Man of Iron (1980), the latter of which won the Palme d'or for best feature film at Cannes in 1981. Wajda's towering presence both in Poland and on the world stage, however, should neither overshadow nor obscure the remarkable range, depth and artistic sophistication of the Polish film community and its many substantial achievements since the end of the Second World War. In their path-breaking book, Michalek and Turaj have identified and weaved together the multiple strands of historical, socio-cultural, political and aesthetic influences which have shaped the evolution of this remarkable national cinema; and they have done so in a clear, forceful, lean and interesting style.

The authors provide a systematic and scholarly discussion of the founding and evolution of Poland's post-war socialist cinema as well as an in-depth analysis of the films of four of its most influential film artists, Jerzy Kawalerowicz, Andrzej Munk, Andrzej Wajda, and Krzysztof Zanussi. The broad outline of its development does not differ significantly from those of neighboring Central and East European socialist states. There is the period of reconstruction immediately after the war in which the infrastructure of a newly founded socialist cinema rises phoenixlike from the ashes and devastation of war and a distinctive national film culture begins to take shape, only to be developmentally hamstrung by Stalinist-inspired centralized bureaucratic structures and creatively stifled by the sterile and deforming aesthetic dogma of Socialist Realism. After the Stalinist period (late forties and early fifties), there follows alternating periods of freer film creativity and periods of crisis, repression, bureaucratic interventions, and what regime authorities euphemistically term "stabilization."
In Poland, as Turaj and Michalek eloquently demonstrate, the richest periods of film expression occurred from the mid-fifties throughout much of the sixties, and again in the mid-seventies to early eighties. The first impressive “new wave” of post-war Polish cinema was nourished by a system of decentralized film production “units” headed by leading film artists, by the steady maturation of the internationally respected Polish film school at Łódź, and by the high artistic, moral and political status achieved by an unusually gifted community of film directors, scenarists, cinematographers, actors, actresses and other film artists. There was also a close relationship of film expression to the deepest and best currents of Polish literature and arts as well as the distinctive shaping influences of Polish history—past and contemporary. All of these factors are given life and meaning in Michalek's and Turaj's sophisticated analysis—Michalek writing from the inside as one who played a leading role in Polish cinema for thirty years, including his artistic collaboration with Wajda and other leading Polish film directors, and Turaj writing from the outside, but with a knowledge formed from his many years as a careful critic and scholar of Polish cinema.

After a comparatively sterile period in the late sixties and early seventies, Polish cinema once again burst onto the world stage in the late seventies and early eighties with an impressive outpouring of artistically and socially meaningful films. Once again, Wajda led the way with the already mentioned Man of Marble, the first film to penetrate official mythology surrounding the Stalinist years in Poland and to expose its propagandistic excesses and political grotesqueries. Man of Iron staked out even bolder territory by mirroring the formation of the Solidarity movement—a film which both reflected and helped to shape its dramatic course. The new mood of Polish cinema (labelled the “cinema of moral concern”) was richly confirmed and enhance by Krzysztof Zanussi's complex cinematic and philosophical meditations Camouflage (1976), Spiral (1978), and The Constant Factor (1980). These already established film artists were soon joined by a younger generation of filmmakers (Agnieszka Holland, Piotr Andrejew, Zbigniew Kamiński, Witold Orzechowski, Ryszard Bugajski, Feliks Falk, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Tomasz Zygadło, and others) who rapidly rose to international prominence.

Following the crackdown on Solidarity, several of these rising talents emigrated to the West, and Polish film production went into a brief period of shock and suspended animation. Regrettably, Michalek’s and Turaj’s book carries the story only to 1984 with a very brief Epilogue appended to recount the recent resurgence of important new Polish films which have been released in the last few years (including, for example, Wajda’s excellent film based on a book by Konwicki, Chronicles of Love (1986), Zanussi’s triumphant The Year of the Quiet Sun (1984), Feliks Falk’s Idol (1985) and Hero of the Year (1986) as well as other recent important films from Kieślowski and Zygadło). Since they had appended an Epilogue, it would have been helpful if the authors had better used the opportunity to expand more fully on these important post-crackdown developments.