

LIDIJA REZONIČNIK, SEWERYN KUŚMIERCZYK

# MASTERPIECES OF POLISH LITERATURE AND FILM



PHARAOH  
THE WEDDING  
MOTHER JOAN  
OF THE ANGELS

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OF THE ANGELS

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# INTRODUCTION



The monograph *Masterpieces of Polish Literature and Film* presents three selected works of the Polish literary canon and their film adaptations, all of which are distinguished by a high artistic level and belong to the classics of Polish cinema: the novel *Pharaoh* by Bolesław Prus (*Faraon*, 1895) and the film *Pharaoh* directed by Jerzy Kawalerowicz (*Faraon*, 1965); Stanisław Wyspiański's play *The Wedding* (*Wesele*, 1901) and the film *The Wedding* directed by Andrzej Wajda (*Wesele*, 1972); and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's novella *Mother Joan of the Angels* (*Matka Joanna od Aniołów*, 1946) and the film *Mother Joan of the Angels* directed by Jerzy Kawalerowicz (*Matka Joanna od Aniołów*, 1960). The final chapter offers a more detailed presentation of the anthropological-morphological method of film analysis. This method, developed by Seweryn Kuśmierczyk, was employed in the present film analyses.

In addition to their aesthetic value and their representativeness of Polish literary and film production, the works treated in the monograph were selected due to the availability of translations of the literary texts and the possibility of analysing digitised film formats.

The order of the chapters in the monograph follows the chronology of the publication of the literary works. Consequently, the arrangement of the chapters on films does not follow the chronological sequence of their creation. Jerzy Kawalerowicz first directed the film *Mother Joan of the Angels* (1960, premiered 1961) and only four years later created the film *Pharaoh* (1965, premiered 1966), which is presented in the first part of the monograph, while Andrzej Wajda's film *The Wedding* (1972, premiered 1973) was the last of the three presented films to be produced. The chapters of the monograph are designed independently and can be read separately. However, reading the monograph as a whole, together with the analysed literary works, provides a broader picture of cultural and historical processes and trends in Polish literature, from the realist currents of the late nineteenth century (*Pharaoh*), through the period of so-called Young



Poland at the beginning of the twentieth century (*The Wedding*), to the unique literary response to the Second World War (*Mother Joan of the Angels*).

Referring to historical material, the novel *Pharaoh* deals with the universal issue of the mechanisms of government; the play *The Wedding* focuses on a specific issue of the Polish sphere, that is, the spiritual state of the Polish nation at the time of the country's division between neighbouring superpowers and its formal non-existence; while the novella *Mother Joan of the Angels* reflects on the universal issue of the birth of evil in man and society. In their own unique way, all three works address issues of social norms, moral values, human freedom and a person's functioning in society.

The analyses of the literary works focus on all three elements of a literary work's existence – production, text and reception – shedding light on those layers that have significantly marked each work. Consideration is given to the dynamism of each text, its placement in and interaction with the broader socio-historical and cultural system, as well as the uniqueness of its literary expression.

The treatments of the films are based on the anthropological-morphological method of film analysis. The holistic and in-depth analyses deal with the circumstances of the creation of each work, its unique features in terms of content and form, and its reception and wider impact. The discussions also include information obtained directly in conversations with the filmmakers.

The book is an English translation of the Slovenian-language monograph *Mojstrovine poljske književnosti in filma*, which was published in 2021 by the Ljubljana University Press of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. The translation omits certain sections of the originally published analyses dealing with the reception of the literary works in Slovenian translation and the screening of the films in Slovenian cinemas.

The monograph is the result of the Slovenian-Polish research cooperation between the two authors, but with valuable contributions by many other colleagues, to whom the authors are particularly grateful: Assoc. Prof. Zdzisław Darasz, PhD, and Assoc. Prof. Patrycjusz Pająk, PhD, from the University of Warsaw, and Assoc. Prof. Nikolaj Jež, PhD, from the University of Ljubljana for reviewing the book and providing support; and Tomasz Wójcik for designing the cover and title pages and especially for his careful selection of the film stills used as cover images, as the creator of the visual image of two of the three films analysed (*Pharaoh* and *Mother Joan of the Angels*) was his father, Jerzy Wójcik, the director of photography. Very warm thanks are extended to Małgorzata Matuszewska, Director of the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute

(FINA), for her help in publishing the book and to Marcin Ogiński, Head of the Department of Festivals, International Cooperation and Licensing of the Warsaw Documentary and Feature Films Studios (Dział Festiwalu, Współpracy z Zagranicą i Obrotu Licencjami Wytwórni Filmów Dokumentalnych i Fabularnych w Warszawie), for his assistance in obtaining permission to publish stills from the analysed films used on the cover. The publication of the monograph was made possible by the financial support of the Polish National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute (FINA), the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS), the University of Warsaw and the Ljubljana University Press of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Lidija Rezoničnik and Seweryn Kuśmierczyk



# ***PHARAOH***

**Lidija Rezoničnik**

“WE ARE THE STATE”

*PHARAOH* BY BOLESŁAW PRUS

**Seweryn Kuśmierczyk**

THE CINEMATIC IMAGE OF ANCIENT EGYPT

*PHARAOH* BY JERZY KAWALEROWICZ



Lidija Rezoničnik

## **“We Are the State”. *Pharaoh* by Bolesław Prus**

Aleksander Głowacki, known as an author under the pseudonym Bolesław Prus (1847–1912), is, along with Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916) and Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841–1910), a key representative of Polish realist novels or the literary period known as positivism.<sup>1</sup>

In the time of Prus's literary creativity, Poland was divided between three super-powers – Austria, Russia and Prussia – and between 1795 and 1918 it did not exist as an independent political entity. Gradual industrialisation took place at different rates in the individual occupied regions, and socioeconomic progress led to the development of the bourgeoisie, in which the German and Jewish communities were also strongly represented. Disputes between landlords and peasants dating back to feudal times were joined by disagreements between the developing working class and the bourgeoisie, as well as between different nationalities. In the Russian-occupied zone, where Prus lived, political pressure

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1 In addition to understanding the concept of 'positivism' in a broader sense – as a worldview based on trust in reason and the scientific method, the rejection of metaphysics, and an understanding of history as a natural process and evolution, as well as advocating the postulates of utility, freedom and equality – the term 'positivism' also took root in Polish literary history in a narrower sense. It refers to a period of realism that, in Polish literature, is demarcated by the years 1864 (the end of the January Uprising against the Russian Empire) and 1890. The leading authors of the period – in addition to Prus, Sienkiewicz and Orzeszkowa, also Maria Konopnicka (1842–1910), who devoted herself mainly to shorter prose forms and poetry – nonetheless continued their creative work in the subsequent two decades (until 1910), while the younger generations were already developing a new poetics, today indicated by the literary-historical label 'Young Poland'.

intensified after the failed January Uprising, which took place from 1863 to 1864: censorship and Russification increased, the establishment of Polish societies was prohibited, etc. (Markiewicz 2015: 13–16). Nevertheless, it was in this occupied zone that new artistic currents developed most intensively, especially in Warsaw. Although literature after 1864 largely turned away from the Romantic glorification of the role of writers as national leaders towards the postulates of utility, rationality and the social role of the writer, due to Poland's lack of independence, writers still had the task of encouraging readers to take a patriotic stance and consider national issues.

In journalism, younger authors spread positivist postulates that were largely influenced by English and French models, especially geographical determinism (Henry Thomas Buckle), empiricism, utilitarianism and liberalism (John Stuart Mill), Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, Herbert Spencer's concept of society as an organism and its evolution, and the deterministic conception of cultural history (Buckle and Hippolyte Taine). They highlighted the necessity of raising the level of education and enabling the lower classes to attend school, promoting and disseminating scientific findings, work as a key value, tolerance, and the fight for equality between the sexes, nations and social classes. It was thought that all of this would lead to the democratisation of society. In doing so, they were aware of the difference between the more developed Western European countries and the conditions in Poland at the time. Due to differences and slow progress, however, the optimism of the Polish positivists faded from the end of the 1870s and shifted towards a more pessimistic outlook.

Within the framework of the generally accepted 'organic' action 'from the ground up', the activities of the younger intellectual elite, which were oriented towards the economic progress of the nation in the given conditions, even if this necessitated cooperation with the occupiers, not only replaced but also critically condemned the illegal conspiratorial rebellion typical of the previous period of Romanticism.

From the 1870s onwards, Bolesław Prus actively collaborated with Warsaw newspapers, in which he shaped his socio-political, philosophical and aesthetic views, which were a balanced synthesis of positivist ideals with certain conservative ones (Markiewicz 2015: 48). In cycles of feuilletons, e.g., *Weekly Chronicles* (*Kroniki Tygodniowe*), published in the newspaper *Kurier Warszawski* in the years 1875–1887, he dealt with current social issues related especially to the Warsaw area, including reflections on the improvement of working and living conditions (disease, hygiene, sewage), demonstration of the coexistence of different nationalities, presentation of cultural events, etc. Among positivist postulates,

he particularly highlighted the importance of work as a value and, consequently, the overall economic and cultural development of society, which he ideally saw as a harmoniously functioning organism (Markiewicz 2015: 69).

Prus's literary programme is especially evident from his literary criticism and his responses to criticism of his own works. Following the lead of Taine, in the article "*With Fire and Sword*" – *A Novel from Ancient Times by Henryk Sienkiewicz* ("Ogniem i mieczem" – powieść z dawnych lat Henryka Sienkiewicza),<sup>2</sup> Prus highlighted science and art as the key achievements of man, who otherwise resembles animals in many ways. It is art that has the ability to show what is 'highest' in an understandable and attractive way:

We now understand what the essence of great art is; it is showing the most general causes and the most enduring laws that govern the world, especially the human world, as well as – the most general and enduring characteristics of phenomena notwithstanding – showing this in an explicit way that is universally understandable. (Prus 1954)

Prus saw the main task of literature, especially novels, in depicting social change. The writer must be an attentive observer of reality and in the novel, through realistically conceived literary characters, speak of important sociological processes that are based on facts and reflect the essential issues of the time. The most important dimension of literature is therefore cognitive. At the same time, in an orientation towards critical realism from the 1880s onwards, Prus began to doubt positivist ideals.

Prus's most important works, in which he realised his literary programme, were published as feuilletons in newspapers, which were an important medium for the dissemination of literature during this period. The novel *The Doll* (*Lalka*, 1887–1888, *Kurier Codzienny*; book edition 1890) offers a panorama of social classes and life in Warsaw in the second half of the nineteenth century, an image of the disintegration of the former social order and of a man who finds himself in a transitional age; *The New Woman* (*Emancypantki*, 1890, *Kurier Codzienny*; book edition 1894) is a discussion with positivist ideals, especially the emancipation of women; while *Pharaoh* (*Faraon*, 1895–1896, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*; book edition 1897) deals with the issue of power and the mechanisms of government.

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2 Weekly *Kraj*, 20 July 1884.



## The Feuilleton Novel and Book Versions

The novel *Pharaoh* was published as a literary feuilleton in the newspaper *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* from 5 October 1895 to 26 December 1896.<sup>3</sup> The author did not write the novel as it was being published but had already completed it in May 1895.<sup>4</sup> The first book edition followed in 1897, and the novel was reprinted twice during Prus's lifetime. An additional, final chapter of the novel, which had not been published in either the newspaper or the book edition, was discovered among the manuscripts in Prus's estate. The non-publication of this chapter has not been explained definitively; it may have been either due to the influence of censorship or simply the author's decision. Literary historian Zygmunt Szweykowski (1894–1978) placed the unpublished chapter, to which he added the title *Epilogue*, in the 1935 edition of *Pharaoh*, and this practice was followed in subsequent reprints.

In the version without the epilogue, there is more emphasis on the disagreement between the two powerful central figures, who have opposing views on the issue of saving the country and different strategies in the struggle for power. The defeat of Ramses XIII is the result of a combination of his immaturity and a series of chance events that his opponent used to his advantage. After marrying Queen Nikotris, Herhor becomes pharaoh, and the further fate of the dynasty and the Egyptian state is unclear.

Rather than being a continuation of the plot, the epilogue is a commentary in the form of a dialogue between the priests and sages Pentuer and Menes. The latter understands historical processes in the context of evolutionary theory, that is, the natural development and disintegration of individual ruling dynasties. According to this view, the failure of Ramses is due to the fact that he was born at the wrong time, when the country was doomed to collapse, while at the same time, the plans for a new order were already taking shape. The structure of the novel, in which the reader learns about the pharaoh's inevitable tragic end at the very beginning, can be interpreted in terms of the composition of a Greek tragedy, requiring a final catharsis. In *Pharaoh*, this catharsis appears in the epilogue. From the point of view of the external structure, the epilogue represents a symmetrical element to the introduction and thus the story frame. However, it annuls the otherwise open ending and changes the idea of the novel. Interpreters

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3 In almost the same period (from March 1895), the conservative newspaper *Gazeta Polska* published the historical novel *Quo vadis* by Henryk Sienkiewicz, which drew from the history of the Roman Empire and the reign of Emperor Nero in the first century AD.

4 Note at the end of the book: "[Finished] 2 May 1895 at 3 p.m."

of the novel are therefore more inclined to the thesis that the author himself decided not to publish the epilogue (cf. Warzenica-Zalewska 1985: 21–34; Łukaszewicz 2017: 52).

## Egypt in the Polish Literary Tradition and among Readers

At the end of the nineteenth century, during the period of Prus's creative work, material from Egyptian history had already been treated several times in literature. Due to the gradual development of Egyptology and the availability of sources, authors who based their works on this period had various degrees of knowledge about the history of ancient Egypt (cf., e.g., Kaczmarek 2014: 609–625).

Even before Napoleon's campaign in Egypt and his establishment of the Egyptian Institute in Cairo (1798), Jan Potocki (1761–1815) described his travels to the Middle East and North Africa in French in the collection *Voyage to Turkey and Egypt* (*Voyage en Turquie et en Égypte*, 1788). Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849) visited Egypt during the heyday of Egyptology and Egyptian mythology and incorporated motifs into his works, e.g., *Conversation with the Pyramids* (*Rozmowa z piramidami*), *On Top of the Pyramids* (*Na szczycie piramid*) and *Song on the Nile* (*Pieśń na Nilu*).

Information about the discoveries of Egyptologists was available in scientific and professional discussions and journalistic articles, and exhibitions about Egypt were on display in European museums.<sup>5</sup> Interest in this field was further stimulated by the construction and, in 1869, the opening of the Suez Canal between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea (Łukaszewicz 2017: 44). The discoveries of Egyptologists gained popularity among the general public due to literary adaptations, e.g., the so-called professorial novels of the German Egyptologist Georg Ebers (1837–1898), *The Romance of a Mummy* (*Le Roman de la Momie*, 1858) by Théophile Gautier (1811–1872), trivial novels, as well as satirical adaptations, e.g., Edgar Allan Poe's (1809–1849) short story *Some Words with a Mummy* (1845) or Sienkiewicz's later humorous work *The Judgment of Osiris* (*Sąd Ozyrysa*, 1908) (Kulczycka-Saloni 1952: 93–128).

The rich literary tradition of drawing from the historical material of ancient Egypt and other ancient cultures also had an influence on Prus's novel *Pharaoh*. The latter was especially marked by the novel *Salammbô* (1862) by Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880), which included material from the history of Carthage,

5 For example, at the International Exposition in Paris, which opened in 1867, one of the exhibition pavilions was in the form of an Egyptian shrine from the city of Edfu (Łukaszewicz 2017: 44).

and the cycle of novels about ancient Egypt by Ebers. It was apparently Ebers's novels, with their crime-detective motifs, that led to the inclusion of the murder motif in the novel *Pharaoh*. Among the differences that distinguish Prus's novel from its predecessors are the marginality of love motifs; the realistic scepticism, as evident in the 'miracles' for which the narrator provides rational explanations (e.g., a solar eclipse); the distant view of history, which in places portrays the Egyptians humorously (naivety, ignorance of natural laws); and the unfortunate end of a literary character with whom the reader sympathises (Kulczycka-Saloni 1952: 114–118).

The Egyptian chronotope was therefore known, at least in its general outlines, among well-informed Polish readers, but it was nonetheless surprising that Prus tackled historical material; until the novel *Pharaoh*, he had located events in his contemporary time and space, in which he addressed current social issues, such as in the novels *The Doll* and *The New Woman*.<sup>6</sup> One anecdote reports that, upon the news that Prus was writing a work entitled *Pharaoh*, word spread that it was another novel about Polish society at the end of the nineteenth century and its title was related to a popular card game at the time (Pieścikowski 1998: 93).<sup>7</sup>

## The Narrator and the Image of Egypt

Taking a historically and culturally distant perspective, the third-person narrator in the novel *Pharaoh* adopts different points of view when revealing the plot. In the introduction, he is a kind of informer who briefly summarises the geographical, climatic and socio-political characteristics of Egypt and locates the narrative in a specific place and time. He looks from a distance, as if observing the land along the Nile from a bird's-eye view or with the aid of a geography textbook. The emphasis is on the orderly social structure and organisation, as well as the achievements in science and construction, while foreign influences are also mentioned. From the comparisons mentioned (e.g., "Three, four and even five thousand years ago, while rawhide-clad barbarians huddled in Central European caves, Egypt already possessed an advanced social structure, an agriculture, crafts and a literature" [Prus 1991: 7];<sup>8</sup> "sometimes the heat reaches a hundred twenty degrees, the temperature of a Turkish bath" [8]; "Today it is well-nigh

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6 One of the reasons for the shift to historical material may have been censorship, with which Prus had already encountered problems in the novel *The Doll* (Koblar 1967: 631).

7 A French game with forty cards.

8 All of the quotations from the novel *Pharaoh* in English are from Christopher Kasperek's translation (1991), so only page numbers are indicated in brackets in subsequent quotations.

impossible to conceive the extraordinary role played by the priesthood in Egypt" [10]), it is clear that it is the perspective of a person from nineteenth-century Central Europe.

With the first chapter of the first book, the omniscient narrator begins the narrative "In the thirty-third year of the happy reign of Ramses XII" (13), when the pharaoh named his fourth son, Ham-sem-merer-amen-Ramses, as successor to the throne. At the same time, he introduces authentic elements into the narrative on a verbal and descriptive level, such as the names of months or functions, which he explains as he proceeds (the month of Payni – March, April;<sup>9</sup> *erpatr* or the successor to the throne),<sup>10</sup> or provides explanations or comparisons that reveal the narrator's (Eurocentric) perspective ("from every hill sprouted a dark grove of acacias, sycamores and tamarinds, the latter from a distance reminiscent of our linden" [15]; "Thus sang the brave Ennana, and his tearful song has outlived the Egyptian Kingdom" [41]). Textual inserts from ancient Egyptian sources are pointed out in the author's notes and footnotes (e.g., the fellah's chatter is authentic; authentic hymn; authentic; ancient Egyptian maxims; authentic tomb inscription; one mina was 3.3 pounds).

The narrator often adopts the point of view of Ramses XIII. Thus, while reporting on the gradual acquaintance of the successor to the throne with the functioning of the state apparatus, he also reveals the pharaoh's inner self, subjective perceptions and character traits.

Prus prepared for writing a novel based on Egyptian history by studying the available literature, but he had never actually seen Egypt with his own eyes. In her analysis of the novelistic construction of the Egyptian chronotope, Janina Kulczycka-Saloni (1947: 8–23) notes that the narrator rarely describes the natural environment, and when he does, it is a schematic description from a distant perspective without going into detail. Nor is there any detail in the descriptions of buildings – pyramids, sanctuaries, the Pharaoh's palace, the palaces of the dignitaries – and other construction achievements. Instead, the narrator especially emphasises the monumentality of the buildings, which he paints with information and comparisons of measurements.<sup>11</sup> There are even

9 Łukaszewicz (2017: 30) points out that this is an anachronism since the names of the months given by Prus were only used later.

10 In Kasperek's English translation, the word *erpatr* is not used; instead the translator uses "successor to the throne".

11 For example, "The dam was as high as a two-story house, about a hundred paces wide at the base, and over twenty-five miles long" (542).

fewer descriptions of detail in the images of interiors, which serve merely as a backdrop.<sup>12</sup> The narrator focuses more specifically on descriptions of the everyday life of the Egyptians – their clothes, objects for everyday use, works of art, customs, religious ceremonies (the embalming and burial of Pharaoh Ramses XII) – as well as on dialogues. The Egyptian chronotope and the atmosphere of the time are thus most clearly recreated in the descriptions of individual people and their behaviour, as well as in the elaborate dialogues, which introduce authenticity through quotation of original pronouncements, parts of poems and inscriptions (e.g., the exclamation at every mention of the pharaoh: “Live forever, our commander!”; “Egypt’s sun!”; “O lord of the two worlds”). On the other hand, the spiritual-historical state of man at that time is depicted in the dialogues by the way of thinking of the characters in the novel, which is characterised by naivety, simplicity and a literal understanding of statements. Only educated priests, who have access to scientific knowledge, are capable of complex reflection. The narrator employs sages from the ranks of the priests to give explanations about the workings of the world, natural phenomena (e.g., a solar eclipse, volcanoes) and presentations to the Egyptian people of the time and even to the pharaoh, as well as to less educated priests, regarding incomprehensible inventions (e.g., the compass, the steam engine), knowledge about the world (life in East Asia, the fact that the Earth is not flat, calculation of the circumference of the Earth) and potential projects (a canal between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea).

## A Historiosophical Novel

Prus referred to *Pharaoh* with the literary genre label ‘novel’ but did not define it more specifically in terms of genre. Due to the work’s material, which the author drew from the distant Egyptian past, it is often characterised as a historical novel. In a study from 1897, however, literary critic Ignacy Matuszewski (1858–1919) emphasised that a more appropriate label would be historiosophical novel (which is not otherwise an established genre label) since the author was not concerned with historical accuracy but rather with universality (Matuszewska 2003b: 152–154). It is true that Prus drew material from Egyptian history, which he had learned about from the available sources, but for the central literary character he chose a mysterious and dramatic figure, Ramses XIII, about whom little was known. Modern studies actually reveal that Ramses XIII

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12 Unlike in *Pharaoh*, the contemporary novels of Sienkiewicz or Orzeszkowa pay a great deal of attention to the realistic description of both interiors and exteriors.

most likely did not even exist, and that Dynasty XX ended with Pharaoh Ramses XI.<sup>13</sup>

Experts on Egypt and Egyptian history (cf., e.g., Łukaszewicz 2017: 27–53; Niwiński 2014: 643–658) have analysed the novel in the light of historical facts and scrutinised the historically relevant descriptions and data provided by the narrator. Their analyses reveal numerous anachronisms, errors and inaccuracies: for example, during the reign of Dynasty XX in Egypt, the position of peasants was not as critical as the narrator portrays in descriptions that are reminiscent of the position of the oppressed in European feudalism; the talent was not a monetary unit in Egypt; and the capital of the pharaohs of Dynasty XX was not in the city of Memphis. Although it is true that the priesthood gained power during the reign of Dynasty XX and there was an accumulation of wealth in temples, the pharaoh was not dependent on the priests because of this and still maintained absolute power. Furthermore, there are inaccuracies in the descriptions of clothing, food habits, construction, rituals, the natural environment, etc.

The novel does not, however, focus on (allegedly) specific persons from the eleventh century BC and the Egyptian chronotope, but rather centres on the struggle of two sides for power. In the background of this struggle is the life of the masses, who, although greatly affected by the decisions of rulers, continue to live their lives regardless of the behaviour of the authorities: children are born and people rejoice, suffer, mourn and die. Attention is devoted to the ethical diversity of the state, emerging disagreements between individual nations, the issue of indebtedness, the luxury of the rich and the exploitation of the poor.

The plot outgrows the historical framework in which it is set, as the author universalises it and highlights two central themes of the novel: the mechanisms of the functioning of the state and government, and the issue of the maturing of a ruler towards fulfilling his functions.

## A *Bildungsroman* Novel

The central conflict of the novel takes place between the successor to the throne, later to be Pharaoh Ramses XIII, and the High Priest of Amon, Herhor. The aged and weakened Pharaoh Ramses XII adopted a form of government in which he performed a representative function, while the most important state decisions

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13 The narrator points out this possibility, or offers it as an explanation for the lack of information, in the introduction: "Many pharaohs, however, reigned briefly, and not only the deeds but the very names of some have disappeared" (11).



were dictated by the highest representatives of the priesthood, including the priest and Minister of War, Herhor. However, the successor to the throne decided that he wanted to rule independently even before assuming power. This resulted in an initially silent conflict between the priesthood and the successor to the throne, which soon grew into a personal power struggle between Ramses XIII and Herhor. The inexperienced successor to the throne was at a disadvantage in this struggle, as he could not compete with the determined Herhor, who had strong support from the priesthood. The narrator reveals the outcome of the conflict to the reader in the introduction:

The following narrative refers to the eleventh century before Christ, when the Twentieth Dynasty fell and when, after the demise of the Son of the Sun the eternally living Ramses XIII, the throne was seized by, and the uraeus came to adorn the brow of, the eternally living Son of the Sun Sem-amen-Herhor, High Priest of Amon. (11)

Ramses XIII entered the world of politics without experience, as a fearless and well-trained soldier and military commander with an idealistic view of governance. Even during his initiation test, in which he had to prove that he was capable of leading troops in battle, Herhor interfered using one of the principal weapons of the priesthood: the influence of religion on the people. Two scarabs caused the troops commanded by the successor to the throne to stop, as their religious beliefs prohibited them from crossing the path of the holy beetles. The diversion of the army led to the death of a desperate peasant, whose canal was filled in. The opening chapters of the first book thus highlight the key characteristics of both sides: on the one hand, Ramses's military view of government, stubbornness, ignorance of the real life of the people and idealistic view of improving their living conditions; on the other hand, Herhor's influence, wealth and experience, as well as his knowledge of the life of all strata of Egyptian society, of natural phenomena, of discoveries and of how to control the masses and manipulate them under the pretext of religion.

Ramses's initial military test had a positive outcome. At the same time, he began to gradually learn about the organisation of the Egyptian state, which the narrator (following Spencer) compares to an organism: "As a result, the Egyptian nation in its times of greatness formed as it were a single person, in which the priesthood was the mind, the pharaoh was the will, the people the body, and obedience the cement" (9). As long as the established social hierarchy dominated and the pharaoh did not interfere, the state functioned well. Ramses soon became convinced that introducing changes to the arrangement, even if they contributed to greater equality, was almost impossible. Attempts to make life

easier for peasants and artisans by reducing taxes failed, as promises to reduce taxes caused unrest among the peasant population, which could have led to a weakening of the state. Ramses's benevolence encouraged crowds of people to come to him for help, and he soon realised the impossibility of controlling them.

Ramses learned about the consequences of decisions and the complex functioning of the state through his own actions; for example, when he wanted to free unjustly convicted citizens from prison, he learned about the functioning of legislative power, the overgrown bureaucratic apparatus and the laws, which in some cases were an end in themselves:

"Look, most eminent one, at this chest. It is full of papyri containing the dossier of the case. The judge in Memphis receives reports each day about its development and conveys them to His Holiness. What would become of the work of so many learned scribes and great men if the accused were released?" (86)

Herhor, however, justifies the system and the abundance of officials (including priests, engineers, doctors, officers, judges, chiefs, scribes, treasurers, prison guards, etc.) who help the pharaoh to administer such a large country. Without the system and officials, leadership would be unmanageable, as the successor to the throne could see for himself.

Ramses gradually becomes aware of his smallness and realises the absurdities of rule: despite the fact that the pharaoh is the supreme ruler of Egypt, he does not have the absolute power to change the state's organisation, even if he wants to act in the interest of the people. Attempts at reform are met with disagreement and dissatisfaction among at least one of the social layers involved, resulting in the weakening of the Egyptian state and the risk of attack by enemies. Furthermore, it turns out that the laws that are supposed to regulate life in the country are not the same for everyone:

The state, it seemed, was not an eternal and immovable edifice to which the pharaohs were expected to add a stone of glory each, but rather a heap of sand that every ruler shifted to suit himself. In the state there were not those cramped doors called laws, passing through which everyone must bow his head, whomsoever he be: fellah or successor to the throne. In this edifice there were multifarious entrances and exits: narrow for the small and weak, very capacious, even comfortable, for the strong. (90, 91)

After ceremonies in which crowds of people prostrated themselves before him, Ramses learned that their enthusiasm had been an act: they had been promised payment for their euphoric reception of the pharaoh, which they often did not



even receive. In talking to wise priests about natural phenomena and scientific discoveries, Ramses was confronted with his own ignorance. He did not fully understand these discoveries, and especially not their potential in the struggle for power, and this cost him victory in the end. On the other hand, Herhor, himself very well educated, valued science and was aware of the power it bestowed on him. At a crucial moment, he took advantage of his knowledge of celestial phenomena:

In this fashion, thanks to the solar eclipse, the sage priestly faction had now shaken the authority of Ramses XIII in Lower Egypt as well. In a matter of minutes the Pharaoh's government had, without even knowing it, arrived at the brink of an abyss. Only great wisdom and an accurate knowledge of the situation could save it. This, however, was lacking at the royal palace [...]. (659)

From his initial (political) immaturity and haste, Ramses XIII develops through gradually learning about the operation and administration of state institutions, ways of leading the masses, diplomatic moves, as well as the dishonest manoeuvres of opponents. His youthful illusions about rule are shattered.<sup>14</sup> In this context, the work has the recognisable characteristics of a *Bildungsroman* novel (Martuszevska 2003a: 541).

## The Mechanisms of the Operation of the State

In his theoretical writings on literature, Prus emphasised the importance of showing the mechanisms of operation, i.e., the hidden sides that are not visible to everyone. He stressed this postulate in his criticism of Sienkiewicz's novel *With Fire and Sword*, in which he was disturbed by the disregard or adaptation of historical facts and the superficiality of the presentation: "However, we do not see these outlines in Sienkiewicz's novel. He painted only the face of the clock, but did not show the wheels and springs" (Prus 1954).

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14 Ewa Paczoska (2004: 59–87) points out the parallels between Ramses XIII and the protagonists of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, which was staged very often in Poland in the second half of the nineteenth century and was well known to Prus. Positivists read Shakespeare's drama as being about power and the possibility of rebelling against that power. In *Hamlet* they saw the tragedy of a young individual who gradually matures and learns about the mechanisms of power. Both *Hamlet* and Ramses XIII are successors to the throne with no prior political experience, but with their own visions of governance. However, these visions crumble as they mature and realise the limitations of their power. Francè Koblar (1967: 626) also writes that "in *Pharaoh* it is impossible to rid oneself of the thought of an ancient Egyptian *Hamlet*, who fails in his plans through the fault of both himself and others".

Through the story of Ramses XIII and Herhor, the novel *Pharaoh* demonstrates the struggle for power, and especially the protagonists' strategies in this conflict, which are often morally questionable. In addition to the pharaoh's unsuccessful solutions to the problems of the masses and the behaviour of the priests, the mechanisms of administering the people are also presented: knowledge of the psyche of the masses, intimidation, manipulation, bribery with worldly goods, religious miracles, and the exploitation of ignorance and naivety. During his process of maturation, Ramses XIII is faced with the social hierarchy, the functioning of the state apparatus, officials, inequality before the law, the exploitation of labour, the leisurely life of landowners and administrators, and the power of capital. In accordance with his positivist ideals, Prus presents the potential for improving the general wellbeing, especially of farmers and artisans, through the demonstrated possibilities for technological progress, which would facilitate work and increase productivity. This would need to be supported by sharing knowledge and not hiding it, as priests do, by spreading learning about natural phenomena and laws, that is, by education. In doing so, reforms would have to be carried out prudently and with a great deal of patience. Emphasis is placed on economic development, which requires knowing and exploiting the advantages offered by natural resources, in this case the Nile River. Moreover, economically successful countries have an opportunity for important cultural, artistic and scientific achievements.

From a social point of view, the novel highlights the (alleged) fear of foreigners, the ethical and religious diversity of Egypt, and with it different values and ways of life, which encourages disagreements. Furthermore, each ethnic group works in its own interests, connecting with other groups only when benefits are anticipated. Enmity, egoism, prejudice and a lack of cooperation lead them to ruin. Regarding rulers and their actions, the short memory of the people is highlighted. After Herhor introduced his reforms, despite his former cruelty and the fact that the reforms were merely the fulfilment of Ramses's plan, the people recognise the priest as a great ruler, while Ramses XIII is regarded as being responsible for all of their misfortune and suffering. On the one hand, the novel (this is especially highlighted in the epilogue) emphasises the transience of individual rulers and ruling families, and of the organisation of the state, while, on the other, it highlights the permanence of the masses, who, despite their political smallness, are ultimately the ones who enable rulers to exist and are the foundation of the state.

By focusing on the socio-political issues of the Egyptian system at the end of Dynasty XX, the novel *Pharaoh* turns to historical substance, and in so doing tends towards universality in its message. In a historiosophical sense, it can be

generalised and observed as a novel about the problems of the time of Prus or any other era:<sup>15</sup>

[H]eros think and philosophise in a borrowed language, while their doubts are also borrowed from their contemporaries. Although outwardly a historical novel, *Pharaoh* – in the sense of a novel of ideas – is in fact a completely modern novel and must be interpreted as such. (Tomkowski 1993: 297 in: Leszczyński 1998: 172)

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15 There are well-known interpretations that *Pharaoh* is a novel that relates to the Polish situation in Prus's era, that is, during the non-existence of Poland and subordination to the Russian Empire ("a novel about Poland, dressed in Egyptian clothes"), or to events in the Russian Empire (the unexpected death of Tsar Alexander III in 1894 and the coming to power of the young Tsar). On the other hand, the universality of the issues presented is emphasised: the inevitability of passing, the cycles of the rise and fall of social and state structures, and faith in scientific knowledge (cf. Łukaszewicz 2017: 42).

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## „Państwo to my”. *Faraon* Bolesława Prusa

### STRESZCZENIE

Rozdział omawia powieść *Faraon* Bolesława Prusa reprezentującą polski realizm – epokę literacką, dla której w polskim literaturoznawstwie przyjęto termin „pozytywizm”. Prus w swej działalności publicystycznej pisał o ideałach pozytywistycznych, a zwłaszcza o pracy jako ważnej wartości, o potrzebie rozwoju i wykształcenia, o konieczności poprawy warunków pracy i życia. W jego twórczości literackiej nadrzędną rolę pełniła funkcja poznawcza dzieła, a główne zadanie literatury pisarz widział w ukazywaniu przemian społecznych w taki sposób, aby ujawniały one głębsze mechanizmy funkcjonowania społeczeństwa.

Powieść *Faraon* ukazywała się w latach 1895–1896 w odcinkach, w formie książkowej została natomiast wydana w Polsce po raz pierwszy w roku 1897. Materiał tematyczny Prus czerpał z historii starożytnego Egiptu, która w drugiej połowie XIX wieku, w czasie intensywnego rozwoju współczesnej egiptologii, wzbudzała zainteresowanie zarówno w literaturze polskiej, jak i europejskiej.

W części analitycznej rozdziału uwaga skupia się na narracji, w której obraz starożytnego Egiptu kreślony jest z dystansu, z perspektywy europejskiej, a autentyzmu dodają określenia zaczerpnięte z egipskich tekstów źródłowych. Zaprezentowane i przeanalizowane zostały cechy gatunkowe utworu jako powieści historycznej, historiozoficznej i rozwojowej. Omówiona została również szersza, uniwersalna problematyka funkcjonowania państwa i społeczeństwa, na którą Prus wskazuje, sięgając po opowieść ukazującą walkę o władzę pomiędzy faraonem i przedstawicielem kapłaństwa w XI wieku p.n.e.

Tłumaczenie: Monika Gawlak

## »Država, smo mi« – *Faraon* Bolesława Prusa

### POVZETEK

Poglavje obravnava roman *Faraon* Bolesława Prusa, predstavnika poljskega realizma, literarnega obdobja, za katerega se je v poljski literarni vedi ustalil termin pozitivizem. Prus je v okviru svoje publicistične dejavnosti razpravljal o pozitivističnih idealih, zlasti o delu kot pomembni vrednoti, nujnosti splošnega razvoja in izboljšanja delovnih in življenjskih razmer ter izobraževanja. V književnosti je izpostavljал spoznavno funkcijo in glavno nalogo literarnega ustvarjanja videl v takšnem upodabljanju družbenih sprememb, ki prikazuje tudi globlje strukture delovanja družbe.

Roman *Faraon* je v letih 1895–1896 izhajal kot feljton, v knjižni obliki pa je bil na Poljskem prvič izdan leta 1897. Prus je snov za roman vzel iz egipčanske zgodovine, ki je bila v drugi polovici 19. stoletja, v času intenzivnega razvoja moderne egiptologije, v evropski in poljski književnosti že večkrat prisotna.

V analitičnem delu je obravnavan pripovedovalec romana, ki podobo starodavne Egipta slika iz oddaljene, evropske perspektive, avtentičnost pa vnaša z besedilnimi vložki, ki se nanašajo na izvirna egipčanska besedila. Predstavljene in analizirane so žanrske opredelitve dela kot zgodovinskega, historiozofskega romana in romana dozorevanja ter širša, univerzalna problematika mehanizmov delovanja države in družbe, ki jo je Prus prikazal v okviru zgodbe o boju za oblast med faraonom in predstavnikom duhovščine v 11. stoletju pr. n. št.

Seweryn Kuśmierczyk

## The Cinematic Image of Ancient Egypt. *Pharaoh* by Jerzy Kawalerowicz

The first attempt to translate Bolesław Prus's novel *Pharaoh* (*Faraon*) to the screen occurred in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when a team of authors began to prepare a screenplay. One of the authors involved was Jerzy Kawalerowicz.<sup>1</sup> Ten years after the initial attempts to write a screenplay, and following the international success of his film *Mother Joan of the Angels* (*Matka Joanna od Aniołów*),<sup>2</sup> Kawalerowicz made an independent attempt at adapting *Pharaoh* for the screen. The script, written by the director together with Tadeusz Konwicki,<sup>3</sup> was approved on 24 November 1961.<sup>4</sup>

The idea of filming in the desert areas of the Soviet Union was adopted after abandoning an outdoor shoot in Egypt due to the high costs. After much consideration, an area in Uzbekistan's Kyzylkum Desert, 35 kilometres from Bukhara, was chosen. The 'aesthetic' form of the desert, which corresponded to the film's visual and colour concepts, was crucial to this decision, as were

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1 Jerzy Kawalerowicz (1922–2007) was one of the most outstanding Polish film directors, creating films such as *Night Train* (*Pociąg*, 1959), *Pharaoh* (*Faraon*, 1965), *Death of a President* (*Śmierć prezydenta*, 1977) and *The Inn* (*Austeria*, 1982). For many years, he served as the artistic director of the Kadr Film Group, which produced the most important films of the Polish Film School.

2 The film was awarded the Special Jury Prize at the 1961 Cannes Film Festival.

3 Tadeusz Konwicki (1926–2015) was a Polish writer, screenwriter and film director.

4 Minutes of the Screenplay Evaluation Committee, 24 November 1961, Filmoteka Narodowa – Instytut Audiowizualny, ref. no. A-214/166.



organisational factors related to filming there: how to accommodate the crew, obtain the materials necessary to build the huge sets, and guarantee the presence of a large number of extras. The film's producers received help from the Soviet production company Mosfilm, which provided extras – in the form of several thousand soldiers – and also helped with the construction work. The heads of Polish cinematography earmarked substantial financial resources for the making of the film.

Set construction began in the Kyzylkum Desert in the spring of 1964, with shooting commencing at the end of June and lasting until the end of October. Studio shooting was completed in the Polish city of Łódź in February 1965, and some scenes were shot in Egypt at the end of March and the beginning of April of that year. The film was shot on Kodak colour film stock using the CinemaScope technique, which allowed 2.66:1 aspect ratio projection.

The official premiere of *Pharaoh* took place in Warsaw on 11 March 1966, and a shorter director's cut of the film was presented at the Cannes Film Festival in May. The press reported extensively on the subsequent stages of the film's production. After the film was released, *Pharaoh* enjoyed a very high level of interest from audiences and critics, with more than 200 reviews and articles about the film being published. By 1967, however, it had virtually disappeared from view.

In Poland, *Pharaoh* was all but forgotten by critics and film scholars for several decades. It is worth noting, however, that it was the first Polish film commissioned by American director Martin Scorsese for his personal collection in 1991, a copy of which still remains on 35 mm film. Scholarly analyses of *Pharaoh* did not appear until the twenty-first century. In 2012, a shorter version of *Pharaoh* was digitally restored, recapturing the work's original brilliance, which is largely related to its formal qualities.

## Ancient Egypt: A Reality that Exists

An analysis of the cinematic elements of *Pharaoh* addresses questions about how ancient Egypt is presented in Kawalerowicz's work and reveals the craftsmanship with which this world-building was achieved. The world he constructed included massive battle scenes involving thousands of extras, the solitude of Ramses XIII, the immensity of the palace and temple decorations built in the desert, and the glimmering splendour of the jewellery and ornaments. These elements are brought together in a convincing artistic unity (Image 1).

*Pharaoh* does not attempt to recreate a world that no longer exists; the makers of the film, supported by the expertise of Egyptologist Kazimierz Michałowski,<sup>5</sup> believed that the world of ancient Egypt still existed and was accessible to modern man in a preserved state, as uncovered by archaeologists. According to Jerzy Wójcik:<sup>6</sup>

Something had been obscured from us. It is not known how long this process took. Now it was unveiled, it was given to us, it was seen anew. It was not a world that had passed away. It was a world that still existed, although it bore the experience of the presence of time. And so, we wanted to show it in our film.

We started to work with the fewest elements. Unlike the creators of *Cleopatra*, who provided as many elements as possible in an attempt to show the richness of the world on screen, we tried to show the epoch and its complexity with the minimum elements in order to form an image of human beings existing thanks to their own efforts, giving a representation of their hands, their faces. What was reproduced no longer exists, but really existed.

We spoke of the essence by showing the essentials. *Pharaoh* was a realisation of reduction, moderation and austerity. It was, as it were, a refined understanding of Egyptian culture, opening up a field that enabled the viewer's imagination to work, constructing its own world with the help of the elements shown. (Wójcik 2017: 68–70)

One of the most difficult tasks that Kawalerowicz faced was to show the world of ancient Egypt in motion. He depicted bodies in movement, their expressions of feelings and emotions, by drawing on existing iconography.

The craftsmanship of the sets, props and costumes creates an impression of precision and cinematic beauty, while the formal solutions adopted in *Pharaoh*, which were so crucial to building the cinematic world presented, testify to the filmmakers' deep understanding of ancient Egyptian religion and culture and their ability to adapt certain ideas to film aesthetics.

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5 Kazimierz Michałowski (1901–1981) was a Polish archaeologist and Egyptologist famous for his excavations in Faras in present-day Sudan, where a set of monumental early Christian paintings was discovered.

6 Jerzy Wójcik (1930–2019) was a cinematographer, screenwriter, film director and educator, and one of the most outstanding Polish filmmakers. A famous cinematographer of the Polish Film School, he was a co-creator of the most outstanding Polish films of the 1950s and 1960s. As well as serving as the cinematographer for films such as *Eroica* (1957), *Ashes and Diamonds* (*Popiół i diament*, 1958), *Nobody is Calling* (*Nikt nie woła*, 1960), *Pharaoh* (1965) and *The Deluge* (*Potop*, 1974), he also directed *The Complaint* (*Skarga*, 1991) and *The Gateway of Europe* (*Wrota Europy*, 1999).

Light is one means by which the filmmakers presented their knowledge of ancient Egypt in cinematic aesthetics. They used a 'time-independent' light in most of the scenes that did not seem to refer to a specific time, which was a reference to the sun cult of ancient Egypt. This light creates the central axis present throughout the film's composition, which is a direct reference to the processional axis of the Egyptian temple. It is also linked very closely to the concept of 'involved scenography', which is emphasised through the use of shots framed by a subjective camera.

The shared aim of the director, set designer and cinematographer, based on a deep collaboration at every stage of shooting, was to transport viewers 'inside' the screen, giving them the impression of participating in the spectacle.

During the preparation for the film, an event occurred that impacted the formal aesthetics of *Pharaoh*, as described by Wójcik:

During one of my reconnaissance trips to Egypt, I witnessed the discovery in the Valley of the Kings of a sculpture that was thousands of years old. Kazimierz Michałowski was not present at the time; the sculpture was unearthed in my presence by the professor's colleagues. The discovery of this statue made a huge impression on me. Here was something that had been covered up but could be uncovered; what had been concealed was being revealed after thousands of years. The statue was being unearthed and, at the same time, it was being uncovered by light. That which is uncovered receives light; it is revealed by light. (Wójcik 2017: 68)

Michałowski, the film's consultant, aided the director and cinematographer in shaping the presentation of ancient Egypt on screen in terms of its historical reality, as well as the visible changes that impacted its architecture and landscape. They approached the screen as a way to show the 'unveiled world' of ancient Egypt, which is accessible to modern man through ruins or fragments discovered during archaeological explorations. These remnants of the ancient Egyptian past bear witness to its tangible and intangible culture, bringing to light the history of humankind preserved through knowledge and skills, and accessible through crafted artefacts.

The extremely careful documentation undertaken prior to the making of *Pharaoh* aimed to shape the film's cinematic world with deep, empirical knowledge of ancient Egypt. There was no room in *Pharaoh* for cinematic fantasies in the style of *Cleopatra*, which had been made in 1963.

In *Pharaoh*, the construction of the cinematic world of ancient Egypt was based on the principle of *pars pro toto*, or the faithful reproduction of surviving fragments

that served as a substitute for the cultural richness of the ancient civilisation, its endurance, as well as its transformation. At the same time, that which was absent and unspoken heightened the mystery of the ancient world.

The collaborators' approach to and understanding of ancient Egypt had a fundamental influence on the cinematographic solutions adopted concerning the way time and space were depicted, the representation of the era's seemingly timeless nature, and the depiction of changes occurring over time. Such broad cinematic concerns also had a bearing on, among other things, the way in which light and colour were presented, as well as the representation of the human body, which referenced artistic iconography and the world as depicted by the artists of the time in sculptures, paintings and drawings (Kawalerowicz 1966: 3).

## Scenography

Kawalerowicz did not intend to make a historical film, emphasising in his interviews that *Pharaoh* was to be a 'non-historical' work (Katarasiński 1964: 5). The filmmakers nonetheless made every effort to faithfully recreate the architecture and material culture of ancient Egypt, referencing famous excavations and archaeological discoveries. According to Michał Mróz, "They did not try to invent a fantastic world. They portrayed what had been uncovered – excavated from the ground – in movement and using artistic filmic means" (Mróz 2016: 101).

Documentation collected for the film focused on the period of the New Kingdom of Dynasties XVIII to XX.<sup>7</sup> According to Egyptologists, it was a heyday of political, military, economic and cultural power. The 12-volume work by eminent Egyptologist Carl Richard Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (Lepsius 1849), provided one of the key primary sources on ancient Egypt for the film crew. Lepsius collected material for it in the period 1842–1845, during a Prussian expedition to Egypt. Numerous images depicting, among other things, topographical maps, architecture, reliefs, paintings, sculptures and ceramics form an especially significant part of his collection. The many trips to museums in Warsaw, Cairo and Karnak by the creators of *Pharaoh* also provided important information about ancient Egypt.

In the summer of 1962, cinematographer Wójcik and Kawalerowicz went on a long documentary trip to Morocco, Egypt, the Karakum Desert region in Turkmenistan and the Uzbek Kyzylkum Desert. The aim of the expedition was

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7 The period in ancient Egypt lasting from 1570 to 1070 BC.

to verify the technical needs for the production and to assess the aesthetic qualities of the various landscapes (*W Egipcie faraonów*, 1965). Set designer Jerzy Skrzepiński<sup>8</sup> also conducted on-site research in Egypt, as he recorded: “There, on the spot, I could touch the relief inscriptions on the columns and walls of the temples; there I saw the tombs of the pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings, the material texture and structure of the material from which the temples were built” (Skrzepiński 1966: 8).

Costume designer Barbara Ptak collected material samples for the costumes:

Most of the material samples were in the London museum. We managed to obtain them, and we transferred the original materials to our factories in Łódź. It was beautiful, wonderful wool, mostly camel wool. The finest material of the time. How did our tailors process all this? I don’t know, but they were able to reproduce the brand. Probably no one knows, but the materials for the army were almost one hundred per cent the same as in those days. (Ptak 2017: 291)

The museums also looked at the ways in which jewellery or fabrics were put together. Indeed, when sewing costumes, no seams or needles, which were unknown in ancient Egypt, could be used, as this would have been picked up by the camera immediately. (Ptak 2017: 290)

When casting the main roles, the director looked for physical features that corresponded to the standards of beauty valued during the reign of Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten). At that time, slender physiques and head shapes were considered beautiful. For the role of priests, who shaved their heads in this period, the director sought actors with aesthetically pleasing skulls.

For Kawalerowicz, Egyptian reliefs provided a valuable source from which he could recreate, among other concepts, the way ancient Egyptians moved, or at least the way Egyptians represented movement. The director relied on static representations to try to recreate the movements and gestures depicted in reliefs. The reconstruction of this iconography also provided useful guidance on working with the actors. In addition, Kawalerowicz studied the issue of bodily movements by observing contemporary people who lived in tropical climates (Machwitz 1965: 8).

Shooting in the Kyzylkum Desert was no ordinary filmmaking venture: it was a true cinematographic expedition (Mróz 2016: 116). Preparing a film set in the remote desert near Bukhara in the then Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic required the transportation of many diverse materials and massive technical organisation. According to the press, this process included the transportation

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8 Jerzy Skrzepiński (1923–2017) was a Polish film set designer and painter.

of trucks, buses, gassers, tankers supplying water, two watering trucks, two bulldozers, field kitchens, petrol and oil tankers, a 25-metre crane, an AN-2 aircraft and power generators (Peltz 1964a: 10–11). Props prepared in Poland had to be transported by train (Grubert 1966: 8).<sup>9</sup>

An important aspect of the production's operations concerned managing the high temperatures. The camera operators' air-conditioned car was painted white to reflect light, while refrigerators were installed on site to store the film stock. Rolls of exposed film were sent by air to a laboratory in Łódź. The workstations of production divisions were built in wooden dugouts, where wardrobe, the props room and makeup were set up (Czermiński 1964: 7).

Massive structures, including the Pharaoh's palace and Ptah's sanctuary, were erected in the Kyzylkum Desert. When choosing their location, the creators had to consider both the stability of the foundations and the angle of the sunlight, so that the structures, props and artworks of the set would endure the course of the shooting. The shadows cast by decorative elements could not obscure the images on the designed reliefs. The construction site was decided upon after consultation with astronomers, who, based on the forecast of the alignment of the sun, determined the best location of props in relation to cardinal points and suggested times during which the ideal effects of light and shadow could be anticipated (Oleksiewicz 1966: 11).

Skrzepiński encountered great difficulties in his search for a prototype for the Pharaoh's palace. Only the foundations and the remains of window and door frames of ancient Egyptian palaces are extant. The palace's scenography ultimately drew upon a relief depicting the palace of a pharaoh from Dynasty XVIII, which was found in tomb number six belonging to the northern group of tombs at El Amarna. Monuments preserved in the temple complexes at Luxor and Karnak provided models for the decoration of Ptah's sanctuary (Mróz 2016: 124–126).

Events taking place on the Nile River were the only outdoor scenes fully realised in Poland, with Lake Kirsajty near Giżycko standing in for the Nile. To adapt the Polish landscape to an Egyptian one, the creators took several resourceful measures: they filled the reservoir with artificial water lilies and built a floating island with palm trees; many kilograms of dry paint were poured into the water to suggest the effect of suspended desert sand; and reeds were painted brown to give the impression of having been scorched by the sun.

Two scenes were shot in Egypt, featuring characteristic monuments of ancient Egypt located in Luxor, such as Medinet Habu, the Ramesseum, the Valley

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9 Twenty-seven wagons of finished props travelled a route totalling 24,000 kilometres.

of the Kings, Karnak and the pyramid of Cheops in Giza, which provided background landscapes in the film (Herman 1965: 9).

The labyrinth leading to the vault was constructed in a film studio in Łódź using large plaster blocks that resembled large stones. By moving and repositioning the walls, the set designers enhanced the impression of wandering through intricate winding corridors.

The makers of *Pharaoh* succeeded in capturing the ‘spirit of the age’ of the pharaohs, linking the film work with an imaginary Egyptian world shaped by modern excavations and ancient artefacts. According to Mróz, “In Jerzy Kawalerowicz’s film, the image goes beyond the notion of a film work and touches upon a fragment of a civilisation that once existed. It becomes a kind of gateway in time and space. The world of the image becomes the image of the world” (Mróz 2016: 155).

## Light in *Pharaoh*

Light is one of the most important elements of *Pharaoh*’s cinematic world. Its primary source is the clear, bright, open-air sky. It is always daytime in *Pharaoh*, with no scenes taking place at night and no sunrise or sunset shown. As Kawalerowicz said, it was to be a film without the slightest hint of clouds (Zelnik 1966: 4), and not only because Egyptian art did not depict clouds.

The authorial philosophy of light that distinguishes Wójcik’s approach to cinematography informs a more specific understanding of how light operates in *Pharaoh*. His approach also found expression in his subsequent projects, as well as in earlier films such as *Ashes and Diamonds* and *Mother Joan of the Angels*. The use of light in *Pharaoh* originates in a deeply personal experience of the light of the desert and the observation of its mystery, as evoked by the path of sunlight in the temple at Karnak. Wójcik described this light in his book *The Labyrinth of Light (Labirynt światła)*:

It all happened suddenly. The sudden dawn that rises over the desert is like the sun thrown out with tremendous power into great brightness. It becomes this way suddenly, in the space of a few minutes. This energy is like an acceleration of everything I see and a constant variation in what forms the light.

It became clear to me how *Pharaoh* needed to be photographed. Nothing was an obstacle for me, everything was helpful to me. I was helped by the heat of the sun and the colour of the sand. I was helped by everything that was in the sky, above the horizon. It wasn’t a problem of colour, azure or blue, but just the notion



of clarity, which was close to me. I knew it had to be a big statement related to the presence of light, the controlling light. This became clear, and all of the technical problems were merely the result of this kind of reasoning. Jerzy Kawalerowicz interpreted it all brilliantly and adopted it as his own. It was also his great presence.

This work was really a great university for me. Understanding light was also related to my earlier experience, although it was actually only about rays of light.

During the first documentation [trip], when we were in Karnak, I suddenly saw that the rays of the setting sun determined the whole compositional structure of the place. The light of the sun ran through all of the gates, through all of the architectural arrangements, through the doors and the colonnades; it entered through the temple and formed its actual axis. At the very end of the temple, the rays of light fell on the sacrificial altar. The rays descend from the altar as the sun sets. This altar, like all altars, is very modest. It is a rectangular block, a pure form reduced to something very simple, close to the concept of a table.

It was a great shock to me. I realised that I was witnessing some great order that was once conceived when building pyramids and architectural systems. So, I put flowers on the altar. (Wójcik 2006: 58)

## Archetypal Light

In the latitudes where the desert shots for *Pharaoh* were filmed, the sky above the horizon loses its blue colour, becoming “glowing white” (Wójcik 1966: 10), a cloudless source of light. This ‘great order’ of light – associated with the sun and the symbolic scarabs that open the film (Zorn 2006: 24), referencing the birth of life and the duration of the world, and embodied in the ancient Egyptian cult of the Sun God Re, the supreme god in the Egyptian pantheon – was inscribed in *Pharaoh* through the consistent presence of a neutral control light. This intense light was “rich in space, in presence in all directions” (Wójcik 2017: 66). A harmonic division of the frame was maintained during the outdoor shots. The sky occupied a third of the frame, with the remainder of the frame being occupied by the ground.

Wójcik used the following terms to characterise the essence of light as expressed in the film: “light present behind us and in front of us”, “light that is the same as before”, “light that is light itself”, “light that is omnipresent”, “light rich in presence”, “light that is completely independent of time” (Wójcik 2017: 66–68).

In *Pharaoh*, light is shown transcending time, evoked by a filmed effect emphasising the brightness of the sky to show the character of an archetypal light, to imagine



light as a universal human experience. The film conveys a cinematographic statement on the essence of light that was unknown to world cinema before *Pharaoh*.

## Why Did the Sand Have to Be Grey?

The grey of the desert sand figured in opposition to the depiction of light in *Pharaoh*. The neutral colour of the sand determined the selection of the Kyzylkum Desert as the primary outdoor shooting location for the film, according to Wójcik:

Most of the light in *Pharaoh* had the character of controlling light; it was really and authentically light, the concept of light itself. We had to find the opposite of this presence of light. It was the neutral notion of sand. This understanding of it was realised through neutral greys. An arrangement of greys and light itself was present. We were looking for a neutral desert: the sand in the Kyzylkum Desert was grey. It was about finding an element that corresponded with the understanding of the light present in the film. (Wójcik 2017: 66)

The grey sand, as opposed to yellow sand, emphasised the colouring of a world scorched by the sun. Grey emblematised eternal qualities while simultaneously being a sign of the changes brought by the passage of time (Image 2). Skrzepiński recalled that, during his first stay in Egypt, he was struck by its lack of coloured buildings:

Egypt was grey. It wasn't until I entered the Temple of Hatshepsut, which Professor Michałowski had recommended to me, and the tombs of the pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings that I saw colours. For me, the colours were hidden underground. I saw colours such as yellows, reds, greens and sepia. Everything was very vivid, warm, as if taken from one big palette. In addition, I was fascinated by the light itself.

In Uzbekistan, the sun is completely different to other places I have visited. It seems to shine through, as if a person were a glass figure through which the rays pass. Three factors have always been important to me in a film: light – texture – colour.

Another thing that was important to me was the space: it was huge, as if hanging in that light, in a grey desert landscape. Then I realised that it had a kind of depth that was everything. Cinematographer Jerzy Wójcik had exactly the same feeling. We were in agreement that here was another world opening up in front of us. (Skrzepiński 2017: 94)

The pervasiveness of light, which referred to the realm of the invisible, coupled with the greyness of the sand, which testified to the transience of humankind

and the world, came together as the formal and symbolic backdrop for the events in the film, a visual framework for the image of life expressed in *Pharaoh*.

## Light of Ramses

The presence of light, often used in cinema to reference sacred realms, was also related to the beliefs of ancient Egypt. As stated by Kamil O. Kuraszkiewicz, “The cult of the sun was practically always present. It grew in strength during the Old Kingdom. Other gods, such as Amon-Re, were identified with the sun deity. The solar element was always present – in every cult” (Kuraszkiewicz 2017: 455).

This open-air light is paralleled in the way the pharaoh, believed to be the son of the god Re, is illuminated. Monumental, diffused light appears in scenes set in the throne room (Image 3). This particular manner of lighting is also used when the successor to the throne appears at official events.

In the scene of the reception of Sargon, King Assar’s envoy, Ramses’s face is illuminated by a very strong spotlight, levelling the shadows on its surface. In this way, the light distinguishes the heir to the throne from the others, who are instead illuminated in chiaroscuro. This lighting choice isolates Ramses in a symbolic realm, elevated above the common people. The manner of illumination is enhanced by the script, with the words Ramses utters similarly emphasising his determination and inner strength (Image 4).

In the battle scene, the commanding Ramses becomes the master of life and death. His costume includes a silver helmet, polished so that the light of the sky is reflected on its surface (Image 5). The pharaoh’s divinity and his existence between the boundary of the visible and invisible worlds, a belief stemming from ancient Egyptian beliefs, is thus reflected in the film through the presence of light in the costume design.

## The Solar Eclipse Scene

The evocation of the sacred is also achieved in the solar eclipse scene through Herhor’s manipulation. This is the only part of the film that features a vertical composition, although bird’s-eye shots appear in earlier scenes set in the temples, for example, during Ramses’s initiation and during his visit to the temple of Ashtoreth.

In the eclipse scene, the vertical dimension is introduced gradually. The temple’s attackers attempt to climb the giant statues located on either side of the gate.

This architecture enables the transition to a vertical camera panorama, which shows Herhor unexpectedly standing on the roof between the pylons.

In this scene, a polarising filter gives a deepened blue hue, a symbolic reference to the location of the gods in the celestial realm (Image 6).

The beginning of the solar eclipse and the onset of darkness is meant to emphasise the wrath of a god who turns his face away from the cursed people. The change in the position of light sources gives the effect of an overlapping shadow on the silhouette of the priest. The shots of events taking place during the solar eclipse were realised on a black-and-white negative, which was later copied onto colour film. Wójcik characterised this process as follows: “At the moment of the eclipse, we deprived the world of colour and gave the light a different density, which is characteristic of an eclipse. This kind of absence causes anxiety in people and in every living thing” (Wójcik 2006: 63).

## Light in Interiors

Consistent backlighting in scenes shot in the desert shaped a uniform aesthetics in the film that had to continue in scenes set in the interiors. During the construction of the sets, no thought was given to the question of where the light should come from. The problem of lighting the interiors arose when the set design at the film studio in Łódź had already been prepared. As cinematographer Wiesław Zdort<sup>10</sup> explained, the nature of the light that should appear was dictated by the earlier outdoor shots: the light should not suggest the time of day, the weather or the season, and its source should be undefined (Zdort 2017: 219).

Egyptian temples had very little natural light, which entered “only through the entrance opening, or additionally through small windows in the walls below the ceiling” (Lipińska 1982: 179). This architectural detail justified the film’s use of steep, diffuse light coming from above when filming interiors. In the scene of Ramses’s dialogue with his father, Zdort achieved the desired effect by suspending a special lighting grate that held dozens of smaller bulbs encased in a wide apron of thick black cardboard and invisible to the camera. In this way, the effect of direct, dispersed light was achieved, creating only a single shadow. It was an atmospheric and monumental light from high up, evoking the temple at Karnak with its tall columns.

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10 Wiesław Zdort (1931–2019) was a cinematographer and the creator of many outstanding works of Polish cinematography.

In ancient Egypt, palaces were built on wooden frames with piles made of linen and clay (Skrzepiński 2017: 106). Their construction did not stand the test of time, nor did the reliefs that could have provided documentary records. Skrzepiński designed the palace in *Pharaoh* based on one surviving relief that depicts an Egyptian woman looking out of a window (Skrzepiński 2017: 106). In the film, a frontal light appeared in the palace rooms, which, through the visible reflections of light from the walls and doors, suggested the presence of windows that were not shown on camera. The exception is a scene in which Ramses looks through a window at villages set on fire by Libyan troops.

Light also established the mood in the scenes set in the temple of Ashtoreth during the funeral ceremony of Ramses XII, as well as being used to detail the nooks and crannies of the palace in the scene of the murder of Ramses XIII. The intensity of the light falling on figures in interior scenes makes them stand out from the background, thus focusing the viewer's attention on specific elements. The uneven distribution of brightness within the otherwise symmetrical composition of the frame results in the impression that the interior space is tightening. In some scenes, such as during Ramses's dialogue with his father or in the scene of the priests' dialogue with Beroes, the frame is bounded on both sides by the dark surfaces of the walls. Elsewhere, such as in the scenes in the labyrinth, the frame is limited by the planes of light striking the sides of the corridor. According to Wójcik, 'narrowing the frame' helped to fill the wide screen in intimate scenes, while also enhancing the impression of increased vastness when the action moved into open space (Wójcik 1966: 10).

Another type of lighting present in the interiors of *Pharaoh* is motivated light, with its source being provided by oil lamps or torches. The corridors of the labyrinth that protect the treasury are lit by oil lamps held by the guards of the labyrinth or the High Priest of Samentu, depending on the scene. The surfaces of the labyrinth walls have a distinctive texture, mimicking the grooves created by stone chisels that the filmmakers witnessed on the walls of the corridors leading to the Egyptian tombs during their documentation trips.

Set designer Skrzepiński spoke about the tasks he set himself when designing the corridors of the labyrinth:

How do you show someone constantly walking, walking in complete darkness, in a way that does not bore the viewer? I focused a lot of attention on the texture of the walls. They were made of a special plaster paste. To make it sparkle a little, I would lubricate it with naphthalene powder so that when it was lit, there was a rock wall effect that couldn't be dull. I even had a whole inventory of rocks that had just a glaze. I wanted to show that this wall is not dead, it creates

a background that draws the actors in. The idea was that the wall was a whole mass, a rock that exists despite the passage of time; it was once carved there, and now we see chisel marks that are alive like a handprint testifying to the presence of a human being.

In the maze, when the camera was guided, it looked as if the walls were moving. I made accurate drawings to size only for selected shots. The scenery was set up for the frame. The cinematographer would give me the spacing of the frame, and I would make the set accordingly narrow or wide. My collaboration with the cinematographer was therefore very close. I also operated with a script, from which I could read the camera settings accurately. I outlined all of the lens angles that were needed for the shoot. The scenery had to fit the camera perfectly, so nothing could be changed later. Each scene was set to the angle of the lens. (Skrzepiński 2017: 106, 108)

Zdort and Witold Sobociński<sup>11</sup> shot the scenes of walking through the labyrinth. In order for the camera operator to move in a controlled manner in the narrow, low space of the corridors, a special tricycle with a motorcycle saddle was constructed. Zdort held a reflector imitating the light of a lamp flame during the shoot. The presence of an electrician – an extra person in the narrow corridor – made shooting even more difficult. The electricians, crawling to avoid getting into the frame, were only used to illuminate the corridor corners. For the same reason, Kawalerowicz could not be near the camera during the shooting in the corridors of the labyrinth, which was quite a difficult experience for a director accustomed to being personally present at every take.

Zdort referred to these shots as a work of craftsmanship:

The labyrinth is a beautiful symbol, an abstract symbol, referring to myth and Ariadne's thread. However, the spectator must understand who can pass through it. So, there are plaques with hieroglyphics, such as the High Priest of Samentu has, and signs on the walls at the turns we show. In any case, the idea of this cinematic labyrinth is very different from the tombs we are familiar with, such as Tutankhamun's tomb in the Valley of the Kings. Although more symbolic than real, it is nevertheless a beautiful formal generalisation of the idea. It is not only the protagonist who moves through the labyrinth; the light also moves, and I hold it without the viewer being aware of it. Alongside the intricate and grand lighting and the often elaborate technical camera movements, there are also 'handheld' shots. This, to me, is the wonder and beauty of the cinematographer's work. (Zdort 2017: 224)

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11 Witold Sobociński (1929–2018) was one of the most outstanding Polish cinematographers. He served as the second cinematographer during the making of *Pharaoh*.

The lighting of the vault gave rise to another technical issue, as the huge golden chest props in the large room were only to be revealed when the candles were lit. The spotlights that imitated the light had to be illuminated only when the priests lit the large candles arranged in the vault with the help of handheld torches. Zdort described how this process was implemented:

There were no such resistors for the ARRI incandescent lamps with a power of 20 kW. That's why they were so big because, with the wide screen and the use of anamorphic lenses, we had to have a lot of light and a diaphragm of at least f: 4.5. The power of all the light in the vault built in the factory in Łódź, in the big hall no. 3, was over 400 kW. It was an extremely complicated task to brighten this light without the use of resistors but with special shafts mounted on large lamps. The large film generated big problems all the time. (Zdort 2017: 222)

Since sensations are subjective, some viewers may experience the phenomenon of synaesthesia while watching *Pharaoh*. In this case, multiple sensory responses occur simultaneously; for example, impressions coming from the screen, perceived through the senses of sight and hearing, evoke an almost physical sensation of a change in temperature. In *Pharaoh*, the interior scenes might seem cooler than those in the sun-baked exteriors. The montage transition from the scene in which Ramses pays a visit to the treasury protected by the labyrinth to the scene of his dialogue with the priests on the terrace of the palace might bring a subjective impression of a rise in temperature.

The cameramen were aware of the need to communicate the lower interior temperature through imagery. According to Sobociński:

The greatest art was to bring the image of Egypt and Africa inside. From a temperature of 40°C, one enters the interior of a house that feels cold. Small windows and thick walls give the impression of a lower temperature, while the outside temperature was very high. However, the lower temperature is combined with darkness. This regularity had to be reflected in the concept of light in *Pharaoh*. (Sobociński 2017: 255)

This issue of expressing temperature was also addressed by Wójcik in his book *The Labyrinth of Light*:

Moving from outside to the interior, we also tried to show the temperature difference that existed between the locations. This should have been interpreted even more profoundly, but you have to remember that at that time, the Kodak negative had only a certain level of sensitivity. It was not a negative with the kind of perfection of registering darkness and blackness that we have today. The technological limitations were very strict. If *Pharaoh* had been realised on today's negatives, with today's means, it would have been better, deeper. (Wójcik 2006: 62)

## Pharaoh's Colours

Ancient Egypt was colourful. In Egyptian representational art, the image of a living person or object had to be painted to gain its full identity (Zorn 2006: 103). The colour palette in Egyptian art consisted of six colours – black, white, red, yellow, green and blue – with specific symbolism associated with each colour. Black symbolised the fertile earth, night, death and the underworld. White was associated with purity, the sacred and illustrious and high-ranking individuals. Red symbolised chaos, evil and danger, the colour of the desert, foreign peoples and the god Set. In a positive sense, red was also the colour of Lower Egypt. Green was the colour of rebirth and successful development: life-protecting amulets were green. The colour blue was linked to the celestial realm, which is why the skin of the main Egyptian gods was pictured as blue. The colour yellow symbolised immortality and was therefore often present in images referencing royal power or celestial bodies (Zorn 2006: 103–104).

The colour world of *Pharaoh* is different from the standard ancient Egyptian colour scheme, which gave rise to objections from contemporary Egyptologists. According to Kuraszkiewicz:

The elements that do not reflect reality are certainly the sand-grey temples and the palace. The buildings in Egypt were colourful, even flashy. Reliefs were polychromed. All of the temples, which we know today as majestically beige, were painted in bright colours. The statues were also painted. In this respect, the scenography does not reflect reality. (Kuraszkiewicz 2017: 462)

The colours of the 'world unveiled' in *Pharaoh* have an incomplete character, emphasising a world whose original splendour has decayed over time. They are colours scorched by the sun and worn down by wind-borne sand. The film has the muted and subdued colours of a relief covered in the 'patina of time'.

The colours of *Pharaoh*, as well as the way in which ancient Egypt was represented in the film, were determined by the documentary trips undertaken by Kawalerowicz, Wójcik and Skrzepiński. In a statement entitled *My Egipt (Mój Egipt)*, published in the magazine *Ekran* two days after the premiere of *Pharaoh*, the director commented extensively on the presence of colours in his work:

Colour. This was perhaps the most fundamental and complicated problem. How could the content and form be tied together in the most integral way? The decision on the colour shape of *Pharaoh* was inspired by trips to modern Egypt as well as by delving into its ancient history. The patinated colours in the reliefs really appealed to us. We were also captivated by modern Egypt and its colour scheme. We knew straight away that we would not use colour in its traditional



form. Colour very often breaks up the drama and becomes a purely technical element. We wanted to avoid this. Instead, we wanted to select colours and reduce them to a synthesis of matters of form and content, that is to say, to limit the opulence and glitter of antiquity and to show the Egypt of customs as it perhaps really was. From the outset, we eliminated the three colours that had previously worked best on screen: red, blue and green. We relied exclusively on ochre, white, black and gold. This colour palette allowed us to achieve a certain patina, which became a feature of the film, something that creates the distance of time in the emotional reception of the film. (Kawalerowicz 1966: 3)

Irrespective of the colour scheme adopted in *Pharaoh*, and assuming its intentional evocation of the 'patina of time' in the representation of colours, the film followed the faithful transmission of certain colours. This applied to elements that were immune to changes associated with the passage of time, or that were linked to unchangeable features of nature or human life: ebony furniture, the marble present in the palace, the muted red and sapphire hues in the ornaments and insignia worn by the pharaoh all retained their original colour. In the scene focused on the life-giving waters of the Nile, a piercing green can be seen, while the intense red of blood appears in the battle scene and the scene depicting Ramses's death. The saturated blue of the sky in the eclipse scene refers to the timeless symbolism of this colour, which is linked to the sacred realm.

During the making of *Pharaoh*, outdoor shooting was not only carried out in the Kyzylkum Desert but also in Egypt and in Poland on Lake Kirsajty. In the edited film, the sun-warmed actors would enter the interiors built in the halls of the film studio in Łódź directly from the desert. Such transitions gave rise to several tasks related to maintaining the film's uniform colour scheme.

One of the problems in this regard was maintaining a uniform colour for sand and sky in shots taken on the three continents. During documentary work in Bukhara, shots were filmed of the dunes in the Kyzylkum Desert to verify that the colour of the sand was consistent with that of the sand in the Libyan Desert in Egypt. As Zdort reported, the problem ultimately solved itself:

In the deserts of Egypt or Morocco, the sand comes from rock that has been crushed and milled over centuries and is yellow in colour, unlike in Kyzylkum, where it is greyish. We had to make it so that the difference was not perceptible on screen. During the many viewings of the tape, we reflected on how to solve this problem. Staring at the images from the Libyan Desert, I noticed that the heavier, atomised layer of rocks was nowhere near as yellow as the dust lifted by the wind and that the colour of the dunes varied according to the position of the sun. This fact offered an opportunity for a certain arbitrariness.



On arriving in Łódź, we watched all of the material on screen. At the time, we paid particular attention to the colour of the sand in the various copies. However, after deeper analysis, we ceased trying to make any match between the colour of the Kyzylkum sand and the Egyptian sands of the Libyan Desert; we considered this problem irrelevant. The sandy desert at Giza under the pyramids shows a slightly different location to the desert at Bukhara. We timed this to illustrate Pentuer's lecture, parts of which were to be shot in Giza and the Valley of the Kings. Also, the rocks and stones suggested a slightly different location than the desert dunes, which was also beneficial. (Zdort 2017: 204)

The scene under the pyramids in Egypt was shot without the sun, so it was possible to achieve a brightness in the colour that was comparable to that above the Kyzylkum Desert. No change in colour is therefore apparent during Ramses's ride from under the pyramids to the Pharaoh's palace.

On 29 March 1965, Andrzej Herman, Kawalerowicz's assistant during the making of *Pharaoh*, wrote in a diary he kept while shooting in Egypt:

Photos at Karnak. The temple's magnificent reliefs seem to come alive with the distinctive silhouettes of the priests we compose against their backdrop. The atmosphere lends itself to the actors and crew. We shoot as if in a trance. [...] We also experience moments of satisfaction. The temple-decoration that was built in Bukhara agrees perfectly in character with what we are watching here. (Herman 1965: 9)

During the shoot in Egypt, the cinematographers had to anticipate and avoid the need for colour corrections, as shooting was done 'in the dark', without the possibility of viewing the film shots on location. The negatives could not be developed until two weeks later in Poland, which would have been too late to make any corrections necessitated by technical defects (Herman 1965: 9).

The cinematography for the scene of Pentuer's lecture in the ruins of Luxor was edited into the film. In the scene of Ramses's initiation, with his entry into the temple built on set near Bukhara, Skrzepiński managed to achieve perfect alignment of the architectural structure, its colour reflecting the passage of time and bearing the traces of destruction on Egyptian ruins. He was aided in this process by lengthy, careful and labour-intensive documentary work:

There, on the spot, I could touch the relief inscriptions on the columns and walls of the temples; there I saw the tombs of the pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings, the material texture and structure of the material from which the temples were built... At Luxor, Karnak, Deir el Bahari, I took hundreds of photographs and made sketches and hand-drawings. I was able to note the proportion of the forms, the texture, the colour. I even took material samples of limestone or granite,

of which, to the astonishment of customs officials, I brought home about five kilos. (Skrzepiński 1966: 8)

Skrzepiński was given the opportunity to carry out detailed research in the closed warehouses of a museum in Cairo. He also befriended the guardians of the temples at Karnak, who allowed him to collect samples of rock fragments (Skrzepiński 2017: 103).

The film's colour palette also had to be matched to the outdoor location in Poland where the Nile River scene was shot. Lake Kirsajty in the Mazurian Lake District was enhanced with an island with palm trees, built on pontoons, and 20 floating islands composed of dry reeds to evoke the landscape of the bulrushes along the Nile. Close-up shots proved to be the greatest challenge. Many kilograms of dry paint were poured into the lake to simulate the grey-yellow water colour characteristic of the Nile. The reeds in the area through which Ramses's boat passed were painted brown, reflecting the effect of the scorching sun on green vegetation (Image 7). According to Wójcik, "The degree of colour saturation in our latitude is completely different. We had to get closer to those conditions, to the presence of dust on the greenery, the water, our clothing, our bodies" (Wójcik 2006: 65).

The colouring of the human body was one of the most important elements of the film's colour concept. In *Pharaoh*, the postcard yellow colour of the sand, the bright blue of the sky and the tanned skin of the characters were abandoned early in the preparatory work. The colour of human skin was determined in accordance with the subdued colour range of the film, devoid of bright and saturated colours (Herman 1965: 6).

Makeup artist Teresa Tomaszewska<sup>12</sup> collaborated with the cinematographers to prepare a colour palette for the representation of human skin that would be in harmony with the sets and costumes:

I would first establish the colour with the operator. I found out that the cinematographer was using such and such a light and that this light 'eats' this and that. Then I had a test to prepare the right lipstick colour for the so-called 'proper copy'. I've always done colour swatches. [...] Our understanding is very important because the cinematographer may use some softs, different filters that change the colour of the image. I never inquired because we always agreed that if they did something like that, they were obliged to inform me. The essential material was tape because it was the most expensive. You had to work in such a way that

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12 Teresa Tomaszewska (1928–2016) was an outstanding film makeup artist who created the makeup for many classics of Polish cinema.

you damaged the tape as little as possible. Sometimes you had to make hundreds of attempts to establish something for sure. (Tomaszewska 2017: 313–314)

Speaking about his collaboration with Tomaszewska, the second cinematographer Sobociński said: “Working by trial and error, we found the right lipstick colour, going into brown and purple. The colour scheme we were looking for appeared after correcting the tape and making the right copy” (Sobociński 2017: 248).

The creation of the characters took place in dugouts near the shooting location. These were small rooms, dug 1–1.5 metres into the ground, with sloping roofs covered with sand. It was much cooler in the dugouts in hot weather, as the temperature remained a constant 18 degrees. According to Wójcik:

The makeup, which was executed on the set of the film, in desert conditions, was hell. We were still asleep, and the makeup artists were already starting work. While it was still dark, they drove dozens of kilometres across the desert. The makeup room was built into the ground so that it was cooler. They worked for hours, fainting as they worked. There were often two or three hundred extras playing, and they were all dressed in their bodies. The makeup area was huge. The proposed colour scheme was used consistently throughout the film. (Wójcik 2006: 63)

Acting in the title role of the film, Jerzy Zelnik provided a cinematic model for the appearance of the Egyptians. During studio shooting in Łódź, his body colour was used as a point of reference for the cameramen. As cinematographer Zdort explained:

Kawalerowicz felt that the body of our Ramses would serve as a model for the appearance of the Egyptians, especially their complexion. This was actually the most important thing for the cinematographers’ rehearsals, especially as we needed a very diverse range of many browns. In the whites, too, we were looking not only for shades but also for texture, weave; in many ways, we were looking for differences between the highest function of priests and lower-level hierarchs, such as Pentuer, monks, servants, porters or fan servants. Not to mention Libyans, for whom we looked for the right shade of browns. (Zdort 2017: 201)

The skin tones change in interior scenes, appearing lighter or darker against the dark green walls and grey stone, or changing when the stone is illuminated by a flame, as in the scenes of individuals walking through the corridors of the labyrinth (Wójcik 1966: 10).

Precisely shaped by the set designer, makeup artist and cameramen, the colour concept of *Pharaoh* achieved its full visual impact only after the digital restoration of the film in 2012, perhaps for the first time. Due to inaccuracies in producing

copies of the film in 1966, the effect of the colours remained understated in the screen copies.

## *Pharaoh* as a Cohesive Form

*Pharaoh* is composed of elements that form a unified whole. Its composition was the result of the filmmakers' strict observance of the principles of lighting, a clearly defined colour concept and additional compositional rules that determined how individual scenes were to be formed and framed so as to create a unified whole linked by formal elements. According to Juliusz Żurawski's definition, "A form that, by its emphatic nature, compels us to be submissive to it and to submit to its formal discipline is called cohesive form" (Żurawski 2008: 44).

*Pharaoh* owes its cohesive composition to additional principles followed by the cinematographers and director: the presence of a main compositional axis; the consistent observance of central composition and symmetric rhythm, especially in the outdoor scenes; the linear reliefs characteristic of ancient Egyptian art; and the use of a subjective camera characteristic of Kawalerowicz's auteur cinematic approach.

## The Main Compositional Axis of the Film

The film's consistency is evident in the composition of individual scenes in *Pharaoh*, due to the presence of a staging key that makes it possible to combine individual scenes into a coherent whole and enables the transition between successive places, events and situations through the movement of characters in space. This consistency was achieved through very close collaboration between the set designer and cinematographer.

The film relies on repetition and foreshadowing. At the beginning of the film, Ennana, having spotted scarabs, runs straight at the camera with a message about their appearance, interrupting the middle of a line of soldiers that stretches to the horizon (Image 8). After speaking to Herhor, Ramses, in disagreement with the high priest's decision that the army should avoid the sacred beetles, moves away from the troops by walking deeper into the frame through a passage formed by the soldiers towards the nearby dunes.

The scene of Ramses's dialogue with Sarah ends with him running deep into the frame, returning to the troops grouped in the desert. In the next scene, an Assyrian horse is led from deep within the frame into the circle formed

by the soldiers. Ramses rides off in his chariot along the same road after the manoeuvres are over. Later, following in Ramses's footsteps, as it were, regiments of soldiers move away into the frame, followed by the priests' sedan chairs. After a montage cut, Ramses's chariot, which is centrally located in the frame, rushes directly at the camera (Image 9). After a dialogue between Ramses and Ennana, the heir to the throne rides away, disappearing into the depths of the frame.

A montage cut then transports the viewer to the depths of the Pharaoh's palace through a shot realised with a subjective camera. Another door, located centrally, opens, leading to the throne room. In the wall behind the throne of Ramses XII, dark openings extend the central compositional axis of the walls, along which the staging of the audience scene is focused. The next scene opens with Sarah's approaching from deep within the frame, into the chamber where she will meet Ramses. In the next scene, Queen Nikotris emerges from deep within the frame to meet her son. Ramses moves away after speaking to his mother. His dialogue with Dagon begins with the merchant entering the chamber through a door again situated deep in the frame. These two characters remain in the shot throughout the dialogue. Dagon leaves the chamber through the door and disappears into the frame. Ramses, on his way to meet Sarah, emerges from the depth of the frame and walks directly towards the camera through a passage formed by two rows of small columns. The temple initiation scene opens with Ramses's entrance deep into the scenery through the centrally located temple gates. The architectural axis of the temple leads him through the courtyard into the rooms hidden in the darkness behind it.

It is important to note the compositional axis that is clearly accentuated throughout all of the scenes in the film. Individual scenes are thus linked by a unified scenographic and staging composition, designed according to the principle of movement along the central image axis into the frame. This composition is clearly accentuated at the beginning and end of individual scenes and may be understood by the viewer as equivalent to actors moving on and off stage (Image 10).

The set design, developed in accordance with the architectural principles of ancient Egyptian buildings, established the main compositional axis of *Pharaoh*. As stated by Skrzepiński, "Together with the cinematographer, we knew that a common architectural feature of the temples is the construction 'on axis in depth'. I succeeded in convincing Kawalerowicz about it" (Skrzepiński 2017: 95).

The main compositional axis of the film was followed both in interior and open-air shots, as confirmed by Skrzepiński:

When an actor approached a character, he walked along [this axis]. The director was aware that the construction of the scenery 'on axis in depth' posed a whole

series of difficult tasks for the actor and required discipline. In the open air, perspective was also taken into account. The idea was not to show that someone is walking to get somewhere, only that he goes 'deeper'. Then the scene is important from another point of view than that of the plot. (Skrzepiński 2017: 101)

Skrzepiński similarly emphasised that the staging, which was integrated with the set design, meant that general plans to block dialogues were arranged in advance:

On a 'to arrive' basis. This meant that, for example, when there was a dialogue between two people about to enter a scene, we would just show the door opening, the entrance, and then the camera would follow the two people talking. A close-up was made, and the character was immobilised. Everything was subordinated to the use of architecture. My aim was to use perspective so that the structures were built in depth. This could be read as inviting the viewer inside. Nothing in *Pharaoh* is accidental. The film was characterised by an extraordinary concern for composition. There was a vision that we agreed on at the beginning. (Skrzepiński 2017: 98)

## The Central Composition, Symmetry and Register Perspective

Linear perspective, which is characteristic of the Western mode of pictorial composition, does not appear in *Pharaoh*. It is absent because ancient Egyptian art did not follow this way of depicting depth on the picture plane. The Cinema-Scope technique used for filming also necessitated its abandonment, as this kind of recessive perspective is difficult to achieve in a widescreen film.

A clear reference to the register perspective common in ancient Egyptian art is evident in the outdoor scenes in *Pharaoh*. In particular, the film's cinematographers drew their inspiration from images dating from Dynasty XVIII. Many aspects of the cinematic imagery refer to features of the reliefs and wall paintings of that period. References to register perspective are evident in the massive outdoor scenes, during manoeuvres and in the battle scene. Visual elements recede deep into the frame in horizontal rows perpendicular to the camera, while relative size expresses the rank of the people depicted (Lipińska 1978: 78). For example, Ramses stands in the centre foreground of the frame, which makes him appear taller than the figures behind him, an impression emphasised by his delineated silhouette. Meanwhile, the troops grouped deeper in the frame in successive lines are visible in the background.

In ancient Egyptian reliefs and wall paintings, a separate section of space was reserved for the main figure, while secondary figures were depicted in horizontal registers arranged one above another and separated by a line (Michałowski 1974: 120). The more distant the depicted figure, the higher it was placed (Lipińska 1978: 79) (Image 11).

The register perspective is also used in the staging of Pentuer's lecture. The scene begins with the camera panning across the space, showing from below the great walls covered with hieroglyphs and reliefs. The priest is teaching the young Ramses about the great age and endurance of Egyptian civilisation. In each of the shots in this sequence, a horizontal line formed of human silhouettes is visible in the background, as in the reliefs depicted a moment before.

In addition to its muted colours, critics most often note the symmetrical composition of *Pharaoh*. The most important character is often positioned in the centre of the frame; Pharaoh Ramses XII is always shown in this way, for instance. His son, the film's protagonist, begins to be centrally positioned only when he becomes ruler after his father's death. From that point onwards, the camera also frames him looking slightly downward and occupying more of the frame, in a position of visual and symbolic dominance. Before his ascension as pharaoh, Ramses's position is usually determined by the proportions of the golden ratio.

*Pharaoh* adapted the harmonic and symmetric compositions of ancient Egyptian reliefs to the screen. Several dialogue scenes feature a standard arrangement of figures according to the poses known from ancient Egyptian art, which followed an abstracted approach to the representation of the human body, showing its most characteristic aspects without perspectival distortions (Zorn 2006: 93–94); for example, a torso might be depicted frontally, with the abdomen and legs twisted in a profile view. The right profile was usually shown, suggesting a figure walking to the right. The head was often shown in profile, but the eye was depicted frontally, while the hands were seen from the side (Michałowski 1974: 158). In *Pharaoh*, individuals engaged in a dialogue are frequently positioned so that the face of one is shown frontally and the other shown in profile (Image 12).

The symmetrical composition of *Pharaoh* lends harmony and beauty to the cinematic image, further symbolising the ideal, hieratic nature of the ancient Egyptian world. However, symmetry also signals the limitations and stagnation faced by the pharaohs and the approaching end of their dynasty.

Symmetry was also interpreted more broadly as a structural element that enabled the construction of an integrated cinematic world that strongly expressed its



‘Egyptianness’. In the symmetry that dominated *Pharaoh*, Maria Kornatowska noted “a very strong, almost Corbusier-like film shape in the spirit of the new tendencies of contemporary art” (Kornatowska 1966: 45).

## The Presence of a Subjective Camera

The method of cinematography known as ‘subjective camera’, which pretends to film from the character’s point of view, is one of the formal elements characteristic of Kawalerowicz’s auteur cinema. According to Zdort:

Like many great directors of the time, such as Hitchcock, Kawalerowicz was convinced of the great value of such points of view. Later, he even had lectures at the Film School in Łódź about the subjectivity and objectivity of looking and the division into these two views. I think for the rest of his life, he referred to shots as subjective or objective, but he wasn’t very careful about this way of thinking being consistently and clearly integrated into the narrative of the film. I think other directors around the world do this, too, and always have similar problems. (Zdort 2017: 180–181)

In *Pharaoh*, the power of the subjective camera involves the viewer in the unfolding events during the opening shot of the audience scene, which shows the pharaoh carried on a sedan chair. The viewer observes the processional passage to the throne room from the point of view of the individual who occupies the seat in the sedan. Kawalerowicz explained the creative intentions behind the realisation of this scene:

I was concerned here with creating a sublime experience for the viewer. First, I place the viewer in a sedan chair. It is not clear who is being carried and why [Image 13]. Another door opens. The choir sings, or rather recites (because the word has dialogue value here, and is more important than the melody) a hymn in honour of the Pharaoh. All of this goes on for quite a long time. The spectator begins to experience something sublime, to feel that the Pharaoh is worshipped like a god, that he is someone extraordinary, that he represents the greatest in this country. It is only when this has been suggested to the viewer that Pharaoh appears on the screen. (Janicki 1966: 29–30)

Kawalerowicz introduces a way for the viewer to develop a personalised engagement with the issues raised by the film by involving them in the thought processes of characters and making them a participant in the scene taking place. *Pharaoh* enables this process through its reliance on the protagonists gazing directly into the camera and by placing the viewer in the position of the gazing person, like the camera ‘on axis in depth’.



The individualised perspective inherent to the subjective camera recurs in the scene in the dunes when Ramses is pursuing a fleeing Sarah. It is similarly present in an expressive, elaborate manner in the scene of Beroes's dialogue with the priests and when Ramses runs to Sarah's house after receiving news from Kama that his son is a Jew. The subjective camera becomes an indispensable means of expression in the scene of the High Priest of Samentu's passage through the corridors of the labyrinth, allowing the viewer to closely accompany the priest and share in his experience. It is most spectacularly present in the battle scene, which is shown from the point of view of a participating soldier. Kawalerowicz justified the use of the subjective camera in this scene in an interview:

The battle. Its elements are sand, desert, Egyptian troops and weapons. Here I wanted to suggest the cruelty of the battle and to show it as the experience of an ordinary soldier. But this soldier is a spectator; he is me, as well. The camera, the soldier, the spectator: they don't see where they're running to. And it doesn't matter because it's all about the suggestion of the battle, the experience of the battle. The scene is, by the way, preceded by the subjective experience of Ramses, who, after the expulsion of Sarah, indulges in games, but in an instant becomes the leader and faces an army waiting for orders. Ramses must lead them in an attack, but he is afraid! And now, I move from this experience of Ramses to what the ordinary soldier sees and experiences. (Janicki 1966: 39)

The battle was one of the most difficult scenes to film. Very long preparations in the desert with hundreds of extras were necessary to pull it off. The battle scene required exceptional cinematographic creativity, the use of unconventional technical solutions and Sobociński's unique talents.

## Subjective Camera Proxemics in the Battle Scene

Due to the highly structured composition of the film, its strictly defined formal arrangement and its hieratic nature, the movements in scenes and resulting camera work had to be precisely choreographed. These sequences could only be designed by a second cinematographer. Speaking about his imagery, Sobociński emphasised that "the notion of composition, rhythm, dynamics in the picture – as a whole and in its individual, small elements – was built by subconscious rhythms, they created the images. I transferred them directly from my musical experiences" (Sobociński 2017: 254).

The method of shooting the battle scene introduced a new approach to camera work within Polish and world cinematography. It included a subjective camera that took part in the battle, reflecting the point of view of one of the soldiers running

through the dunes to confront the enemy. The scene was not shot with a camera situated on a moving cart or positioned on a moving car, nor did it involve a camera standing on a moving object. Rather, the scene was constructed with a camera floating through the air.

In *The Labyrinth of Light*, Wójcik described the difficulty of the task faced by the camera crew, especially the second cameraman:

With the camera in hand, in constant motion, we had to cross the desert dunes, always without a dolly. We constructed our own equipment and walked across the dunes, negotiating the steepest of steeps, descending and ascending these dunes, overcoming all kinds of obstacles, something that had seemed impossible for cinema until then. This way of filming was written especially for Sobociński, and it must have been extremely difficult to realise. If it had had to be done by anyone else, it would have had to be scripted differently. No one else could have done it. (Wójcik 2006: 64)

The attack scene was filmed after sunrise. The barchan slopes were then shaded, which made their hollows and undulations visible, and the open space acquired a chiaroscuro that disappeared as the sun rose. This was the time when “the desert tells a story about itself” (Wójcik 2017: 81). At midday, the sun’s rays fall vertically, so a standing individual only casts a small shadow. The presence of light and shadow, shaped by the layout of the terrain, also defined the dynamics of key narrative events. For example, as the soldiers run towards the enemy, their profiles are half illuminated by sunlight and half covered by shadow. Participation in the battle precipitates a state of suspension between life and death, reflected in the lighting of the setting and actors. To extend the visual metaphor linking the battle to the cycles of the day, the scenes taking place after the battle were filmed at sunset.

Shooting the attack scene in chiaroscuro required very careful preparation. Due to the fast-rising sun, shots had to be filmed in a dozen minutes. The film crew had to complete preparatory work the evening before the battle. The filmmakers and the 800 extras cast as soldiers spent the night in the desert at fixed locations, which allowed shooting to begin immediately after dawn (Wójcik 2017: 81).

The stretch of desert where the battle scene was filmed needed to have an aesthetically suitable surface for filming. Kawalerowicz and his collaborators scouted out locations during their long marches across the desert (Peltz 1964b: 6–7). The setting for the attack scene also required additional features, as determined by the cinematographer, to achieve the intended rhythm. Sand dunes were chosen based on their shape so that the paths taken by the running soldiers

were as short as possible, thus ensuring that ascending and descending the dune did not take too long. As described by Sobociński:

The cinematography was linked to the practical physicality of the task. It was the linking of space and time, with the aim of achieving an appropriate rhythm of change in the scene, associated with climbing up and down a dune. It was also linked to the running soldier's perception of enemy soldiers approaching from the opposite direction, who are revealed for a moment with the horizon line and then disappear. (Sobociński 2017: 260)

At the time of the filming of *Pharaoh*, the Steadicam, a camera stabilisation system used by cinematographers to mechanically isolate the movement of the camera from the movement of the operator, did not yet exist. This device was introduced in 1975, making it possible to obtain a smooth and steady shot without bumps, jerks and vibrations when the camera operator had to move quickly on uneven ground or in a tight or awkward space.

A special litter was constructed to film the attack scene from the point of view of one of the soldiers, thus introducing the viewer as a participant, a running soldier. The litter was carried in an unusual manner, with men holding rods and crosspieces on the left and right, rather than at the front and back. In order to ensure the fluidity of the movement of the litter, the bearers could not run in the same rhythm but had to move unevenly, maintaining an individual and varied pace (Sobociński 2017: 257).

The camera appeared to walk and run alongside the soldiers, showing their legs and feet as they climbed the dune, and their torsos and weapons as they descended. At the top of the dune, a space briefly appeared over the soldiers' heads, allowing them to ascertain their distance from the enemy. According to Sobociński, "The shot created an image that was a certain summation of the assault. It was, in a sense, 'singing' the melody of this run, while at the same time, the layout of the dunes set the rhythm" (Sobociński 2017: 260).

Kawalerowicz believed that showing the battle in a standard way would not have added anything new to the film. In an interview given during the premiere of *Pharaoh*, he explained how the attack was shot from a subjective point of view:

The start of a battle can be shown with an image of two armies facing each other. Then the soldiers run, the armies mix, we pick out individual heroes, show separate duels, someone dies, someone wins.

In *Pharaoh*, the battle begins with the image that Ramses, the leader of the battle, can see. Then I lose Ramses; he ceases to be important. Along with the camera, the spectator and one of the soldiers, I find myself in the midst of an army

running across the sand, sinking up to my knees in it. I am running in the sixth or seventh row, so I can't see the moment when the armies meet. All I can see are the backs in front of me and, when I look back, the faces. I only see the enemy when the soldier running in front of me has fallen... It is difficult to tell the story without the image: the rhythm of the mass of the runners is just as important as the snorting breath of the tired soldiers accompanying the run. Everything together adds up to the experience I want to evoke. (Janicka 1966: 7)

The dramaturgical impact of the attack scene, which lasts two minutes and consists of a series of subjective camera shots, results from a montage layout that unfolds the attack over time and locates the actors within the broader spatial environment perceived by the camera.

The battle scene opens with a montage juxtaposition of a large close-up of Ramses's face and a landscape view of the desert and dunes. In this way, the battle shifts between the individual experience of the protagonist and the vast space occupied by the Egyptian and Libyan troops. The shields raised and lowered repetitively by the soldiers, shielding Ramses from the stones thrown by the enemy, set the rhythm of the battle (Image 14).

The attack scene is preceded by a concentration of troops approaching from the right and left in the direction of the attack, coinciding with the central compositional axis. Sharp, elongated shadows visually foreshadow the upcoming battle, conveying the growing tension.

The first shots familiarise the viewer with the location of the subjective camera in the middle of the troops ascending the dunes. A shot over the heads of the soldiers to the rear shows the successive lines ready to attack. The shot gives the viewer the impression of being enclosed in the middle of a compact group, surrounded by bodies and shields in a uniform colour scheme, which emphasises the group over the individual. In the next shot, as the soldiers descend from the crest of the dune, the view stretching before them is revealed: an open space separating them from the Libyan troops at the top of the barchan on the horizon line. On the crest of other dunes, the space between the attackers and the enemy is briefly exposed. The desert terrain makes it difficult to estimate distance. The movement of the troops is also protracted within this landscape in an extended timeline of running and waiting for a direct confrontation with the enemy.

The time-space of the soldiers' run is subdivided into successive stages, filmed using forward and backward camera angles and shots of close and distant planes as well as soldiers climbing up and down dunes. These shots are accompanied by a constant audio-visual percussive rhythm of soldiers' torsos and legs, shown in close-ups, accompanied by the sound of their footsteps and breathing.

Situated among a group of soldiers, the camera shows them semi-close-up, with faces also entering the frame in close-ups. Those running closest to the camera appear at arm's length (Image 15). The proxemics of the sets used by the camera operator (Kuśmierczyk 2014: 20–21) create an almost kinaesthetic sensation of proximity, invoking the impression that the viewer is physically removed from the others (Hall 1969: 119–120). The cinematic image visualises the effort and growing fatigue of the runners, intensifying the viewer's sense of participating in an ongoing attack.

The space around the viewer is mediated by the subjective camera; it is closed and narrowed during the run but begins to open before the direct confrontation with the enemy. The perspective of individual soldiers approaching the enemy and engaging in combat replaces the image of a running group that surrounds the mentally and emotionally involved viewer. The distance separating the attackers from the enemy is abruptly shortened. The clash with the enemy is a surprise, as though it is impossible to avoid it (Image 16).

The speed of this changing perspective constitutes a spatial-emotional intrusion into the viewer's experience, one that is almost immediately followed by the opponent's mace striking the soldiers, framed by the subjective camera. As the camera staggers, fragments of sky and earth are visible. Blood reddens the screen, followed by darkness. The violence of the attack is contrasted by a montage picturing the stillness and the silence after the battle, as well as the setting sun.

The attack scene attempts to impact the viewer emotionally by simulating the physicality and sensations of a character taking part in the battle and perishing.<sup>13</sup>

## Music and the Audio Layer of the Film

Kawalerowicz aimed to incorporate music into *Pharaoh* in such a way that it 'blended' into the image as an integral whole. Composer Adam Walaciński limited himself almost exclusively to vocal music, comprising choral hymns for male voices and solo songs. The third type of music, used only once in the film, is a short fragment performed on wooden percussion instruments, which accompanies the orgy scene in the Pharaoh's palace (Czachorowska-Zygor 2016: 439).

Majestic and solemn hymns performed *a cappella* by two single-voice male choirs: bass and tenor, recur four times in the film. With these hymns, Walaciński broadly

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13 This scene is the subject of the educational film *PHARAOH. An Analysis of the Battle Scene* ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ip\\_YF3o9\\_l8&ab\\_channel=EdukacjaSpojrzenia](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ip_YF3o9_l8&ab_channel=EdukacjaSpojrzenia)).

refers to the psalm-choral tradition of antiphonal singing, which can be interpreted as an attempt to emulate an ancient Middle Eastern vocal style.

The composer describes the songs sung by the Jewish woman Sarah as psalms. They differ markedly from the songs of the priest, having a broader ambitus and, in the case of the song *Weeping is the First Cry of Man on This Earth* (*Placz jest pierwszym głosem człowieka na tej ziemi*), a decidedly more dramatic course, which emphasises the emotional character of the piece (Czachorowska-Zygor 2016: 450).

The film's opening credits feature noises that are difficult to identify but evoke distant associations with sounds produced by using extended, non-traditional performance techniques on stringed instruments, as in the avant-garde compositions of Krzysztof Penderecki<sup>14</sup> or Henryk Mikołaj Górecki<sup>15</sup> from the 1960s (Czachorowska-Zygor 2016: 457). We can interpret these sounds thanks to an account provided by Anna Iżykowska-Mironowicz,<sup>16</sup> the music consultant for *Pharaoh*:

Kawalerowicz came up with the brilliant idea of plucking the piano strings with me: I plucked the high notes, and he plucked the lower registers. The end result was excellent. And it all started when, during one of the many breaks necessary to put on the tapes in the booth, out of boredom, I walked over to the piano situated in front of the screen, which had its lid open, and plucked a few strings with my fingernails... (Iżykowska-Mironowicz 2016: 373)

The vocal pieces in *Pharaoh*, such as the hymns performed by the male choir *a cappella* and the songs of the Jewish girl Sarah and the priest, significantly complement the audio-visual meaning of the film across its emotional, expressive and symbolic registers. The importance Kawalerowicz attached to music is evidenced by the fact that he often prioritised audio at the editing stage. This applies also to the editing of *Pharaoh*; for example, in a key narrative moment during the funeral of Ramses XII. As Walaciński recalls:

Kawalerowicz edited the entire funeral sequence to music. He paid great attention to fine editing and spent long hours at the editing table, dictating to the editor: "Here cut four frames, and here move the music forward a little". He wasn't an expert on music, and sometimes he made judgements that were downright funny, but he had a very good feeling and knew what he wanted. (Woźniakowska 2008: 102)

14 Krzysztof Penderecki (1933–2020) was a Polish composer and conductor.

15 Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (1933–2010) was a Polish composer of contemporary classical and religious music.

16 Anna Iżykowska-Mironowicz (1938–2016) was a Polish music consultant.

Although the dominant audio components of *Pharaoh* are majestic hymns and songs, carefully selected and composed acoustic effects also play a fundamental role (Kornatowska 1966: 41).

Character dialogues are the most important auditory component in *Pharaoh*. As numerous synchronisations were required in post-production, sometimes the audio does not exactly match the movement of an actor's lips in the frame. Problems with the correct synchronisation of speech are typical of films from this period (Pająk 2016: 383–384). For scenes where post-synchronisation was employed, atmospheric sounds form an important auditory layer to complement the soundscape in which the character is located, thus providing an opportunity to blend the dialogue into ambient sounds. In *Pharaoh*, the most frequently used atmospheric elements include the sound of the wind, the natural environment, conversations and the activities of the army stationed in the desert. Synchronous effects, which were added in the sound studio to fill in missing sounds that could not be recorded on set, provide the third element of the audio production in *Pharaoh*.

The numerous recorded synchronous effects demanded the precision of prepared sound layers and involved a considerable amount of post-production work. Many of the sound effects in the film are already outlined in the script. A sonic consistency unites the different types of audio effects, which are often similar throughout the film. According to Jacek Pająk, most of the sounds that reach the viewer have a specific role and are composed in a deliberate manner: shaping meanings that build the characters' world; co-creating the space of individual scenes; conveying the passage and changeability of time; and relating to the operations of the camera, lighting, editing, props and costumes (Pająk 2016: 422):

The primary factor shaping the sound in *Pharaoh* is deliberate reduction. The film contains a few elements that sound indistinct, in a way that is difficult to hear. [...] The sounds present in the film are clear and audible even to a viewer who is not familiar with the ins and outs of auditory analysis of film work. It can be said with certainty that sound participates in the co-creation of an integral world, created "by means of purification, synthesis, elimination of everything accidental, colloquial, naturalistic" (Kornatowska 1966: 41). The lack of rich sound backgrounds, the conscious subjectification of the auditive narrative and the handling of silence, the expressive synchronic effects and the avoidance of non-diegetic music make the soundtrack part of a consistently planned and realised whole. In *Pharaoh*, the sound is an emanation of the director's vision and fits precisely into the entirety of the work. (Pająk 2016: 423)



## *Pharaoh* as a Work of Craftsmanship

It is difficult to discuss the masterful use of light in *Pharaoh* – the colours that express the transience of human beings and the world, the decorations and props that recreate original artefacts, the compositional axis borrowed from the spatial organisation of ancient Egyptian temples, and the many other elements that make Kawalerowicz's film a timeless and now canonical work in the history of world film – without emphasising the enormous effort of the entire production team, who were completely committed to their work, both mentally and physically.

From the perspective of contemporary film technology, *Pharaoh* was created as a work of craftsmanship. The huge collection of photographs taken during the preparation for filming and on set by Jacek Stachlewski and Ryszard Ronczewski, now held at the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute in Warsaw,<sup>17</sup> captures this almost literally.

The filmmakers spoke of the effort involved in making the film during interviews conducted for the monograph *“Pharaoh”. The Poetics of the Film* („*Faraon*”. *Poetyka filmu*) and Wójcik described the team's work in a chapter dedicated to *Pharaoh* in his book *The Labyrinth of Light*:

Working directly on the set, I don't think I fully realised the presence and scale of the work of the various services, the enormous effort that had to be made for everything that was required to appear on the shooting location, several thousand kilometres away from Warsaw. The film was a task carried out by a very large team, which was able to work together synchronously and impressively for a long time and accomplish a great deal. Beyond the film, the result that appeared on the screen, we were able to say to ourselves: “We did it!”. You don't get awards for this kind of effort, and it comes out pale on the pages of the newspapers, but it is something very great. (Wójcik 2006: 65)

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17 Materials are available online: <http://fototeka.fn.org.pl/filmy/info/624/faraon.html>.



## Images from the Film

*Image 1*



*Image 2*



*Image 3*



*Image 4*



*Image 5*



*Image 6*





Image 7



Image 8



Image 9



*Image 10*



*Image 11*



*Image 12*





Image 13



Image 14



Image 15



*Image 16*



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## Filmowy obraz starożytnego Egiptu. *Faraon* Jerzego Kawalerowicza

### STRESZCZENIE

Rozdział analizuje sposób przedstawienia świata starożytnego Egiptu w filmie *Faraon* Jerzego Kawalerowicza. Omawia aspekty sztuki operatorskiej, estetykę obrazu filmowego, sonorystykę i warstwę muzyczną oraz aspekty realizatorsko-warsztatowe, wykorzystując liczne informacje źródłowe pozyskane w trakcie ukierunkowanych rozmów przeprowadzonych z twórcami filmu.

Starożytny Egipt był uważany przez twórców *Faraona* za wciąż istniejącą rzeczywistość, „świat odsłonięty” dostępny dzięki elementom zachowanym na powierzchni ziemi lub odnalezionym w trakcie wykopalisk archeologicznych. Przed przystąpieniem do prac zdjęciowych została wykonana niezwykle staranna dokumentacja.

W rozdziale omówiono obecne w pustynnych scenach plenerowych *Faraona* światło kontrowe użyte jako „niezależne od czasu” światło archetypowe oraz stanowiącą jego przeciwieństwo szarą barwę piasku pustyni symbolizującą trwanie, a zarazem przemiany zachodzące w czasie. Analizie zostały poddane sposób oświetlania postaci faraona oraz realizacja oświetlenia we wnętrzach, w tym użycie światła motywowanego w korytarzach labiryntu i w skarbcu. Omówiono także scenę zaćmienia Słońca.

Analiza koncepcji kolorystycznej filmu opisuje obecną w *Faraonie* paletę barw nadającą „patynę czasu” oraz wyjaśnia przyczyny wyeliminowania niektórych kolorów. Analiza kompozycji obrazu filmowego przedstawia wykorzystane w dziele zasady perspektywy pasowej i symetrii, odwołujące się do sztuki egipskiej.

W rozdziale przeanalizowano również występujący w wielu scenach sposób filmowania kamerą subiektywną oraz założenia zastosowanej w rozwiązaniach scenograficznych i operatorskich zasady ruchu po osi obrazu w głąb, która tworzy główną oś kompozycyjną filmu.

Osobny podrozdział opisuje pracę operatora kamery Witolda Sobocińskiego i specyfikę jego zdjęć, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem ich dynamiki i rytmu oraz proksemiki kamery subiektywnej w scenie bitwy.

Omówione zostały także funkcje pełnione w *Faraonie* przez muzykę oraz rolę dźwięku w audiowizualnej jedności filmu Jerzego Kawalerowicza.

## Filmska podoba starega Egipta – *Faraon* Jerzyja Kawalerowicza

### POVZETEK

Poglavje se osredotoča na analizo predstavljene podobe starega Egipta v filmu *Faraon* Jerzyja Kawalerowicza. Obravnava filmska izrazna sredstva, estetiko filmske podobe, zvočno plast filma in glasbo ter vidike filmske realizacije. Pri tem med drugim izhaja iz informacij, ki so bile zbrane med strukturiranimi pogovori s člani filmske ekipe.

Ustvarjalci *Faraona* so na svet starodavnega Egipta gledali kot na še vedno obstoječo realnost, »odkriti svet«, ki je dostopen zahvaljujoč ostankom, ohranjenim na površju ali tistim, ki so bili najdeni med arheološkimi izkopavanji. Pred začetkom snemanja so ustvarjalci filma zbrali natančne informacije in se poučili o zgodovinskih dejstvih.

Poglavje v puščavskih prizorih *Faraona* analizira svetlobo (kontra luč) kot koncept arhetipske svetlobe, »neodvisne od časa«, medtem ko kontrastna sivina puščavskega peska simbolizira tako kontinuiteto kot tudi spremembe, ki se zgodijo s časom. Analiza se posveča načinom osvetlitve faraonove silhuete in uporabi svetlobe v notranjosti, vključno z motivirano svetlobo na hodnikih labirinta in v zakladnici. Obravnavan je tudi prizor sončnega mrka. Analiza barvne palete filma obravnava koloristiko filma, ki ohranja »patino časa« in pojasnjuje razloge za izločitev nekaterih barv. Obravnava razporeditve filmskih podob predstavlja pri snemanju upoštevana pravila pasovno vezane kompozicije in simetrije, ki so se zgledovala po egipčanski umetnosti. Pozornost je namenjena načinu snemanja prizorov s t. i. subjektivno kamero ter izhodiščem pravila gibanja v sliki po njeni osi, ki oblikujejo glavni kompozicijski okvir v scenografiji in motivirajo odločitve direktorja fotografije. Poseben razdelek je posvečen direktorju fotografije Witoldu Sobocińskemu in posebnostim njegovih posnetkov, zlasti njihovi dinamiki in ritmu ter proksemiki subjektivne kamere v prizoru bitke. Poleg tega je obravnavana vloga glasbe v filmu in funkcija zvočne plasti v avdio-vizualni celovitosti filma.

# ***THE WEDDING***

**Lidija Rezončnik**

“POLAND – THAT IS A BIG THING”  
*THE WEDDING* BY STANISŁAW WYSPIAŃSKI

**Seweryn Kuśmierczyk**

A FILM MANDALA  
*THE WEDDING* BY ANDRZEJ WAJDA



Lidija Rezoničnik

## **“Poland – That Is a Big Thing”. *The Wedding* by Stanisław Wyspiański**

Until the premiere of the play *The Wedding* (*Wesele*), Stanisław Wyspiański (1869–1907) was known primarily as a painter, restorer, book illustrator and furniture designer, despite the fact that by 1901 he had written and published several plays (e.g., *The Legend* [*Legenda*], *Varsovian Anthem* [*Warszawianka*], *Leleweł*, *The Curse* [*Klątwa*]), some of which had been staged in Kraków, but without receiving a significant response. Fine arts were also Wyspiański's chosen field of study: in 1887, he enrolled at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts, while at the same time attending lectures at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University. It was on his first study trip to Western Europe, when he visited Munich and Bayreuth, that he became acquainted with Richard Wagner's concept of music drama. While furthering his studies in Paris between 1890 and 1894, theatre and opera were again the focus of his interest in addition to painting. After returning from Paris, he settled in Kraków, where he remained almost continuously until the end of his life. He first devoted himself to artistic painting projects, especially portraiture, but he also prepared illustrations for books and participated in the renovation of churches in Kraków, for which he created stained glass windows (most notably *God the Father* in the Basilica of St Francis of Assisi). However, in his projects involving polychromy and stained glass, he was only partially able to realise his ideas, as his proposals were often rejected, either because of their audacity or for financial reasons.

In 1899, Wyspiański contracted syphilis, which was partly the cause of his death eight years later. During his illness, in addition to his friend Lucjan Rydel (1870–1918),

he found a strong advocate for his work in Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916), who assisted talented but poor artists within the framework of his foundation. In his correspondence, Sienkiewicz wrote:

In a private letter, the President of the Academy has approached me with a request to award a scholarship to Wyspiański, who is an extremely talented writer, as well as being a painter. He recently painted the Franciscan church in Kraków, and his ornamentation is recognised as a work of genius. (Sienkiewicz in: Okońska 1971: 239)

Wyspiański received a scholarship from the Sienkiewicz Foundation in 1901 and 1902, during which time he recovered his health and continued his artistic work.

## Kraków after Wyspiański's Return from Paris

Compared to Paris, Kraków was a small, conservative city, and Wyspiański described his disillusionment with its cultural life and the mentality of the city's inhabitants in letters after his return from Paris. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, local artists and intelligentsia gradually formed new views on art, and Kraków became the centre of cultural life in Galicia alongside Lviv.

In 1899, Stanisław Przybyszewski (1868–1927) published a manifesto entitled *Confiteor* in the newspaper *Życie*. In the spirit of *l'art pour l'art*, he demanded that art and artists be given freedom, independence from national, social and moral obligations, and the right to experiment. In its absoluteness, art is able to portray the depth of the human soul, the human essence that is hidden in the subconscious, that is, the 'naked soul', which should be the only aspiration of artistic creativity. In addition to Warsaw's *Chimera*,<sup>1</sup> the Kraków newspaper *Życie* was the central medium for the publication of the young authors who gradually became identified with the epithet Young Poland.<sup>2</sup> These writers intro-

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1 The weekly *Życie* was published from 1897 to 1900 (Przybyszewski served as its editor from 1898 to 1900), and *Chimera* from 1901 to 1907 (the editor was Zenon Przesmycki, aka Miriam).

2 The label 'Modernism' is often also used in Polish literary studies for the literature of the Young Poland authors, but the concept of Modernism as we know it in Anglo-American literature is not completely synonymous with the term Young Poland.

Literary history places the period of Young Poland between 1890 and 1918. Przybyszewski's poetics was followed especially by young Polish poets such as Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer (1865–1940), Jan Kasprowicz (1860–1926), Leopold Staff (1878–1957) and Bolesław Leśmian (1878–1937), while the prose works of Władysław Stanisław Reymont (1867–1925) and Stefan Żeromski (1864–1925) established a more engaged type of literature dealing with national and political issues, especially in the case of Żeromski. National issues were dealt with in Wyspiański's plays, while the theme of false bourgeois morality was addressed by Gabriela Zapolska (1857–1921).

duced new directions to literature, such as the Decadent movement, Expressionism, Symbolism, Impressionism and Neo-Romanticism. In parallel to these trends, realism and naturalism still retained a presence. Wyspiański began working with the newspaper *Życie* in 1897 as a graphic designer and illustrator, and later as a playwright.

The changes in Kraków's cultural life were further enhanced by the construction of a new municipal theatre, today known as the Juliusz Słowacki Theatre. After the opening, the director of the theatre, Tadeusz Pawlikowski (1861–1915), modernised the programme and, in addition to European and Polish classics (Franciszek Zabłocki, Aleksander Fredro, the first productions of the Romantic plays of Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki), included works by authors from the Young Poland movement as well as other European contemporary authors (Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Maurice Maeterlinck). Wyspiański initially worked with the municipal theatre as a scenographer, but November 1898 saw the first theatrical staging of his work *Varsovian Anthem*, followed a year later by the play *Leleweł*. The play *Legion*, which was published in book form along with the two aforementioned plays in 1899, was not staged due to the complexity of the scenography.

New currents were also coming to the fore at the Academy of Fine Arts, where, after the death of Jan Matejko (1838–1893), the younger professors and artists founded the society *Sztuka*, in which Wyspiański served as the secretary (Nowakowski 1981: 3–24).

## The Play *The Wedding*: Extraliterary Background

On 20 November 1900, Wyspiański attended the wedding of his friend and poet Lucjan Rydel to Jadwiga Mikołajczykówna, who came from a peasant family. The wedding took place in Kraków and in the nearby village of Bronowice.<sup>3</sup> At the turn of the century, the enthusiasm of Young Poland artists for rural life, village traditions, and the simplicity and beauty of peasant life led, among other things, to marriages between Kraków artists and peasant girls, as well as numerous references to folk culture in art.<sup>4</sup> Painter Włodzimierz Tetmajer had married Anna Mikołajczykówna, Jadwiga's sister, and it was on their estate in Bronowice that Rydel's wedding took place. Among the wedding guests were Wyspiański and his wife Teodora Teofila Pytkówna, who was also of peasant

3 Today Bronowice is part of the city of Kraków.

4 The term *chłopomania* or 'peasant mania' came to be used to describe enthusiasm for rural life.



origin. The wedding was also attended by the brother of the owner of the estate, poet Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, journalist Rudolf Starzewski, painter Tadeusz Noskowski, who was a representative of Kraków's bohemia, and others. In a letter to a Czech friend, Rydel commented on the diversity of the wedding guests:

It was a unique and quite extraordinary sight, with gentlemen in tailcoats sitting around the table at the Tetmajer family home, interspersed with village women in dresses with patches and beads around their necks, as well as ladies in their Sunday best and peasants in coats. The most beautiful thing of all was that the whole company, so unusually chosen, was very relaxed and happy, and obviously enjoying themselves to the full. (Rydel 1953: 207)

The guests at Rydel's wedding remembered Wyspiański as a somewhat unusual guest who observed the proceedings closely throughout the night. Wyspiański himself told an acquaintance that while witnessing the wedding reception, he had noticed a reproduction of Matejko's painting *Wernyhora* on the wall of the room. This prompted him to reflect on what would happen if Wernyhora came out of the painting and proclaimed that it was time to fulfil the prophecy and liberate Poland (Okońska 1971: 244).

Less than three months after Rydel's wedding, Wyspiański informed the then director of the Kraków Municipal Theatre, Józef Kotarbiński (1849–1928), who had succeeded Pawlikowski, that he had a new play ready for staging (Nowakowski 1981: 24). The play was topical and interesting for the theatre, especially because of its depiction of Kraków society at the time – artists, intellectuals and dignitaries of renown in the city – as well as its portrayal of Rydel's wedding, which had taken place in St Mary's Basilica on the main square in Kraków and had been an important event in the city, viewed by crowds of onlookers:

The square was bursting with people. Several thousand people stood along the line A–B to the church itself, including many acquaintances who greeted us by waving their hats. In the church, there was an indescribable bustle [...] The crowd was so large that my mother, brothers and sisters, as well as my relatives and invited friends, expelled the uninvited spectators from the chapel and into the church. (Rydel 1953: 205, 206)

In addition to Rydel's wedding, Wyspiański drew material for the play from historical events and the socio-political conditions of the time. In order to understand the play, it is important to be familiar with this context, about which Kazimierz Wyka (1950: 9) wrote: "regardless of the perspective from which we view *The Wedding*, it is a very Galician work, and it is impossible to understand

without a knowledge of the socio-political structure of this occupied part of Poland, a system that is reflected in Wyspiański's social experience".

The territory of Poland was divided for the first time in 1772 by the superpowers Austria, Russia and Prussia. This was followed by two more partitions, in 1793 and 1795, at which point the former Poland was completely divided and ceased to exist as an independent political entity. Kraków belonged to Austria-Hungary and was part of the province of Galicia, with Lviv as its capital. Most of the population in the province were peasants, and the estates were in the hands of aristocratic noble families, who were largely pro-Austrian. The conservatively oriented 'loyalists', who represented the interests of the nobility, blamed the loss of Polish independence on the Polish people and opposed the organisation of uprisings against the government or protests for social rights. These loyalists were called 'stańczycy' after a cycle of anonymous satirical pamphlets on the conspiratorial activities of progressive movements, published in 1869 under the title *Teka Stańczyka* (Stańczyk's Portfolio).<sup>5</sup> Their leader and the co-author of the pamphlet was Count Stanisław Tarnowski (1837–1917), professor and rector of the Jagiellonian University. Compared to the Russian and Prussian provinces, which witnessed intense Russification and Germanisation, Austrian rule in Galicia was milder, enabling the participation of Galician conservative loyalists in the government and, inter alia, permitting the use of Polish in education, administration and the judiciary. Galicia was nonetheless plagued by poverty, which deepened the opposition between the peasant population, on the one hand, and the aristocracy and townspeople, on the other.

The social differences in Galicia were marked by two historical events in particular. In 1794, a peasant army led by Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746–1817) and armed with scythes gathered in Kraków to fight against the Russian occupier, achieving a famous victory at the Battle of Raclawice. The rebellion was later suppressed, followed by the aforementioned third partition of Poland in 1795 and the consequent final loss of Polish independence. In 1846, the region of Galicia witnessed the so-called Galician Slaughter, in which the exploited peasants staged a violent rebellion against the nobility. During this bloody revolt, which was encouraged by Austrian authorities to dissuade the Polish

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5 The name is an allusion to the historical figure of Stańczyk (c. 1480–1560), who was the court jester of Alexander I Jagiellon (1461–1506), Sigismund I the Old (1467–1548) and Sigismund II Augustus (1520–1572). He was known for his intelligent jokes and critique of political events and court life. In literature, he was depicted by, among others, Renaissance writers Jan Kochanowski (1530–1584), Mikołaj Rej (1505–1569) and Łukasz Górnicki (1527–1603), and in the period of Romanticism by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1758–1841) and Józef Ignacy Krasiński (1812–1887). Jan Matejko depicted him on canvas ten times (Węgrzyński 2001: 129, 130).

population from acting against Austria-Hungary, peasants led by Jakub Szela massacred the nobility, clergy and court officials and looted their homes (Nowakowski 1981: 36–45). Both events are referenced in *The Wedding*.

## First Reading and Theatre Staging

The literary wedding takes place on a November night in 1900 at a farmhouse near Kraków. The wedding of a peasant girl and a poet from the city is attended by peasants, the village priest and a Jewish innkeeper, as well as the city's intelligentsia and artists. The guests entertain themselves with music, food and drink, dancing, typical wedding rites and more or less serious conversations. When fantastical characters join the wedding bustle, the individual traumas of the dramatic characters come to the fore along with the national issue: Poland is under the yoke of foreign powers, the possibility of liberation lies in the united action of all social classes.

In the first version of *The Wedding*, which Wyspiański read in a circle of intellectuals, the characters bore the specific names of the extradramatic persons. In the second version, however, the author replaced the authentic names, with the exception of the three girls, Maryna, Zosia and Haneczka. It was nonetheless clear whom the characters were based on, which kindled additional interest among the audience. The individuals who recognised themselves in the play reacted in various ways. The Host (Włodzimierz Tetmajer) expressed his admiration for the author, and literary critic Rudolf Starzewski, despite being portrayed negatively as the character of the Journalist, wrote an objective and, apart from a few criticisms,<sup>6</sup> largely favourable review.<sup>7</sup> The groom's mother, on the other hand, was outraged that the real names of her daughter and two of her friends were used in the play. At her own expense, she ensured that the posters with the invitation to the premiere were replaced. Lucjan Rydel was disappointed with his portrayal, and even more so with the depiction of his wife as a naive peasant girl with no patriotic feelings. He consequently broke

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6 Starzewski's main criticisms were that the play is idealistic and presents an abstract image of peasants and that it takes place in the psyche of the individual characters. The numerous characters and dialogues, as well as the rapidly changing scenes without real action, demand special attention from the viewer and can lead to confusion, thus hindering the reception of the work (Starzewski 2001: 23–32).

7 "Criticalness and imagination, brains and nerves came together in *The Wedding*: a cruel work, like a caustic chemical liquid, but trembling, like a flame, with incandescent patriotism; an original and individual work of a completely dedicated artist; in my opinion, the most important work in the creativity of the young generation of Polish dramatic poets" (Starzewski 2001: 31).

off his friendship with Wyspiański (Nowakowski 1981: 27, 34; Grzymała-Siedlecki 1953: 183).

For the actors, staging the play represented a major challenge. Many of them had to portray well-known figures still living in Kraków (most of whom were present at the premiere or at one of the repeat performances),<sup>8</sup> while others played apparitions of fictitious, mythical or historical figures. It was thus necessary to establish a border between them so that the audience could distinguish between realistic scenes and the appearance of fictitious characters among the wedding guests. There are no prominent principal characters in the play, so even the less experienced members of the acting ensemble were given important roles. Most of the actors were less than enthusiastic about the play; they did not understand the text, few believed in the success of the performance, and they were puzzled by the incoherence of the dialogues and the unusual structure, without a distinct plot and ending. Jokes circulated among them about the play, e.g., "a tiger could walk across the stage during this performance and no one would blink an eye" (Grzymała-Siedlecki 1953: 186, 187; cf. also Got 1977: 228–252).

*The Wedding* was staged for the first time on 16 March 1901, directed by Adolf Walewski (1852–1911), the permanent director of Kraków's Juliusz Słowacki Theatre, with Wyspiański participating in the direction and the scenography.<sup>9</sup> At that time, theatrical premieres took place every Saturday, immediately after which the actors received the text for the next premiere, as plays were typically on the programme for only one week.<sup>10</sup> The response to Wyspiański's play was unexpected: "two days ago we were counting at most on a *succès d'estime*, that bitter consolation for the box office, but the second performance was played to a hall that was full, even – as I found out later – overflowing, which at that time was still uncommon in Kraków on Sundays" (Grzymała-Siedlecki 1953:

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8 The author apparently emphasised that the real people were merely an inspiration for the dramatic characters, and he asked the actors not to try to imitate these people in their characterisation, speech and behaviour (Got 1977: 241).

9 There were various opinions about Wyspiański's role in directing *The Wedding*. According to the available documents (sketches of the scenography and the stage movements of the characters, as well as the memoirs of the actors and other theatre artists), the dominant view was that Walewski directed the play almost entirely according to Wyspiański's instructions. The author of the play also supervised the repeat performances and participated in the preparation of the staging in Lviv. Other sources claim that although Wyspiański was present at the rehearsals, he followed the preparations passively and his answers to the acting ensemble's questions about the realisation of the characters were very sparing (cf. Got 1977: 229–244).

10 Wyka (1950: 7) states that during this period, each play was performed on average only three to five times.

193). Przybyszewski and Sienkiewicz were among the audience at one of the repeat performances, but they were not overly impressed with *The Wedding*. The opinion of the public and literary critics was divided, even among otherwise like-minded people. Conservatives and the clergy tried to have further stagings banned, whereas Starzewski, a journalist of the conservative newspaper *Czas* – as mentioned above – wrote a favourable review of the play, which was published in parts in four issues of the newspaper. Artists of the younger generation were enthusiastic about the performance, while their spiritual leader, Przybyszewski, ridiculed it (Grzymała-Siedlecki 1953: 195–198).

By the end of the 1901/1902 season, *The Wedding* had been performed 35 times in Kraków, and the Kraków premiere was followed by the premiere in Lviv on 24 May 1901 (Nowakowski 1981: 91). At the fourth performance, the audience filled the hall to the brim, thus expressing their support for the theatre in the light of behind-the-scenes attempts at censorship. During the intermission after the second act, Wyspiański was presented with two wreaths. One of them was inscribed with the number 44 (Węgrzyniak 2001: 9, 10), which was an allusion to the play *Forefathers' Eve* (*Dziady*) by Adam Mickiewicz. In the scene of the vision from the third part of this play, the priest Piotr announces the coming of a messiah, a saviour of the nation named forty-four, which remains unexplained: “But look! – one child’s escaped – and he shall bring / Salvation to his nation suffering! / Of foreign mother – heroic blood of yore – / And his name shall be forty-four” (Mickiewicz 2016: 237). With this symbolic gesture, the public crowned Wyspiański as the successor of the great Romantic poets and the fourth national poet-prophet.<sup>11</sup>

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11 Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855) was a key author of Polish Romanticism. Polish literature of this period witnessed the development of the myth of messianism, which views the unfree and consequently suffering Polish nation as a messiah who will triumphantly ascend and save other suffering nations with its victory. Messianism played an important role in Romantic literature, which, during the period of Polish independence, assumed the task of promoting national consciousness and the struggle for the homeland. In addition to Mickiewicz, the main authors of this movement – also known as ‘inspired poets’ or ‘poet-prophets’ (*polscy wieszczowie*) – were Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849) and Zygmunt Krasiński (1812–1859), while literary historians also include Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821–1883) among them to some extent.

In October 1901, the Kraków Theatre entrusted Wyspiański, as the successor of the ‘poet-prophets’, with the preparation of the text of all three parts of Mickiewicz’s *Forefathers' Eve* II, IV, III (*Dziady* II, IV, III) for performance (Wyka 1950: 13). Wyka also notes (1950: 16, 17) that *Forefathers' Eve* III and *The Wedding* share several common features: they draw material from a real event, the dramatic characters are based on extraliterary characters, and there is an emphasis on the national issue, which is not obvious in the realistic scenes, but dominates the fantastical episodes. The differences between the two works are evident mainly in language and stylistics; in Wyspiański’s play, for instance, symbolism is more prominent.

## Internal and External Structure of the Play

*The Wedding* consists of three acts, the first of which is a realistic depiction of the events of the wedding. In a relaxed atmosphere, dialogues take place between the wedding guests from the countryside and the city, while music plays and there is dancing in the background.

The dramatic characters deal with everyday topics in short conversations. The dialogues are often comical and satirical, highlighting the personalities of the characters and the contrasts between the peasants and the intelligentsia. The transition from realism to the fantastical takes place in the last scenes of the first act. The educated Jewish woman Rachel, who is an avid reader of poetry, through which she sees everything that surrounds her, instructs the Poet: "invite here to the wedding feast / all wonders, flowers, shrubs and trees, / the crash of thunder, melodies –" (Wyspiański 2013: 23).<sup>12</sup> In the garden there are plants wrapped in straw to protect them from the cold. The Bride and Groom invite these straw-wrapped bushes to the feast.

In the second act, there is an interweaving of realistic and fantastical elements. This time, the realistic dramatic characters are joined by fantastical characters, or their apparitions, in longer conversations, which are related to the individual traumas of the adult characters. The girl Isia meets the Straw-man (a straw wrap called *Chochoł*)<sup>13</sup> in the room, while Maryna experiences an encounter with her deceased fiancé. The court jester *Stańczyk* appears to the Journalist, awakening in him a repressed guilty conscience due to his cooperation with pro-Austrian conservatives and his lack of national awareness. The Poet talks to the Black Knight, an apparition of *Zawisza the Black* who fought in the Battle of Grunwald in 1410, in which the Polish army defeated the knights of the Teutonic Order. During this conversation, the Poet realises the 'worthlessness' of his poetry and decides to be more patriotic: "I've been the most infernal / idiot, I see. Far better burn all / my futile works – mere shadow-plays! / Now, everything is suddenly ablaze – / hills and hearts one fiery hiss. /.../ Great is Poland's cause!" (28). The Groom sees a vision of the national traitor, Hetman Franciszek Ksawery Branicki, who allied himself with the Russian occupier for his own

12 All subsequent English quotations from *The Wedding* are from Noel Clark's translation (Wyspiański 2013), so only the page numbers are indicated in parentheses.

13 This is a straw wrap with which plants are protected from frost in winter. It has a symbolic role in the play. On the one hand, it represents the passivity of the wrapped plant, waiting for spring; on the other hand, it brings hope that the plant will survive the winter and bloom again in the spring. Polish readers would also be familiar with the motif from Wyspiański's painting entitled *Chochoły* (1898).



benefit and has to endure the torments of hell for his betrayal. An apparition of Jakub Szela, the leader of the aforementioned bloody massacre in which Polish peasants killed the nobility in 1846, appears to the Old Man. The scene concludes with the arrival of Wernyhora, an eighteenth-century Ukrainian Cossack, prophet and lyre player,<sup>14</sup> who differs from the other apparitions in that he is met by three people and leaves behind tangible objects: a golden horn and a golden horseshoe. The prophet Wernyhora visits the Host and hands him the golden horn, instructing him to gather a peasant army and await the arrival of the rebels from Kraków, after which they will go together to fight for independence. The Host is a representative of the Kraków society of artists who married into rural life. Wernyhora entrusts the Host with such an important task because he represents the bond between social classes and thus the hope for successful collaboration. However, the Host hands the golden horn and the task to the young peasant Jasiek.

The interweaving of reality and fiction continues in the third act. The conversations between the wedding guests continue, while word of Wernyhora's appeal spreads among the peasants. Meanwhile, tragicomic disagreements arise between the peasants and the urban wedding guests regarding the readiness to take action for the homeland and threats are spoken:

Headman:<sup>15</sup> "Your stuck-up manner gives offence; / you screw your face up when I speak – / we can't make sense of one another. / Waste of time consulting gentry!" (39)

Poet: "Fact is, we're town and you are country!" (39)

Headman: "You're all piss and wind alone! / Poetry, verses, books and that – / ribbons and feathers in your hat, / peasant greatcoat, colour rust – / but when you're asked to make a stand, / can't see your bloody heels for dust!" (40)

Headman: "Gentry you are best beware: / come with us at once or we'll / come for you – with scythemen's steel!" (40)

Armed with scythes, the peasants and the rest of the wedding guests eagerly await the arrival of their compatriots from Kraków. However, the sounds of the approaching army are not heard. The peasant army is powerless without a leader,

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14 Wernyhora foretold the regaining of Polish independence within the borders as they were before the first partition in 1772. The legend of the Ukrainian prophet was a source of optimism among the Poles in their efforts and was recreated many times in literature, especially in the Romantic period (e.g., Juliusz Słowacki in the epic poem *Beniowski* and the tragedy *The Silver Dream of Salomea* [*Sen srebrny Salomei*] (Januszewicz 1994: 183, 184).

15 The village leader.

and the wedding guests fall silent because Jasiiek has lost the golden horn that would awaken them from their stupor. With a rhythmic song, the Straw-man incites the wedding guests into a bizarre, fantastical dance, an endless wedding circle dance.

As can be seen from the stage directions, each of the acts has its own unique quality, based on the time of the action (the lighting), the music, which characters come to the fore, the topics of conversation, and the linguistic-stylistic approach. The first act is set in the late evening, and the wedding venue is brightly lit. There is a constant presence of music and dance, while the characters alternate in light conversations, some touching on politics and art. The dialogues are short, and the statements are often incomplete, sometimes only in the form of individual words. In the second act, the chatter turns into dialogues and extended monologues, with the dramatic figures entering into exchanges with the fantastical characters. The latter either argue with the real people or give short, terse answers, functioning as the voice of conscience. The rooms are dimly lit. At midnight, the wedding rites commence, such as the removal of the maiden's wreath. The band is silenced, and ritual songs are sung. After a sleepless night, the wedding guests have clouded thoughts in the third act, trying to recall events or dreams. A new day slowly emerges from the darkness. The wedding music is replaced by silence until the song of the Straw-man is heard.

The relaxed and carefree wedding atmosphere of the first act emphasises the tragedy of the following acts: the anguish of the individual characters, who meet with a national tragedy in the third act (Makowiecki 1955: 48–53).

## National Drama

In terms of genre, the first act of the play approaches a comedy (this is how the audience experienced it at the first performances), but with each act, the play gets closer and closer to grotesque and finally to tragedy. Through the text and scenography, as well as the descriptions in the stage directions (painting depictions), the play highlights either heroic or traumatic events from Polish history (Battle of Grunwald, 1410; Battle of Racławice – Kościuszko Uprising, 1794; the loss of Polish independence; the Galician Slaughter of 1846) as well as national myths (Wernyhora, Stańczyk).

In parallel, *The Wedding* gives a critical presentation of the Polish socio-political reality at the beginning of the twentieth century: the division of the country between Austria, Russia and Prussia; the discord between conservative and progressive intellectuals; the bohemian artistic life in Kraków and the simple life



in the countryside; and the apparent solidarity and connection between the bourgeoisie/intellectuals and the peasants. In the interaction between the wedding guests from different social classes (among which two groups dominate – wealthier peasants and urban intellectuals/artists – while there are no representatives of the working class or the aristocracy at the wedding),<sup>16</sup> other social frictions and shortcomings are highlighted, such as intolerance towards Jews (“A Jew, I’m used to being reviled” [17]) and the materialism of the clergy.

Urban intellectuals and artists are characterised as dreamers who are full of talk, mythologise rural life and traditions, and view their homeland through artistic frames, but fall silent when it comes to action. On the other hand, the peasant population is portrayed as primal, strong and ready for action, but at the same time rash, reckless, prone to alcoholism (as are urban artists) and powerless in the fight for the homeland without leadership.

The differences between the classes and the dramatic characters are also reflected through language. The peasants speak in dialect (a stylised mixture of dialects from the surroundings of Kraków), while some switch between dialect and literary language (the Host, the Groom). The intellectuals, on the other hand, use literary language, often full of elevated expressions (Rachel, the Poet). Different forms of speech are also adopted by the Jewish woman and the fantastical characters.

## Symbolism

In the interweaving of the realistic and the fictional in the play, an important role is played by symbols, which open up diverse possibilities of interpretation.<sup>17</sup> The interior of the house in Bronowice represents a combination of the rural and the urban/intellectual, while at the same time containing objects that indicate the noble past and coexistence with the Jewish community. A detailed description can be found in the initial stage directions: “holy pictures”; “wreath of plaited corn”; “a huge peasant-style chest, painted with variegated flowers and colourful designs”; “an Empire table decorated with a few glittering bronze ornaments”; “an old clock with alabaster columns”; “crossed swords, flintlocks, belts and a sheepskin bag”; “bronze Jewish candlesticks” (13).

16 Wyka (1950: 38, 49) also points out that not all social classes are represented among the wedding guests, e.g., the proletariat and the aristocracy, which is why he has reservations about labelling *The Wedding* “a play of all social classes” or “a play of national awareness”. He does, however, emphasise that the play represents an important presentation of Galician society and a questioning of the conscience of Galician intellectuals with regard to the peasant issue.

17 Only a few of these possibilities are outlined below.

The dramatic characters are modelled after extraliterary figures, while their duality is reflected by the fantastical characters. At the same time, they can be understood more broadly, as representatives of the (then) Polish nation and the brilliant Polish past, which also has negative characters, both in the noble and peasant past (the Hetman, the Ghost). Thus, the play presents a critical view of the glorification of tradition and history at the end of the nineteenth century (Makowiecki 1955: 61–64).

The golden horseshoe, which is a symbol of happiness and prosperity, shows the character of the rural population. The Wife (of the Host) hides the horseshoe from the others in order to retain it for her family, but rather than viewing this as an act of selfishness, the peasants regard it as showing prudence.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the cap with peacock feathers represents wealth and importance, but also egoism. The golden horn, a sign of national awareness from ancient times, was supposed to awaken the people from national apathy: "Once you're here – immediately – / blow the horn with utmost might / and all our spirits will ignite / as never in a century! / Then wait the coming of first light: / but do not lose that Golden Horn – / God's own gift to those forlorn!" (33). However, Jasiek lost the golden horn when he bent down to pick up the peacock-feather cap. All that remained was a dangling string, a symbol of the failure of national movements and uprisings. The Straw-man appears as a symbol of national indifference. However, since the straw is used to protect plants from the cold, enabling them to come to life again in the spring, it can also be seen as a symbol of hope for the future. The scene when the wedding guests are eavesdropping represents passively waiting for a miracle, for a leader who will come and lead Poland in the fight for freedom. The dance that is performed at the end by the Straw-man is a symbol of turning in a circle, a vicious circle of lack of freedom and of apathy, of merely accepting the political situation in Poland. Wyspiański's compatriots had not managed to free themselves from this vicious circle by the time the play was created.

## Synthesis of the Arts

In Germany, Wyspiański was captivated by the music dramas of Richard Wagner, who saw the art of the future in the fusion of dance, music and poetry. With

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18 Headman: "Hid the horseshoe in a chest – ? / and never showed it to a soul? / I s'pose she thought it would be best – / a wise decision, on the whole" (37). The Wife's action can also be understood as a criticism of society, which is only interested in the wellbeing of the individual and is not prepared to participate in efforts for the greater good by making an individual contribution.

the support of architecture, sculpture and painting, these arts can be most effectively combined in drama, thus forming the so-called *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the complete, integrated work of art (cf. Wagner 2014: 39–119; 1850). Wyspiański implemented his new outlook in his plays and in the stagings he prepared for the Kraków Theatre, thus significantly influencing the development and renewal of Polish theatre.

In *The Wedding*, the concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is realised in the interweaving of the dramatic text with painting, music and dance elements. The role of these arts is defined in the initial stage directions (the description of the scene):

[...] Through an open side-door, leading to the hall, can be heard the noise of a wedding celebration in full swing – booming basses, the shrill squeak of fiddles, a strident clarinet, the shouting of peasants – men and women – and, deadening all other sounds, the rhythmic swish and thump of the dancers' feet, as they swirl round the hall in a confused mass, to the beat of some song, barely audible in the hubbub...

The attention of the characters who pass through this room on-stage, is fixed throughout on the dance. Ears and eyes are ceaselessly attracted by the Polish melody... a dance of swirling colours glimpsed by the half-light of kitchen lamps – the multicoloured ribbons, peacock plumes, embroidered capes and the colourful coats, jackets and jerkins of rural fashion in Poland at the time.

[...] The room also contains a writing-desk strewn with papers, above which hangs a photograph of Wernyhora, as painted by Matejko, and a lithograph of Matejko's "Battle of Raclawice".

In one corner stands [...] an old clock with alabaster columns supporting a gilded dial with a portrait of a beautiful woman in a dark dress, cut in the fashion of the 1840s.

[...] Above the door which leads to the dance hangs an immense painting of Our Lady of Ostrobrama in her silver robe with gold trimmings on a sapphire blue background. Above the bedroom door, an equally large picture of Our Lady of Częstochowa in her variegated dress, wearing the beads and the Crown of Poland's Queen. She holds the Holy Child, whose hand is raised in blessing. (13)

## Dialogue with Painting

Painting is present in the play both on the verbal level and in the scenography, whether in descriptions of the visual images of characters or scenography that originate from paintings, or in the appearance of reproductions of paintings or mentions of paintings or painters.

Almost thirty paintings appear directly or indirectly in *The Wedding* (cf. Januszewicz 1994). Most of the painting quotes and allusions refer to the painter of Polish national history, Jan Matejko (1838–1893). Matejko created portraits and depictions of figures important to Polish history and culture (e.g., *Konrad Wallenrod*, 1863; *Mikołaj Kopernik*, 1873; *Wernyhora*, 1883–1884), and is especially renowned for his monumental depictions of key events in Polish history. He illustrated the path to the loss of Polish independence through a cycle of paintings entitled *Stańczyk* (the most famous being a depiction of the pensive and anxious court jester sitting in a red costume on a large armchair after hearing the news of the Russian capture of Smolensk in 1514, with the royal court enjoying themselves in the background, 1862), *Skarga's Sermon* (*Kazanie Skargi*, 1864, the court preacher Piotr Skarga points out the capriciousness and selfishness of the Polish nobility) and *Reytan at the Warsaw Sejm in 1773* (*Reytan na sejmie warszawskim 1773 roku*, 1865, Tadeusz Reytan's unsuccessful protest against the ratification of the Treaty on the Partition of Poland). Matejko depicted the victory of the Polish-Lithuanian army over the German Teutonic Order in 1410 in *The Battle of Grunwald* (*Bitwa pod Grunwaldem*, 1878), the victory of the united peasant-noble army led by Tadeusz Kościuszko in 1794 against the Russian army in the canvas *Kościuszko at Racławice* (*Kościuszko pod Racławicami*, 1888), and the golden age of Polish culture during the Renaissance in the paintings *The Hanging of the Sigismund Bell* (*Zawieszenie dzwonu Zygmunta*, 1874) and *Sigismund I Listening to the "Sigismund" Bell* (*Zygmunt I słuchający dzwonu "Zygmunta"*, 1883). During the period in which the Polish state had ceased to exist, Matejko's paintings assumed the symbolic role of preserving national identity, history and Polish aspirations for independence. Thus, the painter continued the mission of the Romantic poets Mickiewicz, Słowacki and Krasiński. In 1878, the city of Kraków awarded Matejko a sceptre, the symbol of a spiritual leader of the Polish nation during the period without government (Mick-Broniarek 2004).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Matejko was an established painter not only among Poles but also elsewhere in Europe, where he exhibited his works and received international awards, although his paintings also encountered critical responses in the period of emerging new trends in European painting, especially Impressionism. The young Wyspiański met Matejko during the latter's visits to his father's carving workshop and the house of his aunt Joanna Stankiewiczowa, who took care of him after his mother's early death, and later during his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, where Matejko served as dean. Although Wyspiański never studied directly under Matejko, the professor noticed the young artist's talent and invited him (together with Józef Mehoffer) to participate

in the production of polychromy during the renovation of the Gothic St Mary's Basilica in Kraków while he was still a student.

The artistic dialogue with Matejko's paintings is present in *The Wedding* from the aforementioned initial description of the scenography: on the wall hangs a photograph of Matejko's painting *Wernyhora* and a lithograph of the painting *Raławice*. The portrayal of the Ukrainian prophet Wernyhora is then realised in the fantastical dramatic character who appears at the wedding with the golden horn. The peasant army with scythes assembled by order of Wernyhora is a paraphrase of Kościuszko's army at Raławice. While the peasants from Bronowice immediately take up their scythes, for the urban artists – the Host – the scythe merely serves as a prop in a painting.<sup>19</sup> Thus, it becomes clear that the wedding guests of different social classes will not be able to join together and achieve a success comparable to that of Kościuszko's army. Matejko's portrayal of Stańczyk (in an armchair, pensive on hearing the news of the capture of Smolensk) appears in the play indirectly, as a literary paraphrase: while sitting in an antique armchair with a high back and engaged in a polemic discussion with the Journalist, the fantastical character of the court jester criticises the passivity of Polish society. The association would be even more obvious in a theatrical performance, which was precisely the author's goal: "Wyspiański sat Kamiński-Stańczyk in the old armchair with extreme care, paying attention to every smallest detail of the position and placement of the hands, faithfully imitating Matejko's famous picture" (Eustachiewicz 1991: 25). In addition, Stańczyk refers to two other paintings by Matejko in his conversation with the Journalist: *The Hanging of the Sigismund Bell* and *Sigismund I Listening to the "Sigismund" Bell*:

The King's own bell! / Once at the royal feet I sat, / the court behind me, daughters, sons, / Italian Queen, monks, priests and nuns, / chanting plaintive benisons – / when suddenly the bell was rung / and everyone at once looked up. / Aloft, great Zygmunt swung and swung / and from the tower his voice rang out – / flying, floating all around / cradled in the upper air – / the very clouds were made aware; / and every head was bowed, devout. / I looked at the King – / and the King's face shone / as Zygmunt thundered – on and on. (26)

Matejko's paintings *Reytan at the Warsaw Sejm*, *The Battle of Grunwald* and the altar triptych *The Queen of Poland (Królowa Korony Polskiej, 1887–1888)* also appear in *The Wedding* indirectly, as inspiration for the image of a dramatic character (the Black Knight and the Hetman) or as part of the scenography (the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa) (Januszewicz 1994: 155–161).

19 The Poet: "If he wants it for a picture, / stand it in the corner, will you?" (39). The Host/Włodzimierz Tetmajer collaborated in the painting of the monumental canvas (15 m × 120 m, 1800 m<sup>2</sup>) *Panorama of Raławice*, 1894, which, like the Matejko canvas, depicts the Battle of Raławice.

Another artist to study at the Academy of Fine Arts, in the class of Jan Matejko, was Jacek Malczewski (1854–1929), a key painter of the period of Young Poland. Wyspiański was well acquainted with Malczewski's works, two of which had a particular influence on *The Wedding: Melancholy* (*Melancholia*, 1894) and *Vicious Circle* (*Błędne koło*, 1895–1897). In the first painting, a multitude of figures emerge from under the painter's brush and move towards a window with a view of the natural environment, on which a woman dressed in black is reclining. However, none of the characters – who represent the efforts of Poles to regain their freedom in the nineteenth century – achieve the desired goal; just before the window, an unknown force directs the petrified figures past. The artist also appears in the painting *Vicious Circle*, this time as a young boy sitting on a ladder. Characters representing the artist's passions and sufferings surround him in a circle. As Wyka writes (in Januszewicz 1994: 228), both Malczewski's paintings and the conclusion of Wyspiański's play with the Straw-man's dance represent the motif of mindless circling, the vicious circle in which the characters are caught.

Wyspiański also referred to some of his own paintings in *The Wedding*. He painted Kraków's Planty Park, which surrounds the old town, several times. Among the best known of these works is the painting *Chocholy* from 1898, in which park bushes are depicted wrapped in straw as protection from the cold and arranged in a circle like in a circle dance. The girl Isia, who in the play "amuses herself turning the wick of the lamp up and down and peering into the light" (24), is a paraphrase of the painting *Girl Putting Out a Candle* (*Dziewczynka gasząca świecę*, 1893). The depiction of the *Girl at the Window* (*Dziewczynka za oknem*, 1899), which Wyspiański drew for the theatre poster for a performance by Maeterlinck, is recreated in *The Wedding* with the motifs of the window and some of the female characters – Isia, Marysia, Haneczka, Zosia, Kasia and Rachel – looking out from the house to the garden. The paintings *Our Lady of Częstochowa* and *Our Lady of Ostrobrama*, patron saints of the Polish nation and symbols of the Polish-Lithuanian union, both of which hang in the farmhouse, were painted by Wyspiański himself for a theatrical performance in Kraków. Stefania Skwarczyńska (1970: 82, 83) believes that the juxtaposition of these two religious images is a literary allusion to Mickiewicz's *Master Tadeusz* (*Pan Tadeusz*, 1834): "Our Lady, shining defender of Częstochowa, saint of Ostrobrama!" (Mickiewicz 1974: 7).<sup>20</sup>

20 The motif of Our Lady of Częstochowa as a patron saint and representative of the Polish people appears many times in Polish literature. Probably among the more famous references is the one in Sienkiewicz's historical novel *The Deluge* (*Potop*).



Other references to Polish and European painting appear in *The Wedding*, for example: Rachel wears a modern hairstyle “a la Botticelli”<sup>21</sup> (17); the Poet likes to watch her because she is “like a painting by Burne-Jones”<sup>22</sup> (22); the Poet describes an image in his head that is like “a graveyard painted by Ruisdael”<sup>23</sup> (20); and the Groom reflects on the rural idyll: “A private corner, by God’s grace – / some tiny spot, the sort of place / Stanisławski loved to trace, / where apple-trees and thistles teem / in the golden sunset’s gleam...” (39).<sup>24</sup>

## Dialogue with Music

The three acts of *The Wedding* contain very little real dramatic action, which occurs only at the end of each act. Apart from this, the play is dominated by dialogues that typically reflect the subjectivity of the dramatic characters: “No matter what he has in mind / or, in his dreams, may find –” (24). Tadeusz Makowiecki (1955: 53–60) notes that the play has a lyrical internal style and contains many elements related to music, which also has a direct presence in each act: in the first act, a band plays and the wedding guests dance (“Just like rosary beads advancing, / dances follow one by one –” [30]); in the second, traditional songs are sung during the ceremony of removing the bride’s wreath, and the dramatic characters often hum folk songs or their variations to themselves; while the last act is marked by Straw-man’s song. Musical motifs also appear indirectly in the vocabulary with which the characters express their opinions and feelings (“When good fortune comes your way, / it’s like discovering a tune –” [19]; “The tone of voice – heart’s melody, / that tone in which the soul cries out –” [35]; “What if the strings should somehow snap – / the music grief alone recall – ?” [36]), in metaphors (“I fiddle, you play bass – agreed?” [17]), and in references to musical works (“You sing at me like Lohengrin / as he serenades

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21 Sandro Botticelli (1444–1510) was an early Renaissance painter from Florence. At the time of the play’s creation, modern hairstyles were modelled after the female characters in Botticelli’s paintings (Wyspiański 1981: 42).

22 Edward Burne-Jones (1833–1898) was an English Pre-Raphaelite painter who was fascinated by Botticelli’s painting (Wyspiański 1981: 84).

23 Jacob van Ruisdael (1629–1682) was a Dutch painter and landscape artist. Among his most famous works is *The Jewish Cemetery* (Wyspiański 1981: 63).

24 Jan Stanisławski (1860–1907) was a Polish landscape painter. One of the most important representatives of Polish Impressionism, Stanisławski served as a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków from 1897 (Wyspiański 1981: 217).

his swan!" [14];<sup>25</sup> "Were Chopin still alive, I think, / he would drink" [35])<sup>26</sup> and folk songs.

The play is written in verse (with alternating tonic and syllabo-tonic meters) and the dialogues are rhymed. The same words appear in the function of rhyme, while anaphora and parallelisms are also common. Overall, the text is rhythmic. The repetition of words, or the slightly modified repetition of parts of sentences or entire fragments, functions as (musical) motifs that return again and again. Similarly, the dramatic characters with their peculiarities also 'repeat'. This repetition on the level of word, sentence and content creates the unique atmosphere and musicality of the play.

## Dialogue with Literature

Among the wedding guests in Bronowice are representatives of Kraków's literary elite, especially the Groom and the Poet, that is, their extraliterary models Lucjan Rydel and Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, as well as Rachel, who is a great admirer and connoisseur of poetry. Their conversations centre on reflections on their own creative work and their attitude towards literature ("Far better burn all / my futile works – mere shadow-plays!" [28]; "Sonnet – or ode – will you be writing?" [28]; "What else but literature, my sweet? / Art ready-made! / In one form or another, in it goes – / as sonnet, lyric, or short-story – / if it's prose..." [36]; "I see you're busy pinning wings, / poeticising place and time, / manor, guests and wedding-dances" [36]), as well as containing allusions to literary works, such as motifs from Rydel's poetry and Tetmajer's writings (the play *Zawisza the Black* [*Zawisza Czarny*], which Tetmajer wrote at the time of the wedding and which was performed in the Kraków Theatre a month before *The Wedding* [the figure of the Black Knight], the cycle of poems *Qui amant*: "but – where love's concerned – a duffer! / Quite a merry tale it is, / but so very, very sad!" [19], the poem *Evviva l'arte*: "I know – *evviva l'arte*: / life means nothing – one long party –" [35]), or the works of other authors (Dante, Bolesław Prus, Ignacy Maciejowski, aka Sewer). Rachel, who "knows modern

25 The character of Lohengrin is known from the legends of the Holy Grail but became more widely known mainly due to Richard Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*, which was first performed in 1850 (Wyspiański 1981: 11, 12).

26 An allusion to Stanisław Przybyszewski, the leader of the Kraków bohemians, and to the music of Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849). Przybyszewski was very enthusiastic about Chopin's music and played it tirelessly during the bohemian gatherings of Young Poland artists. These gatherings were also renowned for the large amounts of alcohol consumed at them.



writers off by heart" (17),<sup>27</sup> and Nos, a member of Kraków's bohemia, are associated with the then fashionable literary circle led by Przybyszewski in Kraków.

In Wyspiański's play, it is also possible to find indirect or direct references to Polish literature. Wernyhora speaks of the 'Bogoroditsa', the image of the Mother of God, the protector of the Polish nation, who is glorified in the oldest recorded Polish religious poem *Bogurodzica*: "[L]eć kto pierwszy do Warszawy / z chorągwią i hufcem sprawy, / z ryngrafem Bogarodzicy" (Wyspiański 1981: 163).<sup>28</sup> Although the direct association is lost in the translation ("He who reaches Warsaw first / flags aflutter, troops athirst, / under Mary's blessed shield –" [32]), with the phrase "under Mary's blessed shield", the translator maintains the link to the religious poem and to the historical role of *Bogurodzica* as an unofficial anthem that was sung when going into battle, as well as on other occasions. There are also allusions to the poetry of Renaissance poet Jan Kochanowski, such as at the beginning of the play when the Journalist describes the peace of the countryside (Wyspiański: "Ale tu wieś spokojna" [9] is an allusion to Kochanowski's verse from the cycle *Midsummer Night's Song* [*Pieśń świętojańska o Sobótce*, 1586]: "Wsi spokojna, wsi wesola!", although this connection is lost in the translation: "All's quiet here; why should you care?" [14]). In a conversation with Stańczyk, the Journalist asks "Prawdy czy Fraszki?" (113), truths or trifles, referring again to Kochanowski's epigrams, which the author called *Fraszki*, or to the collection of epigrams from 1584 (the connection is again lost in translation: "truths – or poets' gems of mirth?" [26]).

The Neo-Romantic elements in the play are complemented by references to the literature of the Romantic period, mostly to the works of Mickiewicz and Słowacki (e.g., the verse "Młodości! Wyrwij mnie z cieśni!" [116] / "Would Youth could snatch me from this trench" [27] paraphrases the verse by Mickiewicz from *Ode to Youth* [*Oda do młodości*, 1827]: "Młodości! dodaj mi skrzydła!" / "Youth, give me wings!"). In the play, the Journalist refers to Romantic poets, to messianism<sup>29</sup> and its actualisation: "those Polish fast-days to exalt / the names of poets sanctified – / rainbows of sentiment to vault / the desert wastes of crucified; / those folklore virgins wearing crowns – / and all Beliefs along with them!" (26).

27 In the original: "zna cały Przybyszewski".

28 All subsequent Polish language citations in this chapter are from the 1981 edition (Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich), so only the page numbers are indicated in brackets.

29 The cult of messianism regained prominence in Galicia at the end of the nineteenth century. Among its greatest advocates was Wincenty Lutosławski (1863–1954), a professor at the Jagiellonian University.

## "Blow the Horn with Utmost Might and All Our Spirits Will Ignite as Never in a Century!"

Immediately after the first performances, there was a resounding response to *The Wedding*, first in Kraków, and then in the wider Galicia region and further afield. Theatre and literary critic Adam Grzymała-Siedlecki and actor Andrzej Mielewski, who portrayed Jasiek in the play, prepared a literary evening with a talk on *The Wedding* and a recital. In view of the numerous repeat performances in Galicia, they were convinced that "since the times of *Trilogy*, there has not been a work in Poland that, like *The Wedding*, was not only literature, but became part of social life" (Grzymała-Siedlecki 1953: 199). Soon after the premiere, certain sections of the dialogues appeared in the everyday speech of Kraków residents and have remained part of the intellectual and journalistic discourse to this day. One anecdote (Got 1977: 269) reports that coachmen apparently responded to the calls of customers in the middle of the night with the Straw-man's words from the beginning of the second act: "Whoever called / had something planned" (24). In contemporary Polish journalistic texts, and sometimes even in interpersonal communication, parts of the dialogues from *The Wedding* have become catchphrases in a literal or formulated form, e.g., "So, what's new in politics, sir?" (14); "Great is Poland's cause!" (28); "Your heart is Poland" (39); "You oaf! You had the Golden Horn..." (44).<sup>30</sup>

*The Wedding* is the focus of numerous studies, and its complexity and multifacetedness excite researchers even beyond the field of literary science. It represents one of the central works of the Polish literary canon. At the same time, however, it provokes polemics regarding the justification of recognising literary exceptionalism and such a high status in national literature and culture. Among those to comment on this issue were Witold Gombrowicz and Czesław Miłosz, who highlighted the pathos, local relevance or provincialism, and excessive patriotism in the play.<sup>31</sup> Despite its strong embeddedness in a specific socio-historical, political, cultural and literary context, it has been translated into numerous languages.<sup>32</sup>

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30 The quotations in Polish are as follows: "Kto mnie wołał, czego chciał –" (Wyspiański 1981: 93); "Cóż tam, panie, w polityce?" (8); "Polska to jest wielka rzecz" (126); "A to Polska właśnie" (215); "Miałeś, chamie, złoty róg" (257).

Excerpts from *The Wedding* also appear in lexicons of literary quotations, e.g., Hertz, Kopaliński 1975; Cudak, Hajduk-Gawron, Madeja 2018.

31 See, for example, Fiut 2009.

32 *The Wedding* has been translated into German, English, French, Hungarian, Slovak, Czech, Russian, Italian, Romanian and Hebrew (cf. Podróżaj 2012: 115, 116).

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## „Polska to jest wielka rzecz”. Wesele Stanisława Wyspiańskiego

### STRESZCZENIE

W rozdziale omówiony został dramat *Wesele* Stanisława Wyspiańskiego, którego premiera teatralna miała miejsce w 1901 roku w Krakowie. Dramat, zgodnie z ideą sztuki totalnej, łączy elementy malarskie, muzyczne oraz literackie, a ponadto zawiera wiele nawiązań do historii Polski, dzieł artystycznych i do kultury.

W pierwszych podrozdziałach przedstawiono przemiany krakowskiego życia kulturalnego i artystycznego na przełomie XIX i XX wieku. Literatura odchodziła w tym okresie od poetyki realizmu, zwracając się ku nowszym kierunkom artystycznym, które w polskim literaturoznawstwie otrzymały wspólną nazwę Młoda Polska.

Wyspiański podczas studiów we Francji zyskał nowe spojrzenie na sztukę, które łączył z problematyką lokalną czy też narodową. Omówiona została pozaliteracka geneza powstania dramatu (wesele Lucjana Rydla) oraz kontekst historyczny i wydarzenia kluczowe dla odczytania dzieła (podziały i niesuwerenność Polski jako tworu politycznego, powstanie kościuszkowskie, rzeź galicyjska). Następnie zaprezentowano fakty związane z pierwszą inscenizacją teatralną *Wesela* i reakcjami na nią.

W części analitycznej omówione zostały budowa zewnętrzna i wewnętrzna dramatu oraz charakterystyczne motywy, które sprawiły, że zyskał on określenie „narodowy”, przybliżone zostały także wybrane symbole. Wyspiański w czasie studiów zetknął się z ideą sztuki totalnej w odniesieniu do dramatów muzycznych Richarda Wagnera, co wpłynęło na jego twórczość dramatyczną. Idea ta widoczna jest między innymi w *Weselu*: w łączeniu tekstu literackiego z elementami malarskimi (np. dialog z obrazami Jana Matejki, Jacka Malczewskiego, z własnymi dziełami sztuki malarskiej), muzycznymi lub rytmicznymi (np. taniec, pieśni ludowe, nawiązania do utworów muzycznych, rytm wewnętrzny, rymowane dialogi) oraz dzięki pośrednim i bezpośrednim nawiązaniom do dzieł literackich lub ich autorów (np. Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Lucjan Rydel, Jan Kochanowski, Adam Mickiewicz).

Tłumaczenie: Monika Gawlak

## »Poljska – to je velika stvar« – *Svatba* Stanisława Wyspiańskiego

### POVZETEK

V poglavju je predstavljena drama *Svatba* Stanisława Wyspiańskiego, ki je bila prvič uprizorjena leta 1901 v Krakovu. Drama po konceptu celostne umetnine združuje prvine slikarske, glasbene in književne umetnosti ter vsebuje obilico navezav na poljsko zgodovino, umetnost in kulturo.

V začetnih podpoglavjih študije so predstavljene spremembe v krakovskem kulturnem in umetniškem življenju na prelomu 19. in 20. stoletja. Književnost se je v tem obdobju po evropskih zgledih odvrčala od realistične poetike k novejšim literarnim tokovom, ki jih v poljski literarni vedi združuje oznaka *Mlada Poljska*. Wyspiański je nove poglede na umetnost prinesel s svojega študijskega bivanja v Franciji ter jih prepletel z lokalno oziroma nacionalno problematiko. Opredeljeno je konkretno zunajliterarno ozadje nastanka drame (poroka Lucjana Rydla) in zgodovinski kontekst oziroma dogodki, ki so ključni za razumevanje drame (delitve in neobstoj Poljske kot samostojne politične tvorbe, Kościuszkova vstaja, galicijski pokol). Sledi predstavitev dejstev, povezanih s prvo gledališko uprizoritvijo in reakcijami nanjo.

V analitičnem delu so obravnavani zunanja in notranja zgradba drame, specifični elementi, zaradi katerih je delo pogosto označeno kot »narodna« drama ter izbrani simboli. Wyspiański se je na svojih študijskih potovanjih srečal z idejo celostne umetnine v glasbenih dramah Richarda Wagnerja, ki je vplivala na njegovo dramsko ustvarjanje in je med drugimi realizirana v *Svatbi*. Predstavljen je preplet dramskega besedila s slikarskimi (npr. dialog s slikarstvom Jana Matejke, Jacka Malczewskega, z lastnimi slikarskimi deli), glasbenimi oziroma ritmičnimi elementi (npr. ples, ljudske pesmi, navezave na glasbo v besedišču, lirični notranji slog, rimani dialogi) ter posrednimi ali neposrednimi navezavami na literarna dela oz. njihove avtorje (npr. Kazimierz Przerwa Tetmajer, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Lucjan Rydel, Jan Kochanowski, Adam Mickiewicz).

Seweryn Kuśmierczyk

## A Film Mandala.

### *The Wedding by Andrzej Wajda*

Andrzej Wajda had envisioned developing a screen adaptation of Stanisław Wyspiański's *The Wedding* (*Wesele*) since the early 1960s. As indicated in his diaries,<sup>1</sup> Wajda proposed to Jerzy Andrzejewski that he write a screenplay in mid-1962.<sup>2</sup> It was supposed to be a modernised version of the play, while still retaining Wyspiański's poetry. As with the original, some characters were also inspired by real people. The groom, a student of dentistry, had connections to the aristocracy, and the bride was envisioned as the daughter of a wartime partisan, who later became a minister.<sup>3</sup> However, the director's cooperation with Andrzejewski did not come to fruition.

In 1963, Wajda read the novel *Wesele 1963* by Andrzej Kijowski, in which the action segments of the play had been modernised.<sup>4</sup> The short text contained references to individual scenes and well-known dialogues from Wyspiański's play, as well as political references and a critique of the socialist system. Years later, in his autobiography *Cinema and the Rest of the World* (*Kino i reszta świata. Autobiografia*), Wajda wrote: "The script was so malicious and obscene that

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1 Andrzej Wajda's diaries are kept in the director's archive at the Manggha Museum in Kraków.

2 Jerzy Andrzejewski (1909–1983) was a Polish writer and publicist. His novel *Ashes and Diamonds* (*Popiół i diament*) was brought to the screen by Wajda in 1958.

3 Entry in the director's diary from 5 October 1962.

4 Andrzej Kijowski (1928–1985) was a Polish literary critic, essayist and screenwriter.



I did not even dare to present it to the cinematographic authorities for evaluation” (Wajda 2013: 136).

In the spring of 1971, in a push to bring *The Wedding* to the screen, Kijowski rewrote the script but abandoned the idea of modernising the action scenes. Instead, the events were set against the backdrop of the native historical context of Wyspiański’s play. Wajda welcomed the script with enthusiasm.<sup>5</sup> Kijowski condensed the text, retaining the best-known dialogues, and decided to incorporate film language in certain scenes with ghosts, which he considered to be “our collective dreams, Polish archetypes of the imagination” (Kijowski 1971: 10).

Throughout May and June 1971, Wajda mulled over the cast for *The Wedding*, prepared documentation for the film and compiled notes on the costume aesthetics for individual characters.<sup>6</sup> During this period, he sought outdoor locations for the film, and a test shooting was also carried out.<sup>7</sup> The Ethnographic Museum in Kraków helped organise the purchase of furniture and small everyday objects appropriate for *The Wedding*.

The film went into production on 12 July 1971, beginning with the filmmakers carrying out a ‘location visit’ to Bronowice (Malatyńska 1971: 6). Tadeusz Wybult, the set designer, travelled around the villages with the set design team and drew on witnesses’ diaries to reconstruct, as faithfully as possible, Tetmajer’s house where the wedding had taken place. Following the creation of the interior design of the hut, which was built at the Documentary Film Studio in Warsaw, cameraman Witold Sobociński<sup>8</sup> carried out individual lighting and cinematographic tests to identify the appropriate colour scheme for the hut’s interior. Outdoor decorations were created in the meadows near Warsaw, and the house was built using demolition wood obtained from an old Kraków hut that had been purchased for this purpose.

Filming began on 3 November (Markowski 1971: 10–11). Scenes were shot in Kraków and at open-air locations near Warsaw (Dipont 1971: 8). At the beginning of December, the film crew moved to the decorated hut in a hall of the film studio in Warsaw, and the first working screenings of the edited film were organised in March 1972.<sup>9</sup>

5 Undated entry in the director’s diary, written between 24 March and 5 April 1971.

6 Undated entry in the director’s diary written after 29 May 1971.

7 Entries in the director’s diary from 14, 28 and 29 June 1971.

8 Witold Sobociński (1929–2018) was one of the most outstanding Polish cinematographers. He shot films by Andrzej Wajda, Jerzy Skolimowski, Roman Polański and Wojciech Jerzy Has.

9 Entry in the director’s diary from 10 March 1972.



On 6 November 1972, Wajda wrote in his diary, "Today around 3 pm a phone call from Warsaw. There is no decision on the premiere of *The Wedding* – some complications..."<sup>10</sup> On 8 November, he noted, "About 1 pm a phone call from Warsaw. A negative decision about the premiere of *The Wedding* – but it is impossible to understand whether it is only about the premiere or the film. They are calling for people to come because the minister wants to convince me personally".<sup>11</sup>

On 10 November, the director learned that the film had been stalled as a result of the so-called 'Soviet paragraph'. The allegation levelled by party authorities concerned a scene in which a Russian Cossack shoots at Jasiek while he is riding a horse. Wajda agreed to shorten the scene in which the shot can be seen being fired and noted in his diary: "I never thought that an Austrian soldier could shoot... and wrongly".<sup>12</sup>

*The Wedding* premiered on 8 January 1973 at the Słowacki Theatre in Kraków and was screened in Warsaw the following day.

## The Film *The Wedding* as a Performance of Stanisław Wyspiański's Score

*The Wedding*, directed by Andrzej Wajda, is traditionally perceived as an adaptation of the play by Stanisław Wyspiański. This interpretative approach is understandable and draws on a wealth of literature. It seems, however, that this is not the only way to interpret the film, which occupies a special place in Polish cinematography, as well as abroad. The final form of *The Wedding*, which has indisputably established itself as a cinematic masterpiece, was the result of the combined effort of Wajda and the cinematographer Sobociński, who made a substantial artistic contribution.

During a discussion held at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IBL PAN) on 6 March 1973, art historian Wiesław Juszczak gave Wyspiański's *The Wedding* an 'ideal' score, comparing it to the notation of a musical form that contains no performance instructions. It is therefore possible to perform a purely instrumental, purely vocal or vocal-instrumental realisation. However, each performance must ensure that the original intent and meaning attached to the work are fully conveyed. In this regard, none of the author's original intentions can be ignored.

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10 Entry in the director's diary from 6 November 1972.

11 Entry in the director's diary from 8 November 1972.

12 Entry in the director's diary from 7 December 1972.

If the matter could be viewed on such a level, I would consider Wajda's *The Wedding* to be a kind of *historische Aufnahme* of Wyspiański's score: one of the possible perfect visualisations of it. As to the question: how does a film (not a 'film adaptation') relate to art itself? I have one answer: at the level of deep meanings, essential meanings, at the level of 'form' in the metaphysical sense, I see no differences. [...] The film is a creative – i.e., lively and perfect – yet reverent performance of the drama. (Juszczak 1973: 144)

In both film studies and an anthropological approach to Wajda's film, the relationship between the film work and the literary original will remain in the background. On the other hand, basic anthropological categories play a very important role: using categories such as space and time, this approach draws attention to the inextricable links between these categories and the presence of individual people – the film characters. This is accompanied by an analysis of their presence in the space that constitutes the wedding night, as well as an attempt to penetrate the world of their internal experiences, in the process of transformation that the characters undergo.

The present analysis of the film *The Wedding* uses the methodological principles of anthropological-morphological analysis of a film work (Kuśmierczyk 2014: 11–34; 2015: 11–29). Following the principle of *syzygies* (Kuśmierczyk 2015: 16–19),<sup>13</sup> particular attention is paid to the unity of content and form, space and time, image layer and audio layer, as well as the unity between the place of the events and the character's inner world, which seems particularly important in the case of Wyspiański's play and its performance in the form of a film work. Attention must be paid to the edifying importance of integrating all of the elements that co-create the film work.

## The Film Setting of *The Wedding*

The film begins with a prologue in which the wedding procession departs from the church in Kraków following the ceremony and heads towards the village of Bronowice, where the wedding reception is to take place. Sobociński explains the role of the prologue as follows:

The prologue says that one day the Poet, an intellectual, takes a peasant woman as his wife. They then go from the church to a banquet hut. Foreign soldiers are training on the side of the road. This is information about the situation in Poland, which was under partitions at the time. It is an add-on story informing

13 See the chapter by Seweryn Kuśmierczyk, *Anthropological-Morphological Analysis of a Film Work as a Film Studies Practice* in this volume.

the audience about the historical time and the circumstances of the wedding that is yet to take place.

The film's prologue is documented until the moment when the Journalist arrives at the wedding at dusk and enters a space full of dancing, shouting, smoke and glowing faces that are sweaty, fiery, passionate. This is the beginning of *The Wedding* proper. The prologue sets the stage as a kind of introduction to the drama that will unfold inside the wedding hut. It reminds us that the action of Wyspiański's play takes place at a time when Poland has lost its independence. It is a story about the dream of freedom and, at the same time, a story about the internal inability to fight to regain freedom. What happens in *The Wedding* is a result of the historical time and the mental states of the characters, which are heightened by dancing and drinking alcohol. It is the Poles' account of their dream of freedom. *The Wedding* is a drama that is difficult to understand by people who do not know Polish history well.<sup>14</sup>

In the film's prologue, the wedding procession leaves Kraków and heads along a road among the fields towards Bronowice. After entering the village, the wedding guests pass a hut with a coffin leaning against it. This scene is a reference to the painting *Peasant Coffin* (*Trumna chłopska*) by Aleksander Gieryski,<sup>15</sup> which has been interpreted many times in works devoted to the film *The Wedding*. But why did the director use such an explicit reference to the painting at the beginning of the film? Was it an attempt to introduce an 'animated' painting into a film work?

One explanation may relate to the assumption that the action of Wyspiański's play was moved to the interior of a cottage in Bronowice, where the wedding of Lucjan Rydel<sup>16</sup> and Jadwiga Mikołajczykówna<sup>17</sup> took place on 20 November 1900. The method employed involved shooting the unfolding events with a dynamic camera equipped with a lens that mimicked the viewing angle of the human eye. All of this was done on a set based on a reconstruction of Tetmajer's<sup>18</sup> house. Viewers are thus immersed in the event, just as Wyspiański once was, having been one of the guests at the wedding.

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14 Based on an interview with Witold Sobociński conducted on 21 September 2017.

15 Aleksander Gieryski (1850–1901) was a Polish painter, a representative of realism, a precursor of Impressionism in Poland and a luminist.

16 Lucjan Rydel (1870–1918) was a poet, prose writer and playwright of the Young Poland period. His wedding to Jadwiga Mikołajczykówna was the subject of Wyspiański's play *The Wedding*.

17 Jadwiga Mikołajczykówna (1883–1939) was the daughter of a peasant from Bronowice and the wife of Lucjan Rydel.

18 Włodzimierz Tetmajer (1861–1923) was a Polish painter and graphic artist, and one of the leading representatives of Young Poland. The ceremonies associated with the wedding of Rydel and Mikołajczykówna took place in his house in Bronowice.

Such an explicit reference to the *Peasant Coffin* may be a form of provocation on the part of the director. The viewer recognises the painting reference in the film and pays no attention to the actual tragedy – represented by the coffin – that befalls the peasant family. In a way that perhaps mirrors the behaviour of the Young Poland intellectuals on their way to Bronowice, the audience is preoccupied with the world of their imagination rather than the reality of peasants' lives. Displaying the coffin lid in front of the house was the customary way of informing the village community about the death of one of the inhabitants and praying for the deceased. In the film, however, the entire coffin is leaning against the wall of the cottage,<sup>19</sup> serving as a disturbing symbol of death along the guests' route to the wedding party.

A moment later, if we apply an anthropological reading of the events taking place, this information finds its continuation in the film. In the falling dusk, right next to the statue of Christ lying by the road, one of the carts carrying the wedding guests overturns, thus emphasising the presence of the boundary that guests must cross to get to the wedding: not a boundary represented by partitions but a boundary between two worlds.

A roadside statue or a cross in the space perceived and experienced by humans is a sign that establishes a boundary between the familiar space (the world that is friendly to the inhabitants of a particular place) and the symbolic 'afterlife' located outside it (a space that is foreign, mysterious and full of dangers).

Beyond this boundary, only the night and impenetrable fog create a circle of visibility that encloses the space. It serves as a protective ring for those attending the wedding, shielding them during the trial to which they will be subjected (Kryszczyński 1997: 33). In a similar vein, and in the event of failure, it transforms into the boundary of their internal imprisonment.

A cottage built on a quadrilateral plan is inscribed in the aforementioned circle. The circle symbolises spirituality (Lurker 1994: 149–168), while the quadrangle is a symbolic representation of the material world (Kopaliński 1990: 182–183). The simultaneous appearance of both figures can be read as a representation of human existence. In this way, the film space evokes the drama of the November night. It is enclosed.

It should be emphasised that the interior of the cottage and the space surrounding it have similar features, which lends cohesion to the whole place of action and is proof of its uniform character. The equivalent of the fog surrounding the cottage is the smoke rising inside the rooms where the wedding takes place.

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19 Perhaps this solution was adopted to make the coffin more visible in the frame.

The night surrounding the cottage – by the decision of the cinematographer Sobociński – was illuminated with a red glow of energy emanating from the interior of the cottage filled with dancing people.

In the fields surrounding the cottage, willows stand level with the fog, which also determines their visibility. Planted along the borders of fields and meadows, as well as along roads, willows are an elementary characteristic of the Polish landscape and one of its distinguishing features.<sup>20</sup> In folk tradition, willows are closely associated with the sacred sphere: they are the gateway to the afterlife, the boundary tree between hell and heaven. Before the advent of Christian tradition, willows were associated with death, fertility and rebirth. Later, they were thought to be a dwelling for evil forces (Olędzki 1994: 91–95; Dobrowolski 2011: 259–261). In the film *The Wedding*, willows – as trees representing life and death – will accompany people, co-creating the landscape of the experience of inner transformation (Image 1).

### Like a Raven at a Wedding...<sup>21</sup>

When, at the village border, one of the carts carrying guests overturns next to a statue of Christ lying on the ground, the character of the Old Man unexpectedly appears beside it. His presence in this context does not seem accidental. In traditional culture, a wandering beggar visiting one village after another, who appeared ‘out of nowhere’ and went ‘to nowhere’, was considered an intermediary between the world of the living and the dead, a link with the reality of ‘the other world’. Although sometimes ridiculed, this figure has always inspired fear and respect as a person with insight into the spiritual world and knowledge of the more complex aspects of everyday life (Grochowski 2009: 38).

In the film, the Old Man represents the Threshold Guardian, and his presence there is proof of the metamorphosis that is about to take place (Campbell 2008: 67). His function as the Threshold Guardian was intuitively noted by some critics writing after the premiere of *The Wedding*: “Wajda, with strange persistence, directs the camera at the Old Man in those moments when the action seems to stop just beyond the threshold of the room, on the boundary between ‘the world of guests’ and ‘the world of phantoms-*chochots*-enemies” (Mruklik 1973: V) (Image 2).

20 The outdoor scenography of the cottage was built in the meadows by the Vistula River, near the town of Czosnów on the outskirts of Warsaw.

21 A reference to the words spoken by the Father: “You’re like a raven, grandad! You’ll / blight the wedding with disaster!” (Wyspiański 2013: 20).

Guardians appear on the path of the heroes who are beginning their initiation journey to test their determination and inner strength. Applying a psychological interpretation, the obstacles personified by the guardians

stand for our internal demons: the neuroses, emotional scars, vices, dependencies, and self-limitations that hold back our growth and progress. It seems that every time you try to make a major change in your life, these inner demons rise up to their full force, not necessarily to stop you, but to test if you are really determined to accept the challenge of change. (Vogler 1992: 64)

## A Film Planned on a Mandala

The layout of the space in which the action of *The Wedding* takes place meets the basic formal criterion of the mandala symbolism: an outer circle with a square inscribed within it (Jung 1993: 87; Tucci 2002: 52). The mandala symbol in its most developed form can be found in the Tibeto-Indian circles. “Mandalas are a symbol of the entire universe – external and internal” (Kalmus 1987: 191); they help with meditation, protection, reintegration, connecting with the deity and evoking a liberating psychic experience. When used in initiation processes, they help to achieve enlightenment (Kryszczyński 1997: 32). Regardless of the era in which they appear, mandalas are a universal symbol. They can be found all over the globe and are one of the oldest symbols of humanity in the world (Krzak 1998: 9–13).

However, the mandala that is used in Wajda’s interpretation of *The Wedding* has a different character. There is no deity at its centre, it is not a symbol of an achieved fullness, nor does it refer to the transformation of a human into a divine being (Jung 1966: 106). Rather, the mandala here is a self-portrait of a man seeking inner unity, an ideogram of conscious and unconscious thought, a symbol used to define order during a crisis (Sikora 2006: 72), in times of inner confusion and disorientation. Its appearance is a compensatory action. Following the concept proposed by Carl Gustav Jung (1993: 112), it serves to bring about an inner order.

In the context of a film work, a mandala understood in this way is a visualisation of the current mental state of the characters to whom it is attached, an attempt to perceive the content of the unconscious passing into the realm of the conscious, and a record of the process of reorientation, reconciliation of opposites (Sikora 2006: 56). It is a collective mandala, brought to life by “illustrating the psyche through phenomena” (Makowiecki 1969: 148), which establishes the mandala of the national drama in the dimension of a cinematic version of Wyspiański’s work.

## The Fractal Structure of the Movie

The film consists of three sequences that correspond to the division of the play into three acts. Sobociński gave each sequence a different colour character. In the first sequence, which I call the dance sequence – full of dynamic camera movements and the violent rhythm of music and dance – the red of the swirling Kraków costumes dominates. In the second sequence, the vision sequence, the calm camera work is accompanied by the colour purple. White dominates in the final sequence, representing the characters' inability to act.

An interpretative entry into the space-time of *The Wedding* requires further discussion of the individual sequences. First, however, it is worth noting that the triadic division also occurs in individual segments of the film. This can be seen in the prologue, in the way the conversations taking place inside the hut are illustrated, and in the vision scenes. The triadic character of *The Wedding* is evident even in the smallest visual phrase, drawing on the arrangement of an overture, climax and final coda.

The triadic structure of the entire film is copied in the scenes, episodes and phrases that make up the sequence. The repeated presence of segments with a structure similar to the whole provides an opportunity to discuss the fractal structure of *The Wedding*.

The film's prologue comprises the exit from the city, the journey across the fields and the entrance to the village. The shots showing the guests transform into a sunless image of soldiers training in the fields, before returning to the guests. This structure also finds its expression in the sound layer. As soon as the protagonists leave the city limits, the signal of the St Mary's Trumpet Call fades away and is replaced by the rattle of the moving carts; finally, when the carts drive between the village buildings, we hear a band playing music.

An example of a triadic structure in episodes of conversation is provided by the exchange of views between the Groom and Haneczka. The Groom, laughing, walks along the wall towards Haneczka. In the foreground, figures of dancing people appear in front of him; he can hear music – an overture – and the stomping of dancing feet. The culmination is the Groom's conversation with Haneczka. Their faces are seen in the close-up, the sound of the wedding party is muted, and the dialogue becomes audible. In the background, behind the Groom, guests can be seen enjoying themselves. After his final words, the intensity of the background sounds returns to its previous high level. The Groom walks away in the direction from which he came, and the episode ends.



All of the conversations are presented in such a way that dancing people can be seen on either side of the characters who are talking. As a result, the speakers are constantly in the vicinity of others. Their dialogue is highlighted, but it is always one of the scenes playing out in the surrounding crowd, which remains visible in the frame.

In addition to the triadic structure, an example of a scene in which there is a fusion of the various elements that co-create the film is the conversation between the Bride and Groom during a dance. As is the case throughout the film, here too the elements remain discernible despite being combined in the same scene. The Groom, walking among the dancers, approaches his wife and says his line. This is the opening segment of the scene, its overture. The climax follows after a short pause in which the Poet can be seen talking to Maryna. The young couple's whirling dance is shown through sequences in which the camera adopts the speaking character's line of sight. Instant camera panning blurs the image of the surroundings and shows them out of focus, much as the rotating people see the space around them. As the rhythm of the dance intensifies, the lines spoken by the Groom and the Bride become shorter and are uttered with greater dynamism.

The scene shows the subjective perception of the environment from the perspective of the dancing people. At a key moment in the scene, the blurred image is accompanied by an unreal sound, played at an accelerated pace. The music played by the band loses its diegetic character and turns into the subjective sound heard by the whirling couple. The dance shots become shorter and shorter as time passes, and their rhythm is determined by the harmony of all the elements that make up the film image. When the Groom utters the words "Why bother? For what purpose?", the coda starts, and the dance slows down. The departure of the Bride, which ties in with the beginning of the scene and creates a stage clip, is due to the Groom's behaviour. The music then loses its subjective character and returns to its normal rhythm.

*The Wedding* is an extraordinary film in terms of editing, consisting of 820 shots.<sup>22</sup> The shortest shot lasts less than a second. It is a chord at the edge of perception, like some of Stańczyk's appearances in the Journalist's vision. All of the shots are accompanied by an audio element. In terms of the speed of editing, some scenes from *The Wedding* could easily serve as a model for MTV music videos created many years later.

The Poet's vision serves as an example of the presence of a triadic structure in the vision scenes. He is in a different room, separated from the dancing guests

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22 The number of shots is based on the movie's assembly list.

by a closed door. After talking to the Journalist, he lights a page of the manuscript on a candle positioned on the table. While the flame consumes the page, the music coming from outside is muted and the image is darkened. The vision forms the centrepiece of the scene (Image 3). Like the other visions, it has its own unique colour scheme and distinctive non-diegetic music. It culminates with the Groom opening the door. The music of the band bursts into the room, and the Groom's voice brings the Poet back to reality. After the editing cut, the colours from the first part of the scene return, and the blood that the Groom noticed disappears from the Poet's hand.

As with the other visions that appear in the central sequence of the film, the Poet's vision is one of the elements in the sequence of events that forms the scenario of the characters' journey to their inner reality.

## The Dance Sequence

After the cut separating the film's prologue from the first sequence, when the carriage carrying the Journalist to the wedding arrives at the cottage, it is already dark. As the vehicle approaches, the band's dance music should be heard more clearly by the latecomer. However, this is not the case. When the Journalist approaches the door, the sounds noticeably fade away. The image of the night and the film's muted sound layer anticipate the moment of crossing the threshold. As soon as the Journalist opens the door, the darkness and silence turn into the glow of a light-filled interior, accompanied by a blast of loud music and the bustle of voices,<sup>23</sup> along with the crowd of people and the intensity of the dance. This is the beginning of the film's main rhythmic line. The camera begins to circle among the people talking and dancing (Image 4). This dynamic gradually fades until the morning brings with it silence and stillness. As Sobociński explained:

The shots were taken handheld, the Steadicam was not invented until later. We also used a special trolley of my design. The way this film was made can be compared to jazz music: there was well-understood improvisation on the set. This applies to the work of the director and the actors, as well as my cinematography. An authentic village band played live during the production. I transferred the sense of rhythm and music to the movement of the camera, which is like a participant in the whole event, it vibrates. A rhythm was created that gave the

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23 The way sound is presented in the scene of the Journalist's arrival was changed during the digital reconstruction of *The Wedding*. The muted sound as the carriage approached the cottage was removed, and its volume levelled.

film its style. The camera distinguishes the characters, shows their experiences and mental states, and presents close-ups of their faces.<sup>24</sup>

The individual rooms inside the cottage have distinctive colours. As a result, viewers can immediately identify the room used for the action in particular shots. The topography of the interior is clear. The dancing takes place in a grey room located on the right side of the hall (Image 5). There is a purple room to the left (Image 6) and a blue room next to it. The room hosting the Bride and Groom is also blue, while the room used to prepare a meal for the guests is yellow (Image 7). The colour concept of the film was prepared by Sobociński.

I did not want to quote Stanisław Wyspiański's painting, his paintings, but I wanted to create a lot of colourful statements, compositions in the film that would resemble Wyspiański's pastels. I decided to replace the brush with light and colour temperature. I used filters, tried to unbalance the colours. I was looking for an image that would be a certain interpretation of them. However, I eventually gave up this search. Instead, I began to shine with colours because I saw a certain pattern in the expression of Wyspiański's pastels that I could only recall. I started the lighting technique by shining; for example, shadows with coloured light. It was a technique of shining and thinking in colour. The shadows were blue, and there were warm yellow lights on the other side. There was also the presence of realistic period costumes, which made the shots resemble a painting in a way, in the sense that I used the colour palette of Wyspiański's art. I was working with light and colour. It was my colour composition that was an expression of the dramaturgical concept of Wyspiański's *The Wedding*.

The decoration was divided into rooms that were intended for specific scenes, which I differentiated using colour. Together with set designer Tadeusz Wybult, we painted the walls of the rooms in four colours: grey, blue, yellow and purple. These colours dominate in Wyspiański's paintings. To obtain high colour intensity, I illuminated the painted walls with sharp coloured light. Colourful zones were created in the frame of the moving camera. All of this together gave the colour scheme of Wyspiański's *The Wedding*.<sup>25</sup>

In the dance sequence, the cottage is filled with dancing, and the movement of the characters is captured by a dynamic camera. The doors between the rooms are open, allowing free movement throughout the interior, although this space becomes more restricted as events unfold. The beginning of the wedding night is dominated by the rhythm of the dance and the red colour of the clothes. The sense of bewilderment among the people and the dense, 'stuffy' atmosphere create an almost hallucinogenic image. There is a kind of "eclipse of 'common'

24 Based on an interview with Witold Sobociński conducted on 21 September 2017.

25 Based on an interview with Witold Sobociński conducted on 21 September 2017.

consciousness, an intoxication that brings as an analogy, for example, a Bacchic frenzy or ‘mania’ (to use a Greek word with broader connotations: it is not only ‘craze’, but also ‘possession’, ‘rapture’, ‘an irrational state’, etc.)” (Juszczak 2009: 355).

“The rhythm captivates, captures, and constraints life, thus giving it power”, writes Gerardus van der Leeuw. He also notes: “the personality is lost in confusion, and the tight frames of the body and the immediate surroundings expand and stretch indefinitely” (Leeuw 1978: 337). The energy from within flows out. The black night through which the Journalist travelled turns red when Rachel appears. This effect was achieved thanks to the work of cinematographer Sobociński.

The relationship between the light inside the hut and the light outside, as well as the change in the presence of light in both spaces at dawn, which corresponds to the transformation taking place in the characters, are extremely important in *The Wedding*.

In the film, the falling dusk and the night are not blue. I wanted to introduce the wedding embers, the light of the kerosene lamps outside. Windows were important to me. The light of incandescent souls, the longing for the freedom and independence of Poland, was born in the colourful light of the interior that went outside. When the protagonists leave the wedding hut, the outdoor light is red or orange. The windows are an intermediate space through which material things pass and mental states, spiritual images, transmitted in thoughts from the inside to the outside, slip through. Hence the warm colours transferred to the outside, the night tinted red. When Rachel comes to the wedding, she emerges from the night, which is red. I started to think in terms of a person’s mood. The wedding is the quivering, warm interior of the hut, which emanates light and surrounds the hut with a colourful ring. It is an extension of the outdoor wedding taking place indoors.<sup>26</sup>

## Rachel

Rachel comes ‘out of the fog’ and disappears back into it once her task is complete. Crossing the threshold of the cottage, she notices the people inside, first in the reflection of the mirror hanging in the hall. She sees them in a different reality, delving into their interior.

Who is this character? She is distinguished by her clothes, fluidity of movements and way of thinking. She keeps her distance, and other guests avoid her. She no longer belongs to the group of ‘people’, and not yet to the ‘people of the drama’

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26 Based on an interview with Witold Sobociński conducted on 21 September 2017.

(Juszczak 1973: 507). She interferes with events and proposes further action. She joins the dance, but then stops it. Rachel joins the dance at the golden ratio point established during the film, which reinforces the significance of this scene in the sequence of events. By advising the Poet to invite the Straw-man, Rachel brings the spectre of death, the guide of the dead, into the cottage (Juszczak 2009: 365).

Rachel may be a herald of mythical-initiation structures, announcing the need for change, pushing the plot forward and awakening the heroes to the possibility of taking up a new challenge (Vogler 1992: 69–70).

The moment Rachel stops dancing, all other movement ceases, and silence ensues. This moment is a foreshadowing of the events to come. The dance, although it continues, is relegated to the background. For a time, it is seen in the background of events that change the perception of the night of dancing. The grey room ceases to be the main place of the action. With the arrival of Rachel, the purple room becomes the central place of the action, and the second film sequence begins (Image 8).

### “No Matter What He Has in Mind or, in His Dreams, May Find”<sup>27</sup>

From the moment Rachel arrives, the camera work eases: the dramatic rhythm of the film determines the manner of shooting. The camera adjusts to the behaviour of the people, who stop dancing and increasingly stand around talking to each other. The transition to the vision sequence is smooth and spread out over time. The doors to the various rooms are gradually closed, and the boisterous party becomes a thing of the past. A space-time arises that is conducive to the individual characters finding themselves: the ‘midnight hour’ is approaching.

The movement of the characters in space – interpreted as a mandala space – indicates an approach to the central place, which is within themselves. The movement is both physical and symbolic (Gennep 2004: 30).

Purple reigns supreme in the image layer of the film. As Wassily Kandinsky writes in his book *On the Spiritual in Art*, both in the psychological and physical sense, it is a “cooled-red” (Kandinsky 1946: 71). It is the colour of melancholy and sadness (Gross 1990: 160). If Patti Bellantoni had been familiar with *The Wedding*, she would probably have added that if it were purple, someone would

27 The Straw-man’s words from the second act of the play (Wyspiański 2013: 24).

die or be transformed (Bellantoni 2005). In Christianity, purple is a colour that symbolises martyrdom, submission and suffering (Kopaliński 1990: 93). The intensity of the purple present in the vision sequence was achieved during filming by shining purple light on walls painted purple.<sup>28</sup>

The space in the vision sequence acquires the character of a closed ritual space. Only selected guests, who will be subjected to the 'mystery test', and the Host are allowed to enter the purple room. The upcoming events are announced in a conversation between the Groom and the Poet:

Death!?

Yes, Death – in Death is Power!

(Wyspiański 2013: 19)

Writing about the second act of *The Wedding*, Juszcak states: "It is a kind of *katabasis*, a descent into the abyss, into the underworld" (Juszcak 2009: 355), being at the same time a passing of the dead to the world of the living. All of the 'persons of the drama' are the ghosts of deceased famous people. "One can combine these two vectors and metaphorically call them 'an attack of the past' or 'a descent into tradition' or simply history", says the author of *The Reality of "The Wedding"* (*Rzeczywistość "Wesela"*; Juszcak 2009: 356). The 'persons of the drama' exist; they are entities with a different 'status of existence'.

If we accept Jung's interpretation, then all the visions that appear in *The Wedding* are rooted "in the same 'ground', i.e. in the collective unconscious, which is the same for everyone" (Jung 1993: 19). After the film's premiere, film critic Zygmunt Kałużyński aptly wrote: "the content of *The Wedding* is nothing more than the disclosure of the 'collective unconscious' of the participants". The critic proposed dividing the visions into two groups. In his opinion, the visions of Maryna and the Old Man are of a personal, Freudian nature, while the other four express a "repressed longing for a national existence" (Kałużyński 1973: 9).

In the second sequence, the images of consciousness and unconsciousness are revealed in the form of visions. This is the primary role played by the mandala, which acts as a mediator (Sikora 2006: 73).

The way the individual visions are presented in the film places them at the edge of consciousness. The elements of reality that appear in the visions are positioned next to the people experiencing the visions. The Poet, who sits next to the armour

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28 Sobociński's statement in the documentary *Portrait in Space. Tadeusz Wybult (Portret w przestrzeni. Tadeusz Wybult)*, dir. J. Wójcik, Poland 1997.

hanging on the wall, sees in his vision a knight dressed in armour. The gorget that hangs on the wall in the Host's room appears in the Old Man's vision, and the crowned eagle, an element of the table, appears in the Journalist's vision. In his vision, the Groom sees dogs barking in the yard in front of the cottage.

The visions owe their pictorial form to Sobociński. Each of them received a different colour characteristic. A white and yellow orchard appears on the screen in Marysia's vision (Image 9), along with Stańczyk's red and green face (Image 10). Sobociński introduced white and red, colours associated with Poland, into the Old Man's vision. The scene with the Hetman was given a green-blue tint (Image 11), and this vision was rendered even more unreal by the use of a wide-angle lens. The image layer is accompanied by a soundtrack prepared specially for each of the visions. Except for the final one, they all appear in a sequence of consecutive streams of consciousness of the protagonists, separated by short cinematic pauses.

The Host's vision has been separated from the others. Although it still takes place in the purple room, there have been significant changes. The intense colour of the walls has faded, and the smoke that previously floated around the room has disappeared. White gradually begins to appear in the picture's colour scheme, heralding the transition to the next sequence of the film. What is more, it seems that the upcoming event has been foreshadowed by the earlier behaviour of the Host, who looked out of the window twice as if expecting someone.

### "He's Not Just Anyone...":<sup>29</sup> The Helper

The Host hears a knock on the window pane. He walks to the window, passing a lit lamp on the table. The lamp marks the boundary of the space where the meeting is to take place. The scene's audio layer reflects the crossing of this boundary by the Host. The band's music coming from the depths of the cottage fades away, and the scene receives its own disturbing sound. After the Host receives the golden horn and moves away from the window, the music returns.

The Host's face is shown in the so-called big close-up. The whole head is not visible, as part of the forehead remains outside the upper border of the frame. This way of showing the human face, which often appears in *The Wedding* (Image 12), directs the viewer's attention to the character's eyes, and through them, to the world of inner experiences. The scene of the conversation between the Host and Wernyhora was filmed using a zoom lens. The cameraman adjusts

<sup>29</sup> Words of the Host from the second act of the play (Wyspiański 2013: 31).



the focus to show the newcomer's face outside the window, which turns into the Host's face reflected in the glass. In this way, the reality of the vision occurring at the intersection of the material and immaterial worlds is made present in the film image.

A reproduction of Jan Matejko's<sup>30</sup> painting depicting Wernyhora<sup>31</sup> was spotted by Wyspiański on one of the walls of the house where Rydel's wedding took place. Stanisław Estreicher reported that Wyspiański told him that "he then asked himself the question: what would happen if Wernyhora suddenly came down from the wall, bringing the news that his prophecy had come true and that the time of liberation from slavery had arrived? What impression would it have made on those present, what effect would it have had on the nation as a whole?" (Węgrzyniak 2001: 164–165). In Wajda's film interpretation of this character, Wernyhora has the face of Józef Piłsudski<sup>32</sup> from a portrait painted by Jacek Malczewski.<sup>33</sup>

But who could this figure be in the anthropological interpretation of the events taking place during the wedding night in Bronowice? Undoubtedly, he is a helper coming from the supernatural world. Joseph Campbell thinks he may be "some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears, to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will require. The higher mythologies develop the role in the great figure of the guide, the teacher, the ferryman, the conductor of souls to the afterworld" (Campbell 2008: 59–60). Wernyhora is the priest of initiation. This guide, "protective and dangerous, this supernatural principle of guardianship and direction," as Campbell puts it, "unites in itself all the ambiguities of the unconscious – thus signifying the support of our conscious personality by that other, larger system" (Campbell 2008: 60).

The golden horn left to the Host is a 'magical agent' appearing in fairy tales and initiation stories. Its function is to facilitate the completion of the hero's task (Propp 1968: 43–49). The climax of the fairy tale is the return of the golden horn (Propp 2003: 179). Vladimir Propp would probably describe Wernyhora

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30 Jan Matejko (1838–1893) was a Polish painter of historical and battle paintings.

31 Wernyhora was a wandering old man, a legendary Cossack bard of the eighteenth century. Whether he was a real-life figure is unknown. Matejko immortalised him in a painting.

32 Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935) was a politician and statesman. He was the first Marshal of Poland (1920) and was twice the country's prime minister (1926–1928 and 1930), as well as a soldier and a social and independence activist. From 11 November 1918, he was the commander-in-chief of the Polish Army.

33 Jacek Malczewski (1854–1929) was a Polish painter and one of the main representatives of Symbolism at the turn of the twentieth century.

as a donor. By giving the protagonist the 'magical agent', he puts him to the test (Propp 2003: 122) (Image 13).

## The Liminality of the Night in Bronowice

The course of events in the first and second sequences of *The Wedding* reveals a structure that occurs in various situations in a person's life when there is a transition to the next stage of life or to another social situation (Gennep 2004: 175). Arnold van Gennep identifies three successive stages of this rite of passage. It is worth recalling that the first stage is a separation ritual, during which an individual or a group is excluded from their current state: a place in the social structure, a set of cultural conditions. The second is a transitional period called the liminal or marginal stage. "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. [...] liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility [...]" (Turner 1969: 95). The liminal stage is followed by the reintegration stage, which takes into account the changes made. It is a return to a stable state with redefined rights and obligations.

Campbell outlines the archetypal hero's journey, suggesting that all myths share the same global structure. It includes three stages: the hero's departure from the ordinary world to an extraordinary world, where unknown powers are present; the initiation stage, which must be completed alone or with someone's help; and the return. The gift that the hero brings back from the journey can save the world (Campbell 2008: 29).

In the sequences discussed so far, one can easily identify the two stages of the mythical-initiation structure presented above. The scene of the wedding party's departure from the city in the film's prologue is the disconnection phase. The night spent in the cottage in Bronowice is the liminal phase, during which selected guests encounter the unconscious through contact with the spirits of the dead. The Host is visited by a helper, who puts him to the test by giving him a task while providing him with the necessary assistance to complete it. According to Campbell's monomyth, this would constitute the stage of completed departure and signal the entry into the stage marked by initiation trials.

The drunk Host is unable to fulfil the tasks set for him by the helper and therefore entrusts them to Jasiek. The initial impression is that the mission will be successful. The journey is accompanied by dawn, silence and rising fog, through which shines the light of the rising sun. The whiteness of the light transforms into a colour signifying the beginning of new life, the colour of physical and spiritual purity, or a colour symbolising death and mourning (Libera 1987: 121–122).

Jasiek loses the golden horn while trying to avoid an encounter with border patrols, the Threshold Guardians. His attempt fails, and the initiation process is not completed. Instead of the return and reintegration phase, the film features a sequence detailing Jasiek's inability to act.

## The Dramaturgy of Colours

White is the last colour in the original colour palette proposed by Sobociński. As has been described earlier, the set designer for *The Wedding*, Wybult, adapted the colour palette used by Wyspiański in his paintings for the colours of individual rooms: grey, purple, blue and yellow. The timbre of the colour palette was closely linked to the narrative.

In the film *The Wedding*, there are no dark or grey shadows as in Wyspiański's paintings. The night in Bronowice casts blue shadows on the faces of its guests (Image 14). The symbolism of this colour indicates their association with death (Gross 1990: 143), as the blue shadows further signal supernatural events.

Sobociński maintains a constant opposition of warm and cold colours in his shots, creating a unique example of this kind of use of coloured light in film. Determined by these contrasts, the colour palette refers to the colour scheme in the painting *Vicious Circle* (*Błędne koło*) – “the stoop of the Chochół dance” (Skwarczyńska 1970: 115) – one of the two paintings by Jacek Malczewski that served as an inspiration for the design of the film, the other one being *Melancholy* (*Melancholia*). It is also reflected in the colour of the polarised relationships between the people in the hut.

In the first sequence of the film, Sobociński uses colours to show the unity of people and space in their mutual emotional and dance-like vibrations: “He controls the palette of possible differentiations, changing their scope and intensity, introducing pauses, creating a peculiar rhythm of light and darkness, a full range of colours and monochrome and sometimes achromat” (Czyżewski 2005: 25–26).

It is worth recalling how Jerzy Wójcik interpreted the presence of colours in *The Wedding* in his book *The Labyrinth of Light* (*Labirynt światła*):

*The Wedding* begins in the red night, a glow that is spread over immeasurable, growing intensity, which stops in red. It is nothing but a reflection from the windows, duplicated by the talent of Witold Sobociński. All of this is on hold and continues. We go inside with the sound and encounter what is happening. Then an extraordinary thing happens. The source of everything that is energy appears: in the middle of the house, in the rooms that differ from each other,

sensationally shown, and in the dance. The thing is that the light from within, the light from this country cottage, gives the light to the night. [...] The light emanates from within, and then a great twist occurs. At dawn, the light of the day is the energy that enters the house. This cool light, with a different direction, enters the house and finds people in poses, in situations that are legible and possible because the light is as it is. The light has entered the interior and immobilised the whole situation. (Wójcik 2006: 128)

The dazzling whiteness that appears inside the cottage after the hallucinogenic night, which may produce a synaesthetic feeling of coldness, comes from outside, neutralising and displacing other colours. It enhances the white already present in the interior. White coats replace red peasant russet coats: the city gentlemen have taken off their frock coats and are now in white shirts. The figures illuminated by the light appear unreal, as if enchanted (Image 15).

Sobociński interpreted the presence of light in the final part of the film as follows:

This film floats slightly above the ground. It seems that the characters do not feel gravity; at some point, they begin to see what they think they see, what seems to be. The arrangement of the visions is the climax of the wedding, after which everyone falls into reverie. When dawn breaks, there is a powerful contrast due to the presence of white.

The strong white light of dawn that enters the interior is a violent contradiction of the film's earlier colour scheme. It extinguishes the dreams and at the same time enhances the remorse of the wedding guests. It limits the physical and mental activity of the intellectuals enjoying themselves at the wedding. The weakness of the Poles is revealed; impotence overwhelms everyone. The windows are illuminated by a great beam of light, which creates a cool, cold atmosphere of awakening. The red melts into steel greys. An image is created of the surreal helplessness that prevails in the minds of the intelligentsia.

The wedding guests are struck by the amount of the unreal light falling through the window. They are terrified that someone is coming, convinced that something is about to happen. Then comes the punch line of *The Wedding*, expressed through cinematic means: I show imaginary images of the peasant uprising, which are not present in Wyspiański's play. The vision of the uprising is almost colourless. Peasants in white clothes are walking in the snow, only banners and scythes are visible. When Jasiiek comes running and shouts that it is necessary to get up and fight, the characters inside the hut freeze as if under a spell; they do not move, they are overexposed with light, deprived of the strength to live. The inability to act is a negation of the prior presence of colour, which is lost in the fog and human powerlessness. Life dies as if someone has blown out a candle.<sup>34</sup>

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34 Based on an interview with Witold Sobociński conducted on 21 September 2017.

The colours present in the film hide one more key to their interpretation. According to Zbigniew Libera, the myths, fairy tales and riddles of Slavic culture establish a hierarchy of colours associated with the formation of the world and the birth of life and culture. In these stories, white represents God, blue represents primordial chaos, and yellow is associated with the stone from which the sky, the sun and the moon were created. Last is red, the colour of fire (Libera 1987: 132). All these colours are present in *The Wedding*. They appear in the film in reverse order of the initiatory process of going through death and rebirth, thus forming a 'mandala' symbolism of colours.

## The Metamorphosis of the Dance

The people stay still, but the dance continues. A dancing camera shows frozen figures that have replaced the dancing people: this is the Straw-man's dance. This image is complemented by the last scene of the film, in which people dance in front of the cottage (Image 16) and are locked in a ring that they are unable to leave, drawn by the camera's movement.

*The Wedding* contains mysterious elements, evoked by the fog that surrounds the cottage and the smoke present in the interiors, as well as the non-diegetic bass sound that can be heard in many scenes. What is their role?

The constant presence of fog and smoke can be explained in terms of practicality. Fog makes it possible to pan around the cottage at any time in a 360-degree radius, and the smoke in the interiors makes the colours brighter, more refined and gives them a pastel hue. The concept of *assist*, related to icons, can also explain the presence of fog and smoke, as well as the unsettling, low sounds used in the film. *Assist* is an ethereal patina of thin golden rays (Trubieckoj 1979: 67), which express that which cannot be expressed through materials or colours. To explain the function of *assist*, one can consider a painted image of a magnet. The steel on a magnet can be depicted in paint, but the invisible energy of the magnetic field can only be marked abstractly with *assist* (Florenski 1981: 131), signalling the presence of that which remains invisible.

In the film *The Wedding*, white fog and the colour white signal the limits of the visibility and materiality of the Straw-man's dance, present in the intensity of the whiteness of the last sequence. The Straw-man's dance is present in the film from the beginning, concealed in the wedding dance.



## Images from the Film

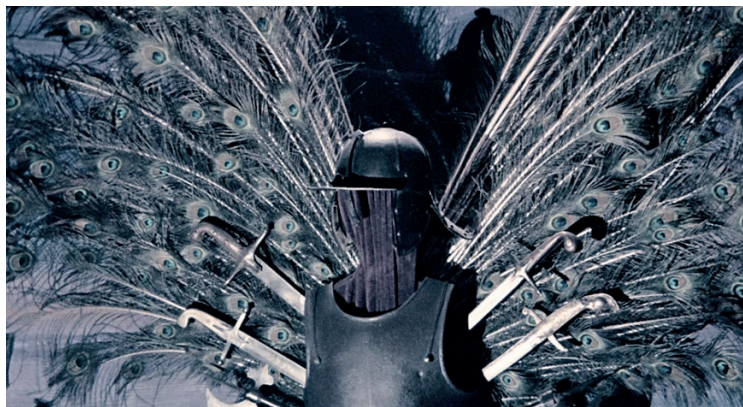
*Image 1*



*Image 2*



*Image 3*



*Image 4*



*Image 5*



*Image 6*





*Image 7*



*Image 8*



*Image 9*



*Image 10*



*Image 11*



*Image 12*



*Image 13*



*Image 14*



*Image 15*





*Image 16*



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## Filmowa mandala. *Wesele* Andrzeja Wajdy

### STRESZCZENIE

Rozdział zawiera analizę i interpretację filmu *Wesele* Andrzeja Wajdy jako filmowej mandali, rozumianej jako wizualizacja stanu psychicznego bohaterów, całościowy obraz treści świadomych i nieświadomych pojawiający się w procesie poszukiwania wewnętrznej osobistej i narodowej jedności. Autor przywołuje koncepcję mandali według Carla Gustava Junga jako ideogramu wyrażającego treści psychiczne w aktualnym momencie rozwoju stanu wewnętrznego człowieka.

Antropologiczna analiza przestrzeni miejsca akcji opisuje wiejską chatę wraz z analizą kolorystyczną jej wnętrza oraz przedstawia jej usytuowanie w zamglonej przestrzeni jako charakterystyczny dla mandali czworokąt wpisany w koło.

W rozdziale omówiono triadyczną, fraktalną strukturę filmu obejmującą podział na sekwencje oraz ich charakterystykę barwną i rytmiczną. Przedstawiono analizę poszczególnych scen rozmów i wizji oraz metamorfozę postaci znajdującą wyraz w przemianach czasu i przestrzeni, a także sposób ukazania zachodzących zmian za pośrednictwem filmowych środków wyrazu, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem elementów sztuki operatorskiej.

Autor omawia obecne w filmie struktury mityczno-inicjacyjne, obecność struktury rytuału przejścia zgodnie z teorią Arnolda van Gennepa, występowanie elementów wyprawy bohatera w ujęciu Josepha Campbella i bajki magicznej według badań Władimira Proppa. Analizuje również funkcje wybranych postaci pełnione w czasie przedstawionego w filmie obrzędu przejścia.

Na przykładzie wybranych scen przeanalizowano jedność warstwy wizualnej i audialnej w obrazie filmowym. Omówiono metamorfozę tańca w kolejnych sekwencjach filmu oraz obrazowe nawiązania do malarstwa Stanisława Wyspiańskiego i Jacka Malczewskiego. Uwagę poświęcono kolorystyce i swoistej dramaturgii barw oraz znaczeniu wkładu artystycznego operatora Witolda Sobocińskiego dla wymowy całości dzieła.

Autor przedstawia ponadto symboliczne znaczenie kolorów odwołujące się do semantyki barw w polskiej kulturze ludowej i ich powiązanie z symboliką mandali oraz metamorfozą postaci.

W rozdziale została zastosowana autorska metoda analizy antropologiczno-morfologicznej dzieła filmowego, ze zwróceniem szczególnej uwagi na budujące znaczenia zintegrowanie wszystkich elementów współtworzących obraz filmowy.

## Filmska mandala – *Svatba* Andrzeja Wajde

### POVZETEK

Poglavje se osredotoča na film *Svatba* Andrzeja Wajde in njegovo analizo po konceptu filmske mandale, razumljene v smislu vizualizacije mentalnega stanja protagonistov, celostne podobe zavestnih in podzavestnih vsebin, ki se pojavljajo v procesu iskanja posameznikove subjektivne celovitosti in na drugi strani nacionalne enotnosti. Avtor po C. G. Jungu koncept mandale razume kot ideogram, ki izraža vsebino duševnega stanja na trenutni stopnji notranjega razvoja posameznika.

Antropološka analiza dogajalnega prostora predstavlja vaško hišo in interpretacijo barvne palete njene notranjosti ter obravnava umestitev hiše v zamegljeno območje, ki predstavlja podobo štirikotnika, umeščenega v krog, kar je značilno za mandalo. Ob tem analiza obravnava trodelno, fraktalno strukturo filma, ki vključuje delitev na sekvence in njihove barvne in ritmične značilnosti. Predstavljena je zasnova posameznih prizorov pogovorov in prividov ter metamorfoza likov, izražena s filmskimi izraznimi sredstvi skozi spremembe časa in prostora, pa tudi z načinom prikazovanja teh sprememb. Ob tem je posebna pozornost posvečena delu direktorja fotografije. Obravnavane so mitično-iniciacijske strukture, ki se pojavijo v filmu, strukture rituala prehoda po van Genepu, elementi sheme odprave junaka, ki jo je razvil Campbell, in pravljična shema v Proppovi paradigmi. Analizirane so funkcije izbranih likov med obredom prehoda, ki se pojavi v filmu. Na primeru izbranih prizorov je obravnavana vizualna in zvočna enotnost filmske podobe ter metamorfoza plesa v filmskih sekvencah. Predstavljene so vizualne reference na slike Stanisława Wyspiańskiego in Jacka Malczewskiego. Analiza opisuje barvno paleto filma, njegovo edinstveno barvno dramaturgijo in umetniški doprinos direktorja fotografije Witolda Sobocińskiego pri posredovanju splošnega sporočila dela. Simbolni pomen barv je predstavljen s sklicevanjem na barvno semantiko v poljski ljudski kulturi, poleg tega je obravnavana njihova povezava s simbolnim pomenom mandale in metamorfozo likov.

Celotno poglavje temelji na antropološko-morfološki metodi analize filmskega dela, pri čemer je posebna pozornost namenjena pomenskemu povezovanju vseh elementov filmske podobe.



# ***MOTHER JOAN OF THE ANGELS***

**Lidija Rezončnik**

A METAPHOR FOR EVIL  
*MOTHER JOAN OF THE ANGELS*  
BY JAROSŁAW IWASZKIEWICZ

**Seweryn Kuśmierczyk**

LOST TRAVELLERS  
*MOTHER JOAN OF THE ANGELS*  
BY JERZY KAWALEROWICZ



Lidija Rezoničnik

## A Metaphor for Evil. *Mother Joan of the Angels* by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz

Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (1894–1980) wrote the novella *Mother Joan of the Angels* (*Matka Joanna od Aniołów*) during the Second World War, in 1942 and 1943, and read it publicly for the first time at a secret literary evening. Although he was already an established author by this time – after studying law and musicology in Kiev, he moved to Warsaw, where, in the interwar 1920s, he became actively involved in the city's literary life as a member of the literary group Skamander;<sup>1</sup> during the Second World War, he and his wife, Anna Iwaszkiewicz, maintained cultural life on their Stawisko estate near Warsaw and offered

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1 In addition to Iwaszkiewicz, the poetic literary group Skamander, which was active from 1919 until the end of the 1930s, consisted of poets Jan Lechoń (1899–1956), Antoni Słonimski (1895–1976), Julian Tuwim (1894–1953) and Kazimierz Wierzyński (1894–1969). The authors initially published their works in the journal *Pro Arte et Studio*, later renamed *Pro Arte* (1916–1919), but subsequently issued their own literary magazine *Skamander* (1920–1928, 1936–1939), as well as publishing in the weekly *Wiadomości Literackie* (1924–1939). They organised literary meetings in the Warsaw cafe Pod Picadorem. While the contemporaneous avant-garde poetry groups that emerged in the major Polish cities after the First World War (e.g., the Kraków avant-garde, the Futurists) declared the guidelines of their artistic creativity in manifestos, the Skamanders consciously eschewed an official literary programme. In contrast to the poetry of the Young Poland authors, which was oriented towards the principle of *l'art pour l'art*, and unlike the poetic experiments of avant-garde groups, the poetics of the Skamanders promoted the connection of poetry with everyday life, simple people and nature, advocating understandable language and destroying the cult of the poet as an exceptional personality who is above the masses of average people. The vitalism and communicativeness of the poetry of the Skamander writers brought it enduring popularity.

shelter to artists<sup>2</sup> – the listeners were not overly impressed by the text. During the German occupation of Poland and the preparations for the Warsaw Uprising, which began one year later in 1944, the public expected a certain degree of engagement from literary texts. However, the events in Iwaszkiewicz's novella do not take place during the Second World War, and evil is not depicted as an immanent characteristic of a foreigner or occupier. Instead, the text deals with the topic from a historical distance and from a philosophical and anthropological perspective (Graf 1999: 93–94).

The novella was published in book form in the collection *New Love* (*Nowa miłość*) in 1946, at a time when Polish literature was dominated by reflections on the end of the war (Tadeusz Borowski, Zofia Nałkowska, Jerzy Andrzejewski, etc.). Consequently, the work again represented a kind of deviation, giving rise to attempts to interpret it in terms of an indirect response to the events of the war. With his shift to historical themes (in addition to *Mother Joan of the Angels*, he also wrote the novella *The Battle on the Plain of Sedgemoor* [*Bitwa na równinie Sedgemoor*] during the war, in which the material is related to a seventeenth-century battle in England),<sup>3</sup> Iwaszkiewicz deals with the issue of human consciousness and morality, which, in extreme circumstances, are directly faced with evil, terror and hatred. The historical theme allows him to establish a certain distance, thus enabling a different perspective and fresh reflection on the meaning and causes of human reactions, and permitting doubt about the meaning of certain historical events (Wyka 1968: 223–226; Zaworska 1985: 57–63).

The first edition of the collection *New Love* was accompanied by a quote from Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, aka Witkacy (1885–1939): “In both angelism and devilry, it is a question of intensity – and this is what our literature lacks”. There was also an explanation by the author in the introduction:

It is true that the events partly described in this narrative happened in another place, under a different sky and in a different atmosphere. The transference of these events to our border regions was simply to make their strangeness more accessible to the author. [...] I found a certain charm in these fragments and gaps. (Witkiewicz in: Melikowski 1997: 47)

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- 2 The artists' meetings, readings, recitals and discussions in Stawisko continued after the war, as well. From the 1950s onwards, Iwaszkiewicz held important positions in the literary field (from 1953, he was the chief editor of the literary journal *Twórczość*, and from 1959, he served as the president of the Polish Writers' Association), so his support meant a kind of springboard for young writers. He continued to create literary works until his death, publishing several poetry collections and writing novels, short prose, plays, essays and treatises, as well as translating.
  - 3 Although these novellas do not address the war directly, Iwaszkiewicz did not avoid topics related to the Second World War in his works, e.g., in the novellas *The Mill on the Lutynia* (*Młyn nad Lutynią*) and *The Old Brickyard* (*Stara cegielnia*).



## Loudun and Ludyń: Chronotope

As Iwaszkiewicz explained in the introduction to the first edition, the material for the story was taken from real events. In the Ursuline convent in the French town of Loudun in 1633, several cases of possession appeared among the nuns. Their unusual behaviour gave rise to different interpretations: in addition to the opinion that the nuns were possessed by the devil, there was also conjecture about a psychological or political background. A local priest, Urbain Grandier, was said to be a political and personal opponent of Cardinal Richelieu, and the nuns' possession was apparently feigned until Grandier's conviction and death at the stake<sup>4</sup> (Graf 1999: 109).

Iwaszkiewicz transferred the plot to the fictitious town of Ludyń in the then eastern border region of Poland near Smolensk. Father Józef Suryn, a Jesuit and exorcist, is sent to Ludyń with the task of expelling the demons from the Ursuline sisters. He dedicates himself most intensively to the exorcism of the convent's mother superior, Mother Joan of the Angels. In performing the exorcism, he realises that the mother superior will only be cured if he takes the possession upon himself. In order to prove to Satan that he has surrendered to him completely, Suryn murders two farmhands with an axe.

The literary Ludyń is a small town with an Ursuline convent built in 1611. Surrounded by forests and marshes, this sparsely populated town is located far from the main roads and has only a small Catholic community. The muddy and dark streets, in which goats and pigs are wandering, are lined with damp wooden houses. Suryn had no desire to come to this place. While the local residents do not seem to be bothered by the town's image and atmosphere, it makes Suryn feel uneasy and reinforces his sense of alienation. From his small monastic cell, which protected him from the outside world, he has come to a secluded place where the inquisitive inhabitants follow his every step in anticipation of what will happen. In the monastery, he was able to control the inexplicable evil that he felt deep inside, but in Ludyń, he finds himself in an unknown, unfriendly environment. The unpleasant image of the literary space enhances the tension in the narrative, which is created by the flowing dialogues and emphasised motives, as well as the suspense and horror of the plot. Father Suryn is sent to Ludyń because he is regarded as an experienced exorcist. He sets

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4 The possession of the nuns in Loudun also provided material for later works, e.g., Aldous Huxley's novel *The Devils of Loudun* (1952), John Whiting's play *The Devils* (1960), Krzysztof Penderecki's opera *The Devils of Loudun* (1969) and Ken Russell's film adaptation *The Devils* (1971).

off in early September and spends a few weeks in the town. The narrative condenses the key events of these weeks, which turn out to be fateful for his psyche and his future life. It emerges that he, too, is weak, emotional, prone to fluctuating moods and afraid of loneliness. In a brief analepsis, the reader learns that Suryn entered the monastery at a very young age to fill the void left by the loss of his mother. He has little experience of life outside the monastery walls, and he overcomes his psychological anguish with physical self-punishment. He is troubled by the fact that he constantly witnesses evil around him, and even more so that he feels the germ of evil within himself. These feelings are exacerbated by the events in Ludyń, until he finally concludes a pact with the devil.<sup>5</sup>

## Demons, Human Nature or Personal Trauma?

Suryn's external and internal tragedy merely represents the overarching layer of the plot, serving as a framework for the moral, social and religious conflicts exposed or merely hinted at in the novella. Probably the central question is who or what is possessing the Ursuline sisters.

The local community and wider society accept the fact that the nuns have been possessed by the devil. This interpretation is also confirmed by the Church, at least officially.<sup>6</sup> The demons possessing the sisters cause them to behave strangely: screaming, howling, contorting their bodies, climbing around the church, giving terrifying looks or lustfully obeying the orders of the priests, falling to the ground in front of the Holy of Holies, licking the altar steps, etc. In this respect, the lead is taken by Mother Joan of the Angels, the mother superior of the convent, who claims to be possessed by eight demons. The most horrific scenes occur during the public exorcism, which is performed – largely unsuccessfully – by four priests who reside permanently in the convent. Not only are the parishioners permitted to be present at the exorcisms, but other people travel to the ceremonies

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5 The motif of a pact with the devil, which is familiar from the legend of Faust and was made famous by Goethe's *Faust*, is explored by Thomas Mann in a similar way to Iwaszkiewicz in the novel *Doctor Faustus* (1947). Both works were written during the Second World War and published after its conclusion. Unlike in Iwaszkiewicz's novella, where evil is immanent to man, nature and history, the central character in Mann's novel decides freely to cooperate with the devil (Melikowski 1997: 54, 55).

6 Some representatives of the Church are critical of this interpretation: "Father Brym looked at the sickly frowning forehead for some time, as if he was considering whether to say what he thought. He finally made up his mind. 'Unless there are no devils there at all!'" (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 35). Even among the visitors to the inn in Ludyń, there are vague rumours about other possible causes of the possession.

from afar, including the most important public figures, even Prince Jakub. Priest Lactantius is convinced that “if the people see the devil, their belief in God and the Catholic Church is reinforced” (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 34). For the people, a visit to Ludyn represents a pilgrimage that includes a special performance, like going to a fair or the theatre, only the performance is more terrifying. For the surrounding innkeepers and merchants, the event is a source of income.

In this regard, certain questions arise concerning:

- social morals (Does society have such low moral values that watching the suffering of the sisters is considered acceptable? How is it that they are not outraged by the groundless death sentence pronounced against Priest Garniec? Why do the local people fail to take any action when they suspect that the possession is feigned?),
- weariness (Isn't it enough for the people to relax by attending fairs, theatres or other events or do they need a performance with more intensity?),
- profiteering (Doesn't earning money at the expense of the possessed sisters seem problematic to the people?).

On the other hand, issues arise regarding:

- the morality of Church institutions (Are the sisters really possessed by the devil, or is the Church merely taking advantage of the strange – possibly feigned – situation in the convent to gain believers or strengthen their faith, warn against sins, strengthen the patriarchy and enhance the reputation of the convent?),
- the cooperation between the Church and the secular authorities (Did Prince Jakub come to the exorcism ceremony in order to attract even more visitors with his participation, thereby giving additional weight to the event?<sup>7</sup> Was Priest Garniec convicted for alleged sins, i.e., witchcraft, or for the fact that the queen did not like him?).<sup>8</sup>

It may be that the sisters are not possessed by demons at all, and their behaviour is due to their own psychological anguish and fears, traumas from childhood,

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<sup>7</sup> It turns out that Prince Jakub is not interested in the event at all; he even yawns during the most terrifying scenes of the exorcisms in the church. The question is whether he is so tired of various performances that even an event like this does not shock him, or perhaps he has been informed that the possession is only feigned. Apparently, he actually came to Ludyn due to financial dealings with Jews.

<sup>8</sup> “[T]he queen did not like that dog because he barked too much” (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 52).

the strict rules of monastic life, erotic longings, malice or arrogance, and desire for recognition. "Is this perhaps merely man's inherent nature?" (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 95), as the rabbi from Ludyń asks.

On arriving in Ludyń, Suryń is surprised by the way of life in the convent: the sisters do not live in a completely monastic cloister; in addition to the priests, other men live among them (a stoker and an organist), who help them and spy on them secretly when the opportunity arises. Among other things, the men slaughter animals for the sisters, betraying the fact that they eat meat, which is contrary to Suryń's expectations. The former town priest, Urban Garniec, is said to have visited the sisters in their dreams and encouraged them to sin; it is because of him that the sisters ran around the garden naked. However, it is more likely that the sisters sought erotic experiences with the attractive priest and later accused him of witchcraft because he refused them.<sup>9</sup> The bishop therefore issued a verdict to punish Priest Garniec by burning him at the stake, a ceremony that was also probably a kind of performance for the people.<sup>10</sup>

The only sister at the convent who does not show signs of possession is Sister Małgorzata. She is also the only one who is known to break the convent's cloister from time to time by sneaking out to the inn to chat with the female innkeeper, as well as with the guests, and "perhaps it was precisely for this reason that Sister Małgorzata did not seek other changes, did not have visions, and avoided attention-grabbing incidents in general" (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 49). Could it be that the other sisters are no longer able to live according to the strict monastic rules and their psychological anguish manifests itself in the so-called possession? Mother Joan of the Angels begs Suryń: "You have to save me from the abyss of this loneliness... into which God has thrown me..." (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 44). Or are the nuns simply justifying their sins and desires with their possession? The male literary characters, in particular, see them through the stereotype of the woman who is sinful by nature, who is the source of evil (Father Brym) and destined to suffer (the rabbi).

Several of the literary characters have endured childhood traumas. Suryń, in particular, resorts to his childhood memories in the most difficult moments.

9 Father Brym: "[I] think that these sisters really wanted Garniec to come to them, and that they became obsessed with these desires" (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 33). At the same time, Suryń also learns that Garniec "was not exactly a saint", as he violated celibacy and had two children with a girl from the town.

10 "But he squealed like a pig"; "'The clothes themselves burn first and the man remains naked', explained Odryń matter-of-factly" (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 23). Similarly, the arrival of Suryń in Ludyń represents a new attraction for the people. Father Brym remarks to Suryń: "It is thanks to you, Father, that there is such a crowd" (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 38).

His father beat him as a child, but he found refuge with his mother. His trauma began at the age of thirteen when his widowed mother abandoned him and entered a Carmelite convent. Mother Joan of the Angels, the daughter of a wealthy man from the Smolensk area, is humpbacked. Due to her physical disability, she could not fulfil her father's vision of an ideal daughter, and subsequently a wife and mother, which was most likely the reason she had to enter a convent. Sister Małgorzata's poem also tells of the hardships and fears of girls: "My beloved mother, / I will be a nun! / Because I do not want to wed / with the first one I get! // With a cane, my husband would / drive me on, / so that he would not kill me... / I would rather be a nun." (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 55).

Mother Joan of the Angels is also driven by a strong desire for recognition. She wants to become a saint but realises that this is beyond her reach. Her fear of becoming just another bored nun is so great that she surrenders to the devil or feigns possession and finds her fame in this way. She is proud of the fact that of all the nuns in the monastery, she is possessed by the most demons and is the most renowned. The fact that her actions lead to Priest Garniec being wrongly accused, leaving his two children orphaned, and that she will also ruin Suryn, is of no consequence to her.

## The Rabbi and the Jewish Community

In addition to the tragedy of the individual literary characters, the novella highlights the issue of the cohabitation of the Polish and Jewish communities. The Jews and the Catholics in Ludyń do not mix, even though they have similar concerns: there are cases of possession in both communities. Rabbi Reb Ishe takes care of exorcism in the Jewish community. After the failure of his exorcisms, a desperate Father Suryn crosses the border between the two communities and approaches the rabbi to talk about demons. The conversation is full of tension, despite the fact that the two men have common concerns regarding the creation of the world and the meaning of suffering: "But if the world was created by God, then why is there so much evil in it? Death, disease and armies? Why is he persecuting us Jews? [...] Why do they kill our sons, defile our daughters?" (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 97).

The attempt at cooperation between the two communities fails to bear fruit. The rabbi is indignant that the priest, who has previously avoided him, has the nerve to turn to him for advice when he can no longer see a way out himself, expecting immediate and unconditional assistance. On the other hand, Suryn's already battered psyche is finally destroyed by the meeting: it is just after the

rabbi's visit that he realises that the demons have taken possession of him.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, his ears are ringing with the rabbi's statement "I am you – you are me!" (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 100), which remains unexplained.

## Internal Form of the Novella

In terms of its internal form, the novella follows a mirror scheme and gains coherence from repeated motifs. It starts and ends in the inn of the Roma woman Awdosia on the route to and from Ludyń. In both the Ludyń inn and the Roma's inn, the revelry is interrupted when Suryń enters. In the entrance hall of the Roma's inn, Suryń almost trips over an axe, and on his return from Ludyń a few weeks later, he takes the axe from the same place. It is here that Suryń first meets the traveller Wołodkowicz, who accompanies the priest to the town and then observes him constantly from the background during his stay. After Suryń's failed mission at the convent, he is again joined by Wołodkowicz as he leaves the town.

The motif of the axe is emphasised several more times: the monastery stoker explains to Suryń that it is his job to chop firewood, and Suryń recalls his youth and the family farmhand Mykita, who was killed with an axe by an enraged peasant. After arriving in Ludyń, the farmhands Kaziuk and Juraj talk before going to bed about the existence of the devil and about Juraj's fears that he will be possessed by the devil and kill his hated father with an axe.

Other key motifs are repeated in a similar way: during the farmhands' conversation, bells ring in the background, and Kaziuk explains that they are tolled by order of the Ludyń bishop to warn travellers wandering in the forest against wolves. The conversation about the devil, possession, Juraj's father and the tolling of the bell for wandering travellers is repeated in the inn stable before the death of the two farmhands. The motif of the forest and wolves appears several more times: when Suryń is shaken by the unsuccessful exorcism of the devil, Father Brym advises him to take a walk in the forest; Suryń observes the children's game "hunting and scaring away the wolves",<sup>12</sup> which he does not understand; and when Suryń sets out for the forest, he meets Kaziuk on the way, who warns him against the "wolf" Wołodkowicz.

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11 While Wołodkowicz and Suryń are climbing to the rabbi's quarters, the former makes a meaningful remark: "What brazen stairs these are! I suppose they lead to hell!" (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 93).

12 In the game, two children imagine wolves that frighten Krysia, while her brother Alunio goes on an imaginary hunt.

## The Ambiguity of the Literary Characters

On reading the novella, the question arises as to the real identity of Wincenty Wołodkowicz. He presents himself as a poor nobleman who travels from place to place, as he is struggling to survive on his own estate. However, the character of Wołodkowicz remains unclear. His external appearance is unusual (small, hamster-like, stubby teeth, purple gums, large black eyes, black vulture-like fingers, etc.), and his behaviour is intrusive. After meeting Suryn in the Roma's inn, he constantly lurks around him and questions him. When Suryn makes the sign of the cross in front of Wołodkowicz, the traveller jumps away in fear. Wołodkowicz is interested in all of the rumours circulating in Ludyń, especially those about sin and adultery, and he encourages Sister Małgorzata to drink and socialise with men, as well as helping her to escape from the convent. In the Roma's inn, Wołodkowicz points out the axe to Suryn when he stumbles upon it in the dark. Moreover, it is Wołodkowicz who takes Suryn to the rabbi for a talk, after which the Jesuit's possession by Satan is complete. Is Wołodkowicz really just an intrusive nobleman? Could he be an assistant to the devil leading Suryn into a trap? Is he perhaps even the devil himself in human form?

What really happened to Father Suryn in Ludyń? Did he fall in love with Mother Joan of the Angels and become possessed because of the sin he had committed? What happened between them during the exorcisms in the attic? Did he kill the two farmhands simply to prove to the devil that he had truly and completely surrendered himself to him? Why did Suryn choose the farmhands Kaziuk and Juraj as his victims, when they were among the few people for whom he had felt any affection during his visit to Ludyń? Was it just because they were without sin and – so the priest believed – would therefore go to heaven in any case? Was Suryn's possession actually due to his own traumas and fears, with the events in Ludyń only fuelling his mental crisis? Speaking to Suryn, the rabbi remarked: "But all of the evil that a person commits does not explain the evil that torments one" (Iwaszkiewicz 1965: 97). Suryn learned this lesson himself after his own crime, when the demons returned to the mother superior and possessed her again. His sacrifice was in vain.

## A Metaphor for Evil

Just a few years after Suryn's departure, Mother Joan of the Angels recovered and subsequently led the monastery until her death. Sister Małgorzata returned to Ludyń after her elopement and affair with Chrząszczewski and became



one of the most pious and industrious nuns at the convent. The farmhands Kaziuk and Juraj were buried, and Father Suryń was most likely taken back to his monastery cell by the provincial minister.

The tragic external events in Ludyń more or less successfully draw to a conclusion or settle down. However, the question of the inner hardship and anguish of the literary characters remains unresolved, as does the question of the possibility of individual decision-making about one's own life, and the moral, social and philosophical questions raised by the novella. Iwaszkiewicz presented various theological and philosophical views on the ontology of evil. Evil exists as a magical force embodied in the devil or demons. It is the opposite of God. The devil takes possession of weak and sinful individuals and through them proliferates his power. Evil can be the opposite of good or it can be innate to a person, but its development depends on the individual and on the social, political and ideological conditions that affect him or her. It can be a reflection of weakness and the result of manipulation, but as long as a person has free will, he or she also has the possibility of making a conscious decision to accept or reject evil (Graf 1999: 95). In addition, the novella addresses the problem of the acceptance of evil, highlighting social passivity and the toleration of evil as part of, or even an enrichment of, everyday life. It suggests several possibilities for combatting evil: firm faith and theological knowledge, perseverance, kindness, love or a moral decision.

As a metaphor for the evil concealed in the human soul and in the history of mankind (Melikowski 1997: 55), the novella *Mother Joan of the Angels* raises questions and encourages reflection, but it does not offer simple or definitive answers:

The meaning of this superb work nonetheless remains multifaceted and cannot be captured in a single form. For all its artistic excellence, this experience is served in small doses, in a form prior to final crystallisation. The final decision is thus left to the reader, but I doubt he will succeed in unravelling it. (Wyka 1968: 233, 234)

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## Metafora zła. *Matka Joanna od Aniołów* Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza

### STRESZCZENIE

Rozdział omawia opowiadanie pt. *Matka Joanna od Aniołów*, które Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz napisał w czasie II wojny światowej, a które w wydaniu książkowym ukazało się w Polsce w 1946 roku. Utwór koncentruje się na problemie obecności zła w człowieku, który nie jest bezpośrednio związany z wojną, ale zostaje ukazany z dystansu historycznego oraz w perspektywie filozoficznej i antropologicznej.

Iwaszkiewicz wykorzystuje wydarzenia historyczne: w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku, w klasztorze sióstr urszulanek we francuskim mieście Loudun, doszło do głośniejszych przypadków opętania zakonnic przez złe duchy. Miejsce akcji opowiadania przeniesione zostało do Polski, na tereny położone przy ówczesnej wschodniej granicy (Smoleńszczyzna), natomiast czas akcji to nadal wiek XVII.

Analiza czasoprzestrzeni i fabuły ujawnia głębsze warstwy znaczeniowe opowiadania, gdyż główny wątek tragedii księdza Suryna wskazuje na konflikty moralne, społeczne, religijne oraz narodowe, widoczne zarówno w zapadłej miejscowości, jak i w samych postaciach. Omówienie budowy wewnętrznej opowiadania, jak również wyeksponowanych, powtarzających się motywów oraz postaci literackich stanowi przyczynek do omówienia poruszanej w nim problematyki.

Tłumaczenie: Monika Gawlak

## Metafora zla – *Mati Ivana Angelska* Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz

### POVZETEK

Poglavje obravnava novelo *Mati Ivana Angelska*, ki jo je Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz napisal med drugo svetovno vojno in je v knjižni obliki na Poljskem izšla leta 1946. Delo se osredotoča na tematiko zla v človeku, ki pa ni postavljeno v kontekst vojnega dogajanja, temveč ga obravnava z zgodovinsko distanco ter s filozofskega in antropološkega vidika.

Iwaszkiewicz se je pri pisanju oprl na zgodovinsko snov: v prvi polovici 17. stoletja so se v uršulinskem samostanu v francoskem mestu Loudun pojavili nenavadni primeri obsedenosti redovnic. Dogajalni prostor je v noveli prestavljen na Poljsko, v takratno vzhodno obmejno pokrajino, dogajalni čas pa je podobno kot izhodiščni dogodek postavljen v 17. stoletje.

Analiza kronotopa in fabule osvetljuje globlje plasti novele, ki pod krovno zgodbo zunanje in notranje tragedije protagonista Surina izpostavljajo moralne, družbene, verske in nacionalne konflikte tako v zakotnem mestu kot v subjektivnosti posameznikov. Poleg tega je predstavljena zrcalno zasnovana notranja forma novele s poudarjenimi in ponavljajočimi motivi ter odprtost literarnih likov. Ob tem študija izpostavlja vprašanja in razmisleke, ki jih novela odpira.

Seweryn Kuśmierczyk

## Lost Travellers. *Mother Joan of the Angels* by Jerzy Kawalerowicz

In 1960, when Jerzy Kawalerowicz<sup>1</sup> started working on the film *Mother Joan of the Angels* (*Matka Joanna od Aniołów*), the theme of “the devils of Loudun” was already grounded in a rich literary tradition. The stories of the collective possession of the Ursuline sisters at the convent in Loudun in seventeenth-century France were related to the burning at the stake of the local parish priest Urbain Grandier, the arrival of the Jesuit Father Surin, and the exorcisms conducted on the abbess Jeanne des Agnes, which resulted in the possession of the exorcist. These stories were well known due to extant historical sources and private documents, as well as secondary studies interpreting the events in terms of the issues of historical truth, theology, mysticism and psychopathology.

The early 1960s saw a surge of renewed interest in these historical events, which was subsequently reflected in literary and artistic productions. Kawalerowicz’s film, awarded the Silver Palm in 1961 at the Cannes Film Festival, was associated with John Whiting’s play *The Devils*,<sup>2</sup> which was based on Aldous Huxley’s 1952 novel *The Devils of Loudun* and staged by Andrzej Wajda at the Ateneum

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1 Jerzy Kawalerowicz (1922–2007) was one of the greatest Polish film directors. Among other films, he created *Night Train* (*Pociąg*, 1959), *Pharaoh* (*Faraon*, 1965), *Death of a President* (*Śmierć prezydenta*, 1977) and *The Inn* (*Austeria*, 1982). For many years, he served as the artistic director of the Kadr Film Group, which produced the most important films of the Polish Film School.

2 The play premiered on 20 February 1961 at the Aldwych Theatre in London.

Theatre in Warsaw.<sup>3</sup> It also referred to the Polish edition of Jules Michelet's *La Sorcière: The Witch of the Middle Ages*.<sup>4</sup>

## The Drama of Human Nature

Jerzy Kawalerowicz and Tadeusz Konwicki<sup>5</sup> adapted the film screenplay from a 1942 short story by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, *Mother Joan of the Angels* (Iwaszkiewicz 1975), in which the author presented his own embellished version of the Loudun events, moving the action to the Smolensk region in the seventeenth century. The scriptwriters remained faithful to the literary model in terms of plot and choice of characters. In the script, we find the same themes and narrative threads, as well as selected dialogues from the original story. Kawalerowicz and Konwicki did not refer to historical materials related to the events in Loudun (Kawalerowicz, Konwicki 1960), as explained by Bolesław Michałek:

When I make an adaption, Konwicki said, my goal is to force the viewer to see the great beauty that lies in the work... The story of *Mother Joan* is very similar to the mood of the landscape in which I was born and grew up. I liked the melancholy view of human fate very much, and in *Mother Joan*, I played the role of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's ambassador. (Michałek 1967: 6)

Kawalerowicz declared that he wanted to make a discursive film, bringing to the fore a materialistic understanding of human psychology and exposing false truths about human fate. He sought to speak "about human nature and its self-defence against imposed restrictions and dogmas" (Janicki 1962: 35). In another statement, he added: "The main characters are people in habits who, in the name of the 'great love' proclaimed by religion, kill human love. Mother Joan and Father Suryn surrender to love, they are too weak" (Kawalerowicz 1960: 10).

The work of Kawalerowicz and Konwicki was greatly lauded at a meeting of the Screenplay Evaluation Committee<sup>6</sup> on 26 January 1960. The Committee praised the script for its brevity, suggestiveness, mood and consistency in presenting key issues. It is worth quoting some of the statements by the members of the Committee in this regard.

3 The premiere took place on 2 March 1963.

4 J. Michelet, *Czarownica*, trans. M. Kaliska, preface L. Kołakowski, Warsaw 1961. Chapter VII in Book Two is devoted to 'the possessed of Loudun'. The premiere of the opera *The Devils of Loudun* by Krzysztof Penderecki, which took place in Hamburg on 20 June 1969 (Polish premiere in 1975), and Ken Russell's film *The Devils* from 1971 should also be mentioned here.

5 Tadeusz Konwicki (1926–2015) was a Polish writer, screenwriter and film director.

6 The Committee assessed and approved film scripts for production. It included directors of film teams, screenwriters, film critics and party activists.

Writer Stanisław Dygat<sup>7</sup> noted:

I found the script excellent. The impression was as evocative as if I had seen the movie. It has everything I would like to see in a screenplay. I consider the script to be so great that it surpasses the original. It is extremely concise, yet extremely clear and simple; the problems are consistently presented and simply executed. Furthermore, I am struck by something that happens very rarely when reading a script: the matter of the colours black and white. (*Matka Joanna od Aniołów* 1993: 66)

Writer and party activist Jerzy Putrament<sup>8</sup> wrote:

This is an incredibly suggestive script. It is better than the novel because some sections have been removed from it. It has become an evocative picture, full of mood, a two-colour painting. [...] we rarely deal with an artistic work of such high quality. (*Matka Joanna od Aniołów* 1993: 66)

The film went into production in February 1960. The outdoor shots for *Mother Joan of the Angels* were shot in the summer of 1960 at a garbage dump in Józefów near Łódź (Wertenstein 1974: 12). Adopting the main narrative events from the literary original, the screenwriters moved their location to a different space and landscape.

In one of the interviews given during the final phase of work on the film, Konwicki remarked:

We introduced the unity of place by eliminating the travels of Father Suryn so as not to fall into a moral anecdote; we reduced the background, abandoning many elements of the reality. A costume film is positioned in advance in historical terms. We wanted to emphasise the contemporary psychological layer of Iwaszkiewicz[’s novel]. (Konwicki 1960: 8)

Years later, Kawalerowicz added:

Instead of copying the past – which cannot be truly recreated, even with the most scientific and museum-like fidelity to the reality – it is better to make it unreal to some extent, to suggest something that is different from the present, something that allows one to imagine what it might have been like in the times when the action of the movie takes place. (Wertenstein 1974: 12)

Although Iwaszkiewicz located his adaptation in the seventeenth-century Smolensk region, only the stylised costumes and the scenery of the monastery and the inn drew from the historical context. *Mother Joan of the Angels* was character-

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7 Stanisław Dygat (1914–1978) was a Polish prose writer, playwright and screenwriter.

8 Jerzy Putrament (1910–1986) was a Polish writer and publicist.



raised by an ascetic aesthetics, which the cinematographers conceived of as creating an appropriate artistic climate for depicting the main concept of the work: “the drama of human nature” (Konwicki 1960: 8), according to the scriptwriters.

When *Mother Joan of the Angels* premiered on 9 February 1961, viewers were struck by the film’s clear and sublime form. Not a trace remained of the Baroque character of Iwaszkiewicz’s story. The visual evocativeness of the film conveys its depth of meanings. For example, numerous commentators wrote about tasting things pictured on the screen (Braun 1961: 7); they regarded the cinematography as visually suggestive and stylistically sophisticated and viewed the film as an exceptional work of beauty (Bukowiecki 1966: 123), a symphony of white and black (Lessman 1961: 8), and even an excess of plastic refinement (Grodzicki 1961: 10).

Referring to the film’s plot, critics noted above all the emotional relationship between the two main characters. A review by Zygmunt Kałużyński,<sup>9</sup> for instance, characterised *Mother Joan of the Angels* as “a rationalist appeal for the right to indulge natural instinct” (Kałużyński 1961: 16). Many years after the premiere, Andrzej Werner expressed a similar opinion, recognising that the conflict experienced by Father Suryn “has been simplified to a sexual or, at best, erotic basis” (Werner 1987: 14). For Alicja Helman, who sought to analyse the film within the framework of Kawalerowicz’s cinematic oeuvre:

Joan’s game is a sublimation of the desire for love and the inability to fulfil a woman’s destiny. The feeling that will connect her with her confessor, Father Suryn, will remain unconscious at first; then it will be unspeakable, and finally, it will find its paradoxical fulfilment in the complete spiritual breakdown and madness of the priest, who kills to free Mother Joan from demons. (Helman 1996: 49)

The contemporary reception of *Mother Joan of the Angels* by students at the theological seminary is also of interest:

The film is perceived as a religious image. I showed it to my seminarians. The silence was absolute, and anyone who knows the reality of the seminary knows that it is not easy to achieve such a state of concentration on a daily basis. After the screening, one of the seminarians commented that this film would be enough for several ascetic conferences. I thought he was exaggerating and asked what interested him the most about Kawalerowicz’s film. “It is simply a beautiful metaphysical film”, he replied, “black, white and grey... enhance the otherworldly mood. Christianity, the religion of Absolute Love, cannot kill human love. But

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<sup>9</sup> Zygmunt Kałużyński (1918–2004) was a Polish film critic known for his incisive and uncompromising reviews.

a Christian in his poverty... may". One has to agree with the opinion that this film does not appeal to easy emotions; it requires reflection and forces one to participate in a spiritual exam that has been going on for centuries, an exam that humans are unable to pass with flying colours. (Luter 2001: 20)

## A Film by Jerzy Kawalerowicz and Jerzy Wójcik

The film owed its final form and composition to the collaboration between Kawalerowicz and cinematographer Jerzy Wójcik,<sup>10</sup> who shared an understanding of authorship in cinema. According to Kawalerowicz:

I am an emotional, intuitive creator, an 'impressionist'. My compass is my imagination. I never think about individual scenes; instead, I rather feel the shape that they should take. Scenes 'are formed' during production. [...] When working on a film, I can't stand aside and observe or think objectively about the scene being realised; I have to experience it, to be somehow inside the things being shown, to be the camera and the actor. [...] In order to develop their own style, the director must constantly interfere in all elements of making the film. If they do not control them – if, for example, the imagination of the cameraman or the actors begins to dominate the director's imagination – there can be no uniformity of the film image, and therefore of style. Uniformity, stylistic homogeneity, will only occur when the director's individuality – due to constant interference – is visible in every component of the film work.

I am the co-writer of almost all my films. This is the first stage of my interference in the film material, and it is a very fundamental stage. [...] I work on the script myself and do not allow anyone else's interference. The screenplay is the most important moment of my work on the film. The script is an artistic plan in which I note down what I will implement in the future film and how I will go about it; it is a recorded emotional and artistic vision of the future film. At the same time, the script describes exactly the tasks of all my associates. (Janicki 1962: 36–38)

Kawalerowicz's directorial approach is characterised by deep reflection on the film medium and the possibilities for reshaping its boundaries. In particular, he sought ways for his films to provide meaningful psychological insights, as well as to show the depth of the human psyche and the complexity of human nature (Helman 1996: 45–54).

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10 Jerzy Wójcik (1930–2019) was a cinematographer, screenwriter, film director and educator. He was one of the greatest Polish filmmakers and a famous cinematographer of the Polish Film School, co-producing some of the most outstanding Polish films of the 1950s and 1960s, such as *Eroica* (1957), *Ashes and Diamonds* (*Popiół i diament*, 1958), *Nobody is Calling* (*Nikt nie woła*, 1960), *Pharaoh* (*Faraon*, 1965) and *The Deluge* (*Potop*, 1974). He was also the director of the films *The Complaint* (*Skarga*, 1991) and *The Gateway of Europe* (*Wrota Europy*, 1999).

When Wójcik signed on as cinematographer for the film *Mother Joan of the Angels*, he had already worked with Kawalerowicz, having served as the second cinematographer during the filming of *The Real End of the Great War* (*Prawdziwy koniec wielkiej wojny*, 1957), a role he had previously performed during the production of Andrzej Wajda's *Sewer* (*Kanał*, 1956). For his first independent<sup>11</sup> achievements in cinematography, in Andrzej Munk's *Eroica* (1957) and Wajda's *Ashes and Diamonds* (*Popiół i diament*, 1958), he gained a reputation for his skills in the art of cinematography. His credo was further developed in his statements from the early 1960s about the craft. Regarding "the effect of time on matter" (Wójcik 1961: 11), he said:

The basic elements [...] are the elements of time (rhythm) and space (composition), as well as the element of existing in space, which I would call material. These are the elements that all operators use, whether they are aware of it or not. For me, the most important thing is to observe the changes in matter over time. People and objects are subject to the effects of time. It is important how these changes proceed, how a person changes their character or their attitude towards various matters. My job is to observe these processes. I don't care what an actor thinks; I have to see the materiality of what they demonstrate in order to reflect the changes that occur in a particular time and in a particular space. (Janicki 1962: 108)

Wójcik's approach, rooted in a refined philosophy of the cinematic image and a broader attitude towards the world, allowed him to maintain his creative individuality while working with different directors. In his opinion, the cinematographer, as the author of images, should adapt their way of shooting to the director's storytelling and style. Commenting on auteur cinema, he stated:

The film belongs solely to the director. This doesn't mean that there's no room for me here; on the contrary, that's why I have the role. I consider it natural for the cinematographer to adapt to the director's style. The decisive factor in the film is the direction, and for this, the most important thing for the cinematographer is to search for elements appropriate to the director's personality. The selection must be followed by a personal interpretation of these elements. Then I have to objectively photograph the selected elements. (Janicki 1962: 106)

The fact that Wójcik's images retained their individuality, regardless of the film or director, is best evidenced by the opinion expressed by Andrei Tarkovsky in his essay *Sculpting in Time*, published in the second half of the 1960s, which later became his creative manifesto and the main chapter of his book under the same title (Tarkovsky 1986).

11 Wójcik's first independent work was co-directing, with colleagues from the state film school in Łódź, the cinematography for the film *The End of Night* (*Koniec nocy*, 1956).

The Polish cinematographer Jerzy Wójcik says that time in the film is related to the “temperature of the story”, that the sense of rhythm is of utmost importance, and the textures “have an organic relationship with the rhythm, with time, with the observation”. [...] It should be stated that the ability to convey the ‘patina’ of time undergoing changes is one of the most interesting aspects of Wójcik’s work. (Tarkovsky 1967: 72)

Years later, Wójcik, who had become the most prominent cinematographer of the Polish Film School<sup>12</sup> and was fascinated by the reception of his first works, clarified his earlier precepts:

I understand composition as something that organises the entirety of the on-screen expression. Reality must also be understood as a whole. That’s why, for example, thought cannot be contrasted with matter; one cannot say that something is internal or external. [...] The most fantastic thing about cinema is that you can photograph transformation. This is the very essence of cinema. This applies to both transformation in the spiritual world and transformation in nature. Talking about these matters, I have the feeling that they are still poorly verbalised, that I may be using the wrong terms because one does not photograph separately the states of the human spirit and the states of nature that reflect them. (Wójcik 1994: 26)

Wójcik later developed these considerations in the book *The Labyrinth of Light* (*Labirynt światła*, Wójcik 2006).

## The Closed Space of the Action Space

“A desert, lunar landscape” was how critics described the film’s setting (Segiet 1961: 7; Eberhardt 1966: 10). It is a sandy, empty, uneven space; its circular form is slightly recessed in relation to the surrounding terrain, surrounded by a slope and rising upwards as it approaches the horizon. In some places, snow persists in the crevices of the escarpment (Image 1). Nature is depicted in a state of suspension, in anticipation of spring. The strong rays of the sun contrast with the coldness of the earth. The film’s spatial and temporal setting reflects natural cycles, heightening the contrasts that pervade *Mother Joan of the Angels*.

The scenery, which is gradually revealed to the viewer, includes four buildings. The eminent Polish set designers Roman Mann<sup>13</sup> and Tadeusz Wybult<sup>14</sup> were responsible for the spatial design of *Mother Joan of the Angels*.

12 The Polish Film School, which includes films made between 1956 and 1963, was the most outstanding artistic current in the history of Polish cinema.

13 Roman Mann (1911–1960) was a Polish set designer and architect.

14 Tadeusz Wybult (1921–2004) was one of the most outstanding Polish film set designers.

An inn is located on the lowest level of the landscape, a vantage point from which the entire space can be seen. Standing on the slope of a recessed terrain, the inn gives the impression of being sunk into the ground. At the opposite end of the sandy chasm, on a slight rise, a monastery is situated, in contrast to the inn. A recurring shot in the film, showing the view from the inn's windows to the monastery, allows the viewer to visualise the contrast between the two buildings within the spatial landscape.

From the location of Father Suryn and Wołodkowicz in one of the scenes, the viewer can glean that the rabbi's house is located halfway between the inn and the monastery, on the right side of the inn. By showing children finishing a game, the film provides a glimpse of Father Brym's rectory to the left of the inn. The town present in Iwaszkiewicz's story does not appear in the film, although its trace remains in the script: "Behind the glass, below, you could see a fragment of the town and the entrance to the parish church, from which now spilt two thin rows of nuns led by exorcist priests" (Kawalerowicz, Konwicki 1960: 55).

The graphic representation of the film's setting is a square inscribed in a circle, a geometric figure that symbolically represents the duality of human life and the co-existence of the spiritual and material worlds, denoted by the circle and the square, respectively. The action of *Mother Joan of the Angels* takes place between the inn and the monastery, which, through their respective locations at the bottom and top of the field, determine the internal spatial structure of the narrative.

Limiting the narrative space is a characteristic feature of Kawalerowicz's auteur cinema, which enables him to deepen the psychological portraits of the characters. In the film *The Real End of the Great War* (1957), this limited space is a house, while it is a transatlantic ship in *Chance Meeting on the Atlantic* (*Spotkanie na Atlantyku*, 1980), an inn in *The Inn* (*Austeria*, 1982), and the island to which Napoleon was exiled in *The Hostage of Europe* (*Jeniec Europy*, 1989).

## The Opposition of the Inn and the Monastery

Looking at the inn and the monastery, the viewer can observe additional bottom-top oppositions beyond their locations in the terrain. For example, the inn is dark, built of darkened wood and with small windows (Image 2). Father Suryn has to bend down to walk through the door. Although the interior of the main room is quite spacious, it seems cramped to the viewer due to the panning of the camera around the interior and its occupants. The predominance of middle plans and close-ups emphasises the physical, embodied understanding of the

space. The viewer perceives the movement of Awdosia walking alongside the table, approaching the camera; there is the unexpected appearance of the enormous Odryn in the frame and of a crowd of men gathered at the table, discussing the events at the monastery after the priest's departure. Pigs roam around the yard of the inn. These are symbols of sinful behaviour in Christian art, especially the sins of impurity and intemperance (Kopaliński 1990: 99–100).

The inn is contrasted with the monastery, with its bright, high walls and white surrounding wall, large courtyard and orderly interior that give an overall impression of peace, spirituality and isolation from the outside world. In Iwaszkiewicz's story, the walls of the convent were dark, as were the habits of the Ursuline nuns. Despite their small Romanesque windows, the monastic rooms in the film are bright and full of light. The scenography, specially prepared for the needs of the film, features no ceilings (Image 3). The bright interior is occupied by nuns dressed in white gowns. Doves fly in the attic, which is a symbolic reference to goodness, purity and innocence (Kopaliński 1990: 419–420).

The blackness and darkness that characterise the inn and the whiteness and light that define the monastery visually mark the symbolic nature of these places. The former is a mysterious, evil and sinful space, as opposed to one where a close relationship with heaven and God is cultivated. This contrast is also reflected in the two main characters: the mother superior and Father Józef Suryn. They are both members of the clergy, leading a lifestyle that involves renouncing the goods of 'this' world and sacrificing one's life for the love of God. This is a decision related to the desire to resist evil and overcome Satan's influence. The space in which these two characters meet should thus also reflect their internal, spiritual differences. The space created in the film seems to adapt the description of Father Suryn's experiences in Iwaszkiewicz's story: "And the whole world split in front of him into light and dark, into brightness and darkness..." (Iwaszkiewicz 1975: 23).

Let us now consider how the acoustics enhance the characterisation of the inn, the monastery and the middle ground between the two. A cheerful melody played by Awdosia on the lute rings through the scenes at the inn. It frequently returns like a chorus, enriched with the words of a song about a young woman who is getting married but prefers to become a nun. The song is sung by Sister Małgorzata a Cruce, who comes to the inn. The monastery interior, on the other hand, resounds with a Latin chant sung by the praying sisters.

Between the inn and the monastery, between the rabbi's house and the rectory, a central space exists. It is a visually dominant, sandy, desert-like terrain full of hollows, where not even the smallest plant grows (Image 4). The black, charred



pyre on which Priest Garniec was burned stands in the middle of this zone and is visible from a distance. This pyre acts as a focal point, a symbolic axis of the represented world. The sound of a bell is associated with this central space.

### “They’re Ringing. Why Are They Ringing?”

In the film, a conversation between the farmhands Kaziuk and Juraj, repeated twice, concerns the topic of the ringing bells:

- They’re ringing. Why are they ringing?
- It’s a custom here. For lost travellers.
- Oh...
- So the bishop ordered. For the lost, in the forest.

The sound of the bell recurs frequently in *Mother Joan of the Angels*, appearing in clearly defined, specific situations. The ringing accompanies the arrival of Father Suryn, Sister Małgorzata a Cruce’s movements to and from the convent, the nuns as they go to the church for exorcisms and Suryn as he walks towards the convent. Thus, the bell sounds when the film’s protagonists appear for the first time or are in transit, traversing the central space located between the inn and the monastery.

Alicja Helman drew attention to how the filmmakers adapted and developed a playful scene about the children of Priest Garniec, who were brought up by the parish priest. This scene appeared only as a brief anecdote in Iwaszkiewicz’s short story, but scenes of children playing appear three times in the film. Helman believes that “this juxtaposition of children’s play – the wolves are absent, but the children are frightened ‘as if’ they existed – with the exorcisms leads Suryn to doubt the point of expelling demons, and even to question their very existence. Like wolves, demons do not exist, and ‘scaring’ them is a spectacle that requires the audience’s consent to the rules of the game” (Helman 1986: 28).

The theme of scaring away the wolves may, however, carry deeper meanings. After all, the children play around the charred pyre and the sandy space associated with the sound of the ringing bell. They ‘scare away the wolves’ when Father Suryn goes to the monastery for the first time, when he goes to the rabbi and when he is already possessed. The ringing of the bell and the game of ‘scaring away the wolves’ are repeated frequently (Kuśmierczyk 1999: 24–25). The decision to highlight these recurring motifs may be explained by St Augustine’s comment on the Gospel According to St John: “Who is the wolf? Isn’t it the devil?” (Forstner 1990: 308–309).



The wolf symbolises the 'dark' side of life and is frequently associated with demons, often appearing in myths and fairy tales as a menacing omen. In the Middle Ages, it was believed that the devil could appear in the form of a wolf (Lurker 1989: 264–265). Could the wolves scared away by the children be the demons that possessed the souls of Mother Joan and the other nuns in the convent?

## Principles of Frame Composition

In *Mother Joan of the Angels*, the classic principles of film image composition meet original aesthetic solutions devised by the film's creators. In the pictorial composition of the film, Wójcik refers to the golden ratio<sup>15</sup> and takes into account the strong focal points of the frame, while also relying on a diagonal composition. These elements often appear together, enhancing the aesthetic impact of individual shots (Kuśmierczyk 1999: 15–17).

The arrangement of the figures and the slope of the escarpment in the background form an ascending diagonal in the scene when Father Brym blesses Father Suryn, who is on his way to the monastery for the first time. Father Brym's hand, drawn in a gesture of blessing, appears above Father Suryn's head, creating lines that conform to the golden ratio (Image 5). This formal element enhances the eloquence of the blessing. However, the descending diagonal focuses the eye on the close-up of the farmhands in the frame, introducing anxiety about the fate of both men through compositional elements (Image 6).

The original compositional organisation favoured by Wójcik in *Mother Joan of the Angels* strictly divides the frame into four parts, related to its vertical and horizontal axes. Importance is given to the vertical axis, as can be seen in the first shot of the film, which focuses on Father Suryn prostrating and then standing up and listening to the ringing bell. The frames of the window in the second shot follow the course of both axes. The window opens, and the camera focuses downward along a vertical line. A moment later, the symmetrical positioning of two horses and farmhands extends the horizontality of the frame, as the horses' and men's heads are aligned on the horizontal axis.

The dark, intersecting window frames mark the centre of the cinematic frame. At the beginning of the third shot, the priest's head appears in the window. The compositional method adopted in the film places the human face in the centre of the shot, a position naturally occurring in close-ups, in order to convey

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15 Two quantities are in the golden ratio if their ratio is the same as the ratio of their sum to the larger of the two quantities.

a portrait of the character's inner world. In *Mother Joan of the Angels*, other important elements appear in the centre of the frame in addition to important people. This way of presentation gives the objects in the frame the status of *dramatis personae*. The discipline that Suryn hangs on the wall and the fire burning in the inn's fireplace are shown in the same way, as are the pyre on which Priest Garniec was burned, the axe left in the inn's entrance hall and the door that opens before the exorcist, leading him into the inn, the monastery and the parlour.

In the scene where Suryn is praying in the frame before eating a meal, the vertical axis divides the plane of the shot into two parts, as though they are two independent images that remain in balance. The priest stands on the right, while Wołodkowicz sits at the table on the left. In the centre of the frame, there is a jug standing in a recess in the wall. A vertical line that runs along the edge of the table also becomes visible. Later, the heads of the group in the room align along the horizontal axis of the frame, with individual actors placed centrally in the frame. Two people are usually presented symmetrically in the centre of the image, while larger groups are shown in spatial arrangements along the horizontal axis.

Some frames evoke these compositional principles more obviously and intentionally. The first appearance of Priest Garniec's site of execution is characterised by a perfectly balanced composition that conforms to the vertical and horizontal axes of the frame. A vertical, scorched pole cuts through the centre of the frame, lining up with the top of the pyre (Image 7). Inside the church, the line formed by the nuns walking in a row meets the dark plane of the pews in sharp horizontals.

In the shot preceding this scene, the sisters are shown leaving the convent for the exorcism. They pass the deeply shadowed threshold of the building and enter the illuminated courtyard. Lines of darkness and light run along the vertical axis of the frame. Similarly, the book later divides the image into two parts: the only witness to the conversation between Father Suryn and the rabbi.

Camera movements and alternating viewpoints also work to articulate verticality, horizontality, symmetry and centrality. Several panoramas in the film are oriented on the horizontal plane, such as the shots of the inn and the monastery. Vertical panoramas are limited but still present. At one point, following Father Suryn's gaze, the camera shows a cart in the yard of the inn and farmhands talking. In the scene of Suryn's conversation with the rabbi, the camera pans to show a book lying on the table. Since the presence of the vertical axis is clearly emphasised in the composition of the frames and shots, vertical panning of the camera would be an additional, unnecessary reinforcement of the meanings already present in the image. This is further underlined by the fact that the vertical

element in some scenes is also introduced by the camera's point of view. In the inn, Awdosia looks at the frightened monk 'from above' as she tells his fortune. Suryń, who is standing by the pyre, looks down on Wołodkowicz from a great height. In the parlour, Mother Joan, telling the exorcist about her desire for greatness, is shown from the perspective of a kneeling priest (Image 8). This 'exaltation' of sorts precedes the words she utters a moment later about her desire for holiness.

The director and cinematographer seem to have composed their shots with balance, calmness and clarity, thus framing their depiction of the inner world of human experience and the drive to find tranquillity, peace and spiritual balance.

## The Presence of the Golden Ratio in the Temporal Structure of the Film

References to the golden ratio, which determine the duration and composition of individual shots and scenes, are another characteristic principle of Kawalero-wicz's films. In cinema, the golden ratio, also known as *divina proportione*, is used primarily for the composition of frames. In *Mother Joan of the Angels*, however, it also influences the sequence of shots, being evoked in shots, in the temporal relationships between adjacent shots and in individual scenes.<sup>16</sup> As an organising principle of the film, the golden ratio is meant to enhance the aesthetic impressions perceived by the viewer and emphasise the film's significant narrative moments.

Let us take a closer look at certain scenes where the golden ratio occurs.<sup>17</sup> During Father Suryń's prayer that opens *Mother Joan of the Angels*, which begins with prostration and ends with the exorcist entering the inn, the golden ratio structures the moment when the frame closes in on the window that opens in the priest's room.<sup>18</sup> It is worth recalling the importance of intersecting window frames in the composition of the picture, which we will return to shortly.

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16 The division of time related to the golden ratio in a film work is determined by stops associated with the ratios of 0.382 and 0.618 in a selected fragment of the film.

17 The presence of the golden ratio is only mentioned when it appears during the screening of the film with an accuracy of two seconds. When calculating the proportions between the shots, the length of individual shots expressed in terms of the length of the film strip is also referred to. The data on the length, numbering and description of the shots are given according to the assembly list of *Mother Joan of the Angels*. A tape speed of 25 frames per second is assumed, which means that one second of film corresponds to 0.475 metres of film strip.

18 The duration of the entire scene is 4 min 12 seconds. The ratio of 0.618 = 2 min 35 seconds.

The exorcist's stay at the inn brings about the culmination of growing tension, especially when Wołodkowicz, moving closer to Suryn, begins to talk about the 'doings' of the 'holy ladies' in the monastery. The scandalised monk stands up, sharply reprimanding Wołodkowicz. Suryn gets agitated at the moment determined by the golden ratio.<sup>19</sup>

In the scene showing Father Suryn's journey to the monastery, the Romanesque building is seen twice, appearing in the frame at moments determined by the golden ratio. The first moment occurs when Father Brym points to the monastery, which is revealed in all its glory a moment later, while the second moment corresponds to the subsequent appearance of the building in the frame.<sup>20</sup>

The golden ratio is also present during the meeting between Father Suryn and the rabbi, at the moment when the exorcist asks the rabbi whether Satan can possess a human soul.<sup>21</sup>

Another noteworthy compositional element concerns the temporal relationship between shots in *Mother Joan of the Angels*: the duration of some adjacent shots is almost the same, reflecting purposeful editing. In the conversation between Father Suryn and the rabbi, pairs of shots of equal length appear three times.

Trying to penetrate the mystery of evil, Father Suryn sought the advice of a Jewish sage. However, this meeting resulted in Suryn having an encounter with himself, as the conversation with the rabbi became a self-reflective journey into the depths of his own soul. The cinematic presentation of the meeting allows the viewer to see the two men talking to each other (Image 9). They both have the same face, as Mieczysław Voit played both roles (Image 10). When one of the interlocutors closes his eyes, the other opens them a moment later in the next shot. When one looks down at the book lying on the table, his interlocutor looks up from the table. In this scene, the book is a symbol of the mystery of the world that the exorcist wants to penetrate:

Suryn: When can Satan possess a human soul?

Rabbi: When a human loves him a lot.

19 Father Suryn's stay inside the inn lasts 7 min 22 seconds. The monk standing up:  $0.618 = 4 \text{ min } 33 \text{ seconds}$ .

20 This scene is included between the shot showing the pyre and the shot showing the opening of the monastery gate. Duration: 6 minutes. Father Brym pointing to the monastery:  $0.382 = 2 \text{ min } 17 \text{ seconds}$ . Second shot showing the monastery:  $0.618 = 3 \text{ min } 42 \text{ seconds}$ .

21 Father Suryn's conversation with the rabbi lasts 7 min 28 seconds.  $0.618 = 4 \text{ min } 37 \text{ seconds}$ .

Suryn: What kind of love for Satan?

Rabbi: Love is at the bottom of everything...<sup>22</sup>

The priest's journey into the depths of his inner self is made visible through set changes throughout the conversation. Semi-close-ups and close-ups expose the faces and sparkling eyes of the interlocutors, which are, in fact, the eyes of one person. The shots are arranged in pairs (reverse shots) and are of the same length, an editing approach that also emphasises the interlocutors' shared identity. The terrified priest steps back, and the rabbi, remaining behind the table, points his finger at him, as well as at himself:

Suryn: My demons are my business, and my soul is my soul.

Rabbi: I am you; you are me.<sup>23</sup>

Suryn: God, what are you saying? I didn't know you didn't know anything.

Rabbi: (off-camera) You, priest, don't know anything. You walk in darkness, and your ignorance is like the black cloak of night. I will not teach you anything because you cannot learn anything, and my teaching is no longer your teaching.

Suryn: You are me...

Rabbi: Go away... go away... I don't know anything either... I don't know anything...<sup>24</sup>

The priest abruptly exits the rabbi's house, which is reminiscent of fleeing after encountering one's inner self, something known in fairy tales and mythical stories as the 'quick return'.

The juxtaposition of shots of equal length also occurs in other scenes in *Mother Joan of the Angels*. In the film's opening, two shots show Father Suryn finding an axe in the entrance hall of the inn. The equal length of the shots makes it possible to understand the relationship between the exorcist and the tool

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22 Shot 164. Suryn with downcast eyes. Length: 13.25 m. Shot 165. Close-up of the rabbi. Length: 13.23 m.

23 Shot 170. Terrified Suryn steps back. Length: 2 m. Shot 171. The rabbi is standing behind the table. He points his finger towards the camera and at himself. Length: 2.5 m.

24 Shot 172. Suryn steps back. Length: 10.28 m. Shot 173. The upset rabbi bangs a book on the table. Length: 11 m. The last words spoken by the rabbi are not in Iwaszkiewicz's story, nor are they in the script. During the meeting of the Screenplay Evaluation Committee, it was noted that in the plot of the future film, the demon-possessed nuns and a Catholic priest are contrasted with a wise rabbi. It was recognised that, in Poland, such a combination would create a very explosive mixture. In the script, Kawalerowicz and Konwicki made a correction by adding the last sentence spoken by the rabbi.

he picks up from the ground.<sup>25</sup> The same length of shot also characterises Father Suryń's final conversation with Mother Joan in the parlour, before his violent escape and fall down the stairs. This is the conversation that ends with the exorcist becoming possessed by demons.<sup>26</sup>

## On the Threshold of the Inner World

Wójcik once stated, "The cinematographer has certain special dispositions; first, acute attention. For me, this sharpening of attention is directed at the human face. My eye stops longer and more penetratingly on some faces; it records many details in my memory" (Wójcik 1984: 117). In *Mother Joan of the Angels*, the characters' faces appear at significant moments. Close-ups allow viewers to observe the final phase of the psychological process that drives the development of the narrative. The film's course of events is framed by inner human experiences.

After Father Suryń's departure, close-ups of the men in the inn talking about the exorcism and the burning of Priest Garniec are featured. Only then do the characters muster the courage to address the topic that affects everyone directly, to remove the proverbial masks worn during the conversation with the exorcist. The scene at the inn also features a close-up of Awdosia looking out of the window. In the stable, the viewer gets a glimpse into Kaziuk and Juraj's inner worlds as they fall asleep. Mother Joan's possession is dramatised with close-ups of her face, which is distorted during the conversation in the refectory and frozen during the exorcism in the church (Image 11). The audience also witnesses Father Suryń's madness by observing his face during his visit to Brym, the parish priest. The uncertainty and mystery that accompany his arrival at the rabbi's house and the subsequent sudden arrival of the exorcist at the monastery are registered by Wołodkowicz's curious face, which appears against the background of closed doors.

A special compositional technique was used to build tension: the rapid approach of the camera from the back of an actor to a half-zoom of their face. When this occurs, the actor tends to look back anxiously and notice someone looking at them. The invasiveness of the camera in the character's personal space works to evoke a feeling of anticipation, creating tension and allowing the viewer

25 Shot 74. Suryń is walking by the wall, followed by Kaziuk, who stumbles and falls. Suryń picks up the axe, watches, smiles and swings it. Length: 6.49 m. Shot 75. An axe blade falls on a tree trunk. Suryń walks away from the trunk with the axe. Length: 6.49 m.

26 Shot 189. Suryń's face leans over the camera. Length: 3.12 m. Shot 190. Joan's face. She closes her eyes. Length: 3.35 m.

to enter the world of the observed character, feel their fear and try to decipher the expression on their face. After one zooming shot, Suryń turns around, reacting to Awdosia's gaze (Image 12). A similar situation takes place in the refectory. The camera zooms in on Father Imber, who turns around during the exorcism and notices the eyes of the abbess on him. Similarly, later at the inn, Sister Małgorzata a Cruce turns around under the influence of Chrzyszczewski's gaze.

The film presents an additional way to enter the characters' inner worlds, one that emphasises the inner world of man and the physical world discussed by Wójcik. Upon arriving at the inn, Father Suryń unpacks his travel bag in his room. At one point, he takes out his discipline and makes the sign of the cross with it. Against what temptations of the earthly world is he defending himself? The answer is provided by the cheerful sounds of the lute, originating off-screen from the interior of the inn. While this may seem to be an insignificant event, it speaks deeply about Father Suryń: he must be weak in spirit if he has to defend himself against temptations with the help of the discipline that he hangs on the wall.

The film often pictures the hero crossing thresholds between spaces to express his inner world. Before Father Suryń enters the monastery for the first time, as Kaziuk and the exorcist are approaching the gate, the tension that has mounted over the course of their journey is visible on their faces (Image 13). Later, the frame is obscured by the dark, massive doors of the monastery. The gate opens, but Father Suryń is not seen passing through it. The subjective camera shows this moment from the character's point of view. The window that opens in the priest's room is shown in a similar way. When Suryń, entering the rabbi's house, has to pass through a low door, the subjective camera 'bends down' as a tall monk would do. However, his footsteps are not heard, alerting the viewer to a moment where they are privy to the character's inner world.

The action takes place in an almost theatrical setting, which is reflected in the closed, oval space of the terrain, the dark room of the inn, the monastery surrounded by a wall, the bright refectory, the parlour, the interior of the rabbi's house, and the stable. These spaces are isolated from concrete reality, in turn enabling a spotlight to be cast on the inner world of the protagonists.

## **The Audio Layer of the Film and the Meaning of the Music**

Silence is the natural soundtrack for most of the film. The film's auditory character is reduced to its basic shape, corresponding to its raw visual composition.



Apart from short auditory details interspersed through the narrative – the sounds of lutes and songs in the inn, psalms sung by the nuns in the convent, the ringing of the bell – all that can be heard are voices, laughter, whispers, footsteps, the whistling of the wind, the crackling of firewood burning in the chimney, the barking of an agitated dog, the clatter of a bowl being placed on the table, the opening of a window, the creaking of the monastery gate and the sounds of doves in the attic.

Longer moments of silence accompany conversations and pierce individual statements, enhancing the meaning of words and suggesting a more significant intent. Sounds and silence contrast, drawing attention to each other. During the conversation between Father Suryn and the rabbi, one senses that the meeting is taking place in a room acoustically isolated from the outside world. The viewer perceives the changes in emotional tension and volume in both interlocutors. The silence also emphasises the significance of certain shots, such as the first shot showing the stake and the appearance of Mother Joan in the parlour. A very long silence, lasting almost two minutes, accompanies the arrival of the nuns at the church for the exorcism. The sisters and the religious fathers stand facing each other, motionless and silent, like two armies about to meet in battle (Kuśmierczyk 2014: 129–130).

Contrasts also delineate the way the action unfolds in the frame. Action shots are juxtaposed with less animated shots. In this way, the rhythm of the film is slowed down, becoming almost hieratic. However, a state of coldness runs through the film, containing the contrasting liveliness. This is reflected in the scene when Father Suryn enters the inn for the first time. Awdosia stops playing the lute and leaves. The silence, emptiness and stillness in the room contrast with the crackling fire in the chimney, its high flames shooting upwards.

Composer Adam Walaciński<sup>27</sup> created two musical ‘worlds’ in the film, related to the inn and the monastery. A frivolous song sung in the tavern to a lute is contrasted with psalms sung *a capella* by a female choir. In the inn, a simple melody composed by Walaciński to a Baroque poem provides the main soundtrack. The structure of the song is based on an alternation between sung couplets and an instrumental prelude. The melody has a dance-like character, referring to the rhythm of the *krakowiak* (Czachorowska-Zygor 2013: 151). The song emphasises the down-to-earth, secular nature of the inn, symbolising earthly love and the sensuality of the temporal world. The song’s lyrics gain significance as the film’s plot unfolds, foreshadowing Sister Małgorzata leaving the convent.

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27 Adam Walaciński (1928–2015) was a composer who created the music for many Polish films.

The sacred space of the monastery is sonically expressed by three psalms composed for the film, in which the composer referred to the psalm and choral traditions in pre-modern music. The ascetic and austere nature of the melodic lines refer to medieval modes, while the simplicity of the psalms emphasises the closed and isolated space of the Romanesque monastery. Together, the musical modes symbolise the religious atmosphere of the world depicted in the film. The psalms were performed with authenticity and naturalness. Kawalerowicz used a rehearsal performance of the psalms by the Polish Radio Choir in Kraków in the film (Czachorowska-Zygor 2013: 151).

## The Role of Spinning and Circular Motion

Visual evocations of whirling and circular motion have great dramatic significance in *Mother Joan of the Angels*. This movement first appears in the second scene of the film. The cool atmosphere inside the inn is interrupted by the return of Awdosia, who, after bringing the priest a meal, walks around the table, circling Suryn. Wołodkowicz urges her to tell the priest about his future:

Tell him everything... everything. For example, whether he will make the journey, who he will meet on his long journey, who he will see...

As Wołodkowicz is speaking, he stirs the soup in the bowl in front of him with a spoon. Or perhaps, in reference to divination, he is evoking the movement of stirring a sorcerer's cauldron.

Children run around Father Suryn when he stands next to the stake. The conversation with Mother Joan in the refectory ends with a nun who is, or pretends to be, possessed.

The circular motion appears in the film gradually, almost imperceptibly at first. It emerges as a significant cinematic element when the nuns, spinning on the spot, run into the monastery's courtyard. The whirling movement reflects their possession (Image 14). The spinning motif, initially limited to the nuns' possession by demons, moves beyond the monastery to encompass the surrounding terrain.

The vortex becomes visible as the events unfold, appearing in the frame according to the aforementioned compositional principles, that is, aligned with the vertical and horizontal axes and complying with the golden ratio. The whirling motion contrasts with the balance and clarity of the planes and the harmony provided by the golden ratio. It is invoked during the most important dramatic events in the narrative. The movement is introduced to capture the external setting, the circular movement of the camera panning around Father Suryn

celebrating, the axe stuck in the stump and the doves flying over the monastery. However, the scene with the spinning nuns transforms the vortex feature to highlight more 'embodied' scenarios, leading the viewer to associate the origin of its movement with the motions of human spirituality. In the central space, the whole world spins as seen through the eyes of Father Suryn after the possessed Mother Joan enters it. When the film's action moves to the courtyard in front of the inn, where the nobleman Chrząszczewski arrives to pick up Sister Małgorzata a Cruce, who has abandoned her habit for him, his grey horse rushes around the courtyard.<sup>28</sup>

A moment later, the spinning motion moves to the interior of the inn, as Chrząszczewski and Sister Małgorzata dance frantically around the table. The vortex reaches its greatest dynamic in the place where it was first introduced, during the event preceding the night when Father Suryn kills the farmhands sleeping in the stable with an axe.

The whirling motion, which signals to the viewers changes taking place in the character's inner world, is a visual element that recurs many times in Kawalerowicz's auteur cinema. It appears in the films *The Real End of the Great War*, *Pharaoh* and *Chance Meeting on the Atlantic*, as well as in the Hasidic dance in *The Inn*. It is a characteristic element of Kawalerowicz's oeuvre, although the 'spinning camera' was also popular in films from the early 1960s, stemming from Sergey Urusevsky's designs for the scene of Boris's death in Mikhail Kalatozov's film *The Cranes Are Flying* (*Letât žuravli*, 1957). This type of camera movement, borrowed from Urusevsky, structures the 'dance of birches' in *Ivan's Childhood* (*Ivanovo detstvo*, 1962) by Andrei Tarkovsky (Kuśmierczyk 2012: 97–98) and recurs in Konwicki's film *All Souls' Day* (*Zaduszki*, 1961).

## White, Black and Liminal Grey

In one of the first shots of the film, Father Suryn takes a white cloth out of his grey travel bag, in which are wrapped bread and a black discipline, an instrument of spiritual penance. The film relies on a triadic colour system, capable of telling a comprehensive narrative of events and their unfolding in both the outer and the inner worlds of the characters.

Wójcik was the one who developed the colour concept for *Mother Joan of the Angels*. The heavy use of black and white was planned from the early inception

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28 It is worth noting that, in this scene, the creators of *Mother Joan of the Angels* allude to the scene with the horse rushing around the courtyard in Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*.

of the film and is clearly emphasised in the script. Wójcik introduced the importance of liminal grey as an intermediary between these two colours, separating them and at the same time connecting the visual world of the film.

The idea of such a greyscale solution was first raised during preparations for the making of the film:

I remember during my stay in Prague, in one of the Romanesque churches, the GREY<sup>29</sup> of the stone suddenly, in its extraordinary material beauty, became a real ILLUMINATION for me: a direct, pure understanding of UNITY and ALSO SEPARATION of the concept of GREY SPACE filling the church nave.

Something WHITE was obstructing my vision.

Perhaps it was a surplice or a white dress that revealed, for a moment, the GREY of the stone and the adjacent GREY of the spacious nave. And again the grey was covered, this time by the BLACK of the habit...

Then the key to the entire composition of the image of *MOTHER JOAN of the Angels* was revealed to me, for just a few seconds. (Wójcik 2006: 39)

In Wójcik's book *The Labyrinth of Light*, one also finds his justification for introducing grey as an intermediary tone between white and black:

If we look at the grey existing in the conceptual space as a system between WHITE and BLACK, the role of such grey can have different functions and contain different meanings.

In the first case, if I had BLACK behind me, I would have GREY in front of me, behind which there is WHITE and LIGHT. GREY is then a potential path to LIGHT.

The same grey would change its meaning if I stood in the light zone with my back to it. Then the grey in front of me would be my path to darkness and blackness.

Thus, grey in itself can have an infinite number of qualities; it can be non-uniform in its structure and operate both in a narrow, condensed zone with sharp edges of the sphere of its existence, as well as vast and almost imperceptible to the human eye in its spatial extent.

Such reasoning about white-grey and black – captured in screen energy fields of various sizes and with various saturations and contrasts – is the key to shaping the composition of the film work. (Wójcik 2006: 40)

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29 Wójcik's emphasis.

However, it was not until many years later that Wójcik noticed a parallel between his compositional solution and the value assigned to grey in the culture and artistic production of the Far East:

GREY – as a veil of emptiness that intensifies towards BLACK as the light fades, and at the same time as an illuminated and illuminating BLACK in an intentional movement towards white. It is a sign not so much of a colour phenomenon as of a process taking place in the structure of a given whole. Grey, diagonal and curved lines demonstrate the element of becoming, the movement from one value to another. The essence of this movement is interpreted by Laozi as a path to achieving a non-extreme state:

Knowing (the nature of what is) white (so bright, active, masculine) sticking to (however, what is) black (so passive, dark, feminine), they become the measure (for the whole world) under the sky. When I am the measure (for the whole world) under heaven (the strength of my) immutable virtue (Te) is not in excess, and again I return to a state where there are no extremes. (Wójcik 2006: 40)

Telling the story in the film using white, black and grey required a departure from deep chiaroscuro. Special spotlights were constructed on the set of *Mother Joan of the Angels* to produce diffuse lighting conditions, which highlighted the architectural structure and sculpted the spatial environments in white, grey and black (Wójcik 2006: 145).

Grey also served as a symbolic indication of the liminal situation of the film's protagonists, who found themselves in a trying situation as they faced the necessity of crossing the threshold of light and darkness, good and evil (Wójcik 2004: 116).

Grey is often present in terms of a vast middle space between colours. At the same time, black and white are also frequently present in the middle spaces of the film. Black is represented most prominently throughout the film, such as in the charred pyre, while white appears in many places in the form of snow.

A similar distribution of colour accents is visible in the depiction of the monastery. When Father Suryn crosses the gate for the first time, there is a notable difference between the sun shining on the inner courtyard and the space extending beyond the wall. This tonal contrast highlights the boundary between the monastery and the world around it.

Many tones are present in this scene: the light grey of the monastery walls, the white of the surrounding wall, and the black of the window recesses and the monastery gate. Against the background of elegant grey walls inside the convent, the white habits of the nuns appear, which contrast with Father Suryn's black cassock (Image 15).

During the exorcist's first conversation with Mother Joan in the refectory, they are framed by black tables and benches, which always appear in the shots of this scene, even if only fragmentarily. The demons' final attack on the abbess is launched from the front door, as the black opening of the door through which Mother Joan exits and returns provides the frame for the scene.

Two doors lead to the secluded exorcism site in the attic of the convent. Mother Joan enters through the black door and Father Suryn through the white one. They speak, separated by white habits drying on poles. Mother Joan removes the habits, moving the poles in a gentle rhythm that becomes a counterpoint to the seriousness of the issues discussed and the relationship between Suryn and Mother Joan (Wójcik 2007: 30). The background features grey walls and grey floorboards, separated by white lines, the remnants of the flour once stored here.

The grey of the walls of the inn is heavier and has a different density than the grey of the walls of the monastery. It conceals a semi-darkness, almost as though anticipating the narrative development. Father Suryn enters this greyness in a black cassock and places bread wrapped in a white cloth on the table. Sister Małgorzata a Cruce, standing against a grey wall in a white robe, holds a black cup in her hand. The black and white of the nuns' habits contrast with the greyness of the clothes worn by the supporting characters in the inn. The attire of Kaziuk, who escorts Father Suryn to the monastery, is distinguished by his white, grey and black sheepskin coat.

The tonal values of individual colours change depending on the context in which they appear. When Father Brym and Father Suryn walk past the pyre, three different shades of black can be distinguished: the black of the priest's cassock, the black of the exorcist's cassock and the black of the pyre. As Wójcik describes:

When we see on the screen Father Suryn in a black cassock standing next to the pyre, the black of the costume and the deep black of the pyre are different. The costume had a different texture and a different shade of black, closer to brown, working in a different colour sensitivity range of the black and white negative, while the black of the pyre was the black of burnt wood. The sun was shining on the pyre, bringing out the depth of the texture, while the costume was flat, serving as an undefined texture spot in the scene. The specificity is on the side of what is burnt. (Wójcik 2006: 45)

During the exorcisms conducted in the church, the white of Mother Joan's habit is brighter than the subdued white of the other sisters' habits. Again, Wójcik outlines the tonal contrast in the scene:

The whiteness of the costumes consisted of three values. From full white, through a white that was somehow bathed in a delicate sepia, to a white that could rival a human face in close-ups. In terms of scenographic preparation, various greys, whites and blacks were needed to be able to precisely operate with what appears in the film as one white and one black. (Wójcik 2006: 71)

The tonal triad of white, grey and black appears in the film in a fragmented way. It is present in the general scenography as well as in individual details; it is present in scenes and shots, the composition of frames, and the colours of costumes and props (Image 16).

Wójcik also introduced other compositional solutions in which grey disappears so that a sharp border between white and black is emphasised instead. This occurs, for instance, at the beginning of the exorcism scene. The nuns enter the church against a non-contrasting background but emerge from the darkness into a very bright light. The focus of the shot comprises close-ups of their faces. Before the exorcism scene, however, the tonal contrast reveals the actual locus of the struggle: the internal, spiritual reality.

The silent bell shown tolling at the end of the film represents a synthesis of the constant tonal shifts in the film between white, grey and black. In this case, the role of sound is taken over by light (Wójcik 2006: 47).

## “And I Became to Myself a Barren Land”

In the struggle that takes place in *Mother Joan of the Angels* between light and darkness, evil triumphs. Along with the deepening greyness, it gradually seeps into the world of the film. Father Suryn’s successive visits to the monastery allow the viewer to see how the initially sunlit courtyard becomes increasingly enveloped in grey colours and deeper shadows.

Darkness also enters the inn, where Sister Małgorzata a Cruce dances with Chrzyszczewski in a dark dress after abandoning her habit. The blackness of the night, the howling wind and the reflection of a face engulfed by darkness in the windowpane frame Father Suryn’s conversation with Satan, who orders him to kill the farmhands. In the morning, the deep shadow on the plane of the wall merges with the black of Father Suryn’s cassock. The choice has been made.

Although the scene of the murder of the farmhands does not appear in the film, the viewer can easily imagine it. Earlier in the film, the road that Kaziuk and Juraj took from the stable door to the place where they slept was shown twice. An astute viewer might guess that Father Suryn must have approached them



on this road. The viewer may also remember the shot of the men already asleep, shown with their heads turned towards the bottom edge of the frame. Speaking about this scene, Kawalerowicz noted:

When, for example, in *Mother Joan*, I photographed the farmhands lying down, who, contrary to the other frames, were 'upside down', I sought to achieve not a plastic effect but a dramatic one. I wanted to achieve the alienation of these people from their surroundings, to convey their loneliness. In addition, I suggest to the viewer – to their imagination – how Father Suryn saw them, what the murder scene looked like, which I do not show. A composition cannot lack dramatic value. (Janicki 1962: 39)

The madness of the priest murdering at night is juxtaposed with the almost bright white of the horses straining at their mangers.

Why was Father Suryn's mission unsuccessful? Can the answer to this question be found in the film? Does *Mother Joan of the Angels* make reference to the power of love between people or to those who have lost their faith in God and are unable to regain it? Let us return to the moment when, after leaving the parlour, Father Suryn goes to the centre of the film's main setting. He stops by the pyre and kneels beside it, his head resting on his hand on the charred wood. The words spoken by the exorcist at this moment may provide an understanding of the mystery present in Kawalerowicz's work, the drama that unites the place and the people who live in it.

An attentive viewer might say that this secret was known before the film, summarised by the legend of the Grail: Mother Joan is sick, and the earth is barren. Is this a correct intuition? Do any elements in the narrative structure of *Mother Joan of the Angels* parallel the legend of the Grail, which, when posed with a question, has the power to heal a place and its people? And who would ask that question? Is it uttered by Father Suryn when he falls by the pyre: "Lord, Lord, why have you forsaken me?". The exorcist recalls the words spoken by Christ on the cross.<sup>30</sup>

Does Father Suryn, kneeling by the pyre, see that this is where the cross should be?<sup>31</sup> Could the cross that appears in the centre of the frame as the central axis

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30 Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34.

31 The pole sticking out of the pyre in the film is a tree trunk with its branches cut off, resembling the letter 'Y'. Perhaps this is an attempt at a pictorial reference to the way the cross was depicted in the Middle Ages. Acting as the axis of the world, a bridge, or a ladder to God, as well as linking opposites and the spiritual principle with the principle of the phenomenal world, it could be represented precisely in the shape of the letter 'Y' or as a growing tree with bark, knots and even branches (Kopaliński 1990: 175).

of the depicted world, organising both physical space and the world of human morals with its outstretched arms, restore the just relations between heaven and earth, light and darkness, good and evil, and give Mother Joan the strength to renounce herself, Father Suryn the power to cast out demons, and fertility to the earth?

The title of T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* is taken from the last sentence of the second book of the Grail legend: "et factus sum mihi regio egestatis" (Kubiak 1987: 401–402). These are the words that Father Suryn might have said at the foot of the cross: "I sank away from Thee, and I wandered, O my God, too much astray from Thee my stay, in these days of my youth, and I became to myself a barren land" (St Augustine 1996).

Father Suryn does not see the cross. A moment later, he jumps away from the pyre, startled by the words of Wołodkiewicz, who is watching him from the side: "Father, please! Father is smearing his hands!".

Father Suryn's mission is unsuccessful. Perhaps he was not the person who was supposed to ask the healing question after all. Perhaps the viewer should be the one to ask this question, while at the same time accepting the answer that the film provides and treating Kawalerowicz's piece as a work with more serious overtones than a simple story of a priest's love for a nun.

Let us return to the beginning of the movie. The long prologue features captions with the names of the producers superimposed on the background image of Father Suryn praying in a prostrate position. The credits end, but the camera's point of view does not change. The priest gets up and moves straight towards the camera. The camera's point of view coincides with the direction of the priest's head during the prayer. An assembly cut is made, with a cross formed by the window frame visible in the reverse shot. Father Suryn was praying in front of this cross. The camera zooms in, and the window opens, the cross disappears, and the viewer sees the vast space where the action of the film will take place. Here is a window to understanding the drama depicted in the film *Mother Joan of the Angels*. This window is a cross.

## Images from the Film

*Image 1*



*Image 2*



Image 3



Image 4





*Image 5*



*Image 6*



*Image 7*



*Image 8*



*Image 9*



*Image 10*





*Image 11*



*Image 12*



*Image 13*

A black and white close-up photograph of a man with a beard and dark hair, looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a dark, high-collared garment. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

*Image 14*

A black and white wide shot photograph of a group of people in white robes, possibly nuns, standing in a courtyard or open area. They are arranged in a loose circle, and some are holding long, thin objects. In the background, there is a small building with a door and a hillside.

Image 15



Image 16



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## **Zabłąkani podróżni. *Matka Joanna od Aniołów* Jerzego Kawalerowicza**

### **STRESZCZENIE**

Rozdział zawiera szczegółową analizę i interpretację zrealizowanego w 1960 r. filmu *Matka Joanna od Aniołów* w reżyserii Jerzego Kawalerowicza, ze zdjęciami wybitnego operatora Jerzego Wójcika. Zastosowano w nim metodologię analizy antropologiczno-morfologicznej dzieła filmowego.

Po przedstawieniu założeń reżysera dotyczących filmowej adaptacji opowiadania Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza autor omawia ocenę filmu przez Komisję Ocen Scenariuszy oraz recenzje po premierze.

Rozdział zawiera analizę miejsca akcji z uwzględnieniem ukształtowania i wyglądu przestrzeni oraz roli karczmy i klasztoru wraz z charakteryzującą je symboliką mroku i światła. Przestrzeń środkowa pomiędzy karczmą a klasztorem zostaje zinterpretowana jako miejsce symbolicznego przenikania się dobra i zła, co pozwala postrzegać bohaterów filmu jako toczących wewnętrzną walkę „zabłąkanych podróżnych”.

Autor przedstawia zastosowane przez operatora zasady budowy kadru odwołujące się do przebiegu osi horyzontalnej i wertykalnej, obejmujące kompozycję diagonalną i wykorzystanie zasady „złotego podziału”.

W rozdziale omówiono także występowanie „złotego podziału” w strukturze czasowej wybranych scen i ujęć. Szczególna uwaga została poświęcona obecności w filmie bieli i czerni wraz z ich symboliką oraz szarości traktowanej przez Wójcika jako barwa pośrednia, łącząca biel i czern z ich znaczeniami symbolicznymi. Ponadto zwrócono uwagę na wykorzystanie ruchu wirowego jako sposobu wyrażenia motywu opętania siostr zakonnych.

Formę filmu, pozostającą w bardzo ścisłym związku z treścią, cechuje minimalizm. Jest to „tworzenie przez odejmowanie”. Twórcy zastosowali jedynie te środki wyrazu – elementy scenografii, kostiumy, rekwizyty – które były niezbędne do charakterystyki filmowych postaci i przedstawienia ich wewnętrznych zmagania.

Osobny podrozdział jest poświęcony analizie warstwy muzycznej i dźwiękowej: piosenki śpiewanej w karczmie, chóralnych psalmów w klasztorze oraz dźwięków istniejących w przestrzeni akcji ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem bicia dzwonu i jego niemej obecności w ostatniej scenie filmu.

## Zablodeli potniki – *Mati Ivana Angelska* Jerzyja Kawalerowicza

### POVZETEK

Poglavje predstavlja analizo in interpretacijo filma *Mati Ivana Angelska*, ki ga je leta 1960 režiral Jerzy Kawalerowicz, kot direktor fotografije pa je sodeloval Jerzy Wójcik. Pri obravnavi je bila uporabljena metoda antropološko-morfološke analize filmskega dela.

Po predstavitvi izhodišč režiserjeve filmske adaptacije novele Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza je v besedilu predstavljeno mnenje Komisije za oceno scenarijev ter recenzije po filmski premieri. V poglavju je analiziran dogajalni prostor, pri čemer analiza upošteva obliko in izgled prostora ter vlogo gostilne in samostana, skupaj z zanju značilno simboliko svetlobe in mraka. Vmesni prostor med krčmo in samostanom je interpretiran kot simbolni prostor prepletanja dobrega in zla, kar napeljuje na interpretacijo filmskih likov v smislu posameznikov, v katerih se odvija notranji boj »zablodelih popotnikov«. Analiza preučuje kompozicijo kadra, kot jo je zasnoval direktor fotografije in se nanašajo na horizontalno in vertikalno os ter vključujejo diagonalno kompozicijo in pravila »zlatega reza«. Slednji je obravnavan tudi v kontekstu časovne strukture izbranih prizorov. Posebna pozornost je namenjena prisotnosti bele in črne barve ter njunim simbolnim pomenom, ter sivini, ki jo Jerzy Wójcik obravnava kot vmesno barvo, ki povezuje belino in črnino. Predstavljena je uporaba vrtenja in krožnega gibanja kot načina izražanja motiva obsedenosti nun.

Filmska forma, ki je tesno povezana z vsebino, je minimalistična in jo lahko opišemo kot »ustvarjanje z odstranjevanjem«. Uporabljena so le tista izrazna sredstva – elementi scenografije, kostumi, rekviziti –, ki so bistvena za karakterizacijo filmskih likov in njihovih notranjih bojov. Ob tem je posebno podglavje posvečeno glasbeni in zvočni plasti filma: pesmi v gostilni, zborovskim psalmom v samostanu in zvokom iz okolja, zlasti zvonjenju zvona in njegovi nemi prisotnosti v zadnjem prizoru.





**Seweryn Kuśmierczyk**

**ANTHROPOLOGICAL-MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS  
OF A FILM AS FILM STUDIES PRACTICE**



Seweryn Kuśmierczyk

## **Anthropological-Morphological Analysis of a Film as Film Studies Practice**

In the chapters devoted to the films *Pharaoh*, *The Wedding* and *Mother Joan of the Angels*, the author uses the original methodology of anthropological-morphological analysis of a film. This procedure allows for a detailed examination of the elements that make up a film and shape its character and structure (Kuśmierczyk 2014: 13–34; 2015: 11–27).

At this stage of the work, the analysis covers the detailed use of individual means of expression and the relationships between them in specific fragments of the film, that is, shots or scenes. The network of meanings presented in the work is related to explicit analytical planes, which are the basic categories of the presented world. At the same time, the main aspects of the film's structure are also read as anthropological categories: space, time and people are perceived as film characters in the analysis phase.

### **The Cinematographic Work Deserves Attention**

The anthropological-morphological analysis of a film aims to obtain detailed information in the process of consecutively performed analytical tasks. This combined methodology makes it possible to transcend the superficial reception of the work and facilitates the formulation of interpretative proposals. This is achieved by using the information obtained during the data analysis and situating the film in external systems of meaning.

The findings gathered during the analysis, together with the proposed interpretative contexts, allow us to search for meanings at 'higher' levels of understanding, with particular emphasis on anthropological interpretative horizons. Here, I present the findings based on the analytical work carried out on the film, both following it and embedded within it.

This analysis aims to reveal the details of the film's fragments as accurately as possible and then provide insight into the entire film. The methodology used allows us to see the full network of meanings constructed by detailed perceptions, thus enabling us to formulate a justification for our proposed understanding of the film and its interpretation.

The use of anthropological-morphological analysis allows the users to adopt a receptive attitude. They are receptive and sensitive, open to accepting the entire spectrum of information coming from the analysis of individual fragments of the film, while simultaneously co-creating a view of the work as a whole.

Interpretations related to a cinematic work should not be expected to draw conclusions solely based on strict and logical reasoning. By their very nature, they cannot be purely discursive. Phenomenological approaches play an important role, and, as such, interpretations should be derived from material containing argumentation that is created by following defined analytical rules.

The aforementioned objective method, which refers to the classical art of analysis and interpretation, is contrasted with intuitive or impressionistic approaches and ephemeral fashions within the humanities.

## 'Thick Description' in Film Studies

The methodology underlying the analytical studies presented in this volume is similar to that of 'thick description' used in cultural anthropology. Its formula was proposed by the British philosopher Gilbert Ryle, from whom it was adopted and transferred to the field of cultural research by Clifford Geertz. A 'thick description' focuses the anthropologist's attention on what a given human action, even if small and ephemeral, expresses in a particular situation and what meanings it brings to that particular situation (Geertz 1973: 3–30).

The anthropological-morphological analysis looks for meanings articulated by employing film expression used in a specific way, at a discrete moment. At the same time, it examines the 'networks of meanings' created in the film in relation to selected analytical planes related to the film work, along with their cultural meanings introduced in the film. The analytical work is characterised by meticulousness concerning the means of expression used by the individual.

The result of the analytical work carried out in this way, which is a kind of ‘thick description’, can, referring to the terminology used by Geertz, be opposed to ‘thin description’ (Geertz 1973: 7) when the treatment of the film is superficial. A ‘thin description’ does not analyse the use of cinematic means of expression and does not refer to them in the interpretation. Nor does it consider the interconnections that exist between the various means of expression and their relation to the levels of interpretation. A superficial approach even overlooks many of the elements that co-create the film image; it does not acknowledge their existence.

It should be noted here that the interpretative findings formulated by reflecting on the information gleaned from the application of anthropological-morphological analysis of a film work do not claim to be the only nor the final interpretation. They exist alongside other proposed interpretations, which, however, may be challenged by more precise findings. The method of detailed analysis of a film serves to enable its interpretation that “takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation” (Geertz 1973: 18).

## The Principle of Syzygies

Anthropological-morphological analysis was born at the intersection between scientific research, film studies and academic teaching practice. Resulting from a specific, legitimate need, it became a kind of implementation of the still valid proposal formulated in 1984 by Alicja Helman:

Analytical proceedings, the sequence of necessary activities, the course of the analysis itself and the method of consolidating its results are all matters that can and should be normalised. The point is not to restrict the researcher’s free initiatives and create rigid rules for analytical activities, but [...] a certain accepted metalanguage, a basic canon, formulas and models of analysis are needed. If only for didactic purposes, because film analysis [...] is a subject that we teach at universities. This complex of issues, its examination and ordering, belongs to the so-called pressing problems that must be solved first if film studies are to develop further as a university discipline and its scientific nature is to be unquestionable (Helman 1984: 22).<sup>1</sup>

The first methodological proposal, co-creating the presented research concept, is the ‘principle of syzygies’, which is a solution that prevents the occurrence of the most common and negative consequences of deficiencies in analytical and interpretative work. One of the most frequently repeated and, at the same time,

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1 Translated into English by Maciej Żurawski.

most significant mistakes is the omission of aspects of the form of a film during analysis and interpretation.

The methodological approach called the 'principle of syzygies' formulates four pairs of specific thematic areas relating to the film. The areas forming each pair are closely linked, a connection that can be described as a 'syzygy' (Greek *syzygos* – 'yoked together'). In each pair, one area that is usually included in the analysis is combined with another area that is often overlooked or forgotten in film studies practice. This allows researchers who undertake analytical and interpretative tasks to acknowledge both areas and, at the same time, to notice the relationships between them and the meanings derived from these relationships.

The first pair (and unity) comprises the content and form of the film work. The second pair consists of space and time, two concepts that are distinct yet unified. In the humanities, the category of space-time has not been sufficiently recognised to date, contrary to the separately considered categories of space and time. Therefore, in analytical and interpretative practice, space and time are subject to separate analyses. While conducting these analyses, however, it is necessary to notice the ties between both categories, as well as their original unity.

In the third pair, the image and audio layers of the film work are combined. The world of sounds present in the film and its co-existence with the image must always be considered during this analysis. Thanks to the use of digital technology, the possibilities for creating the sound layer in a film have increased significantly, resulting in the enhanced role of sound. This is a dynamically developing field of contemporary cinema.

The fourth pair involves the protagonists of film stories. In a film, the character is embedded in the surrounding screen reality, but the film image refers to the real world with its cultural regularities, which are internalised by the character and, at the same time, projected onto the outside world. A person acting as a film protagonist gives the film world its fullness of being. It also accommodates their spiritual experience, which is paired with the reality that surrounds them.

## Analytical Proceedings

Due to the specificity of the film as a medium, the viewer's perceptual abilities are not sufficient for them to be able to simultaneously, consciously and attentively perceive all of the visual and auditory means of expression and their functions in every fragment of the film and the entire work, together with the connections existing between them and the changes taking place. During analytical work,



the film must therefore be watched in an orderly manner multiple times. Moreover, there is a need to formulate rules of conduct (Kuśmierczyk 2014: 13–34).

The film work should be divided into fragments that will be watched and analysed in turn. The shots and scenes create a division inherent in the film.<sup>2</sup> The scope and sequence of perceptual-analytical tasks should be established. This is essential for the analysis to be accurate and effective. The analysis of morphological elements should be carried out focusing on a specific analytical plane – space, time and characters – that is, it should be concerned with the way they create their presence and shape in the film image. This is a multi-stage work involving all morphological elements, respectively.

As the work progresses – in parallel, as it were – the dependencies and connections between the various means of expression emerge, constructing meanings precisely due to their co-presence.

A very important element of this methodology is the description created during the performance of all analytical tasks. These are working notes, a record of the arrangements resulting from the work. This process should be the least onerous, but the functionality of its form – due to the need to develop the collected information, thus enabling its full use – should be as wide as possible. The description should provide simultaneous access to all notes, enable the introduction of annotations, and allow for any grouping of the collected material and its selection according to the needs (Kuśmierczyk 2014: 25–27).

It is also very helpful to keep an up-to-date list of new tasks that need to be performed during the analysis. This involves, for example, noting a detailed formal arrangement, which is relevant to the idea behind the examined fragment of the film. It is therefore necessary to check the presence of this arrangement and its possible evolution over the course of the film. Such situations occur very often throughout the analysis.

The description allows the analysis to transcend the linear nature of the course of the film. It enables a quick and detailed insight into any part of the film and a comparison with any other part.

After completing the description, it is possible to proceed to the next stage of the work, which is an analysis of the connections, interpermeability and fusion existing between space, time and characters within the analysed fragments

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2 During the work, selected frames are also analysed, but the smallest useful unit is the shot, which records the passage of time, movement and changes taking place in the on-screen reality. It is only in a shot that sound may appear; a frame has no audio equivalent.

of the film, as well as a juxtaposition and analysis of the functions performed simultaneously by the various means of expression on these planes. In this way, it is possible to have a detailed and in-depth insight into the entire film, its composition and structure. Moreover, this analysis permits us to inscribe the story of humanity contained in the film into anthropological interpretative horizons, into the cultural order that human beings experience and in which they exist.

## Anthropology and Poetics

The screen reality of the analysed film refers to the real world. The film's means of expression act as a bridge between the objectively existing reality, with its cultural ordering, and the film image, which, despite all of the differences, maintains this kind of ordering. Space, time and characters, thanks to the technical and artistic transformation given to them by the filmmakers, co-create the world of the picture that carries information about people and the world around them. The film becomes "the essence and sublimation of real human space-time" (Dragovič 2012: 41).

All of the chapters devoted to films in this book are the result of research combining film analysis and film studies methodology with anthropological knowledge and sensitivity.

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## Analiza antropologiczno-morfologiczna dzieła filmowego jako praktyka filmoznawcza

### STRESZCZENIE

Rozdziały poświęcone filmom *Faraon*, *Wesele* i *Matka Joanna od Aniołów* wykorzystują autorską metodologię analizy antropologiczno-morfologicznej dzieła filmowego. Pozwala ona na szczegółową, wyprowadzaną z obrazu filmowego analizę elementów współtworzących poszczególne utwory filmowe. Analizie zostaje poddane konkretne użycie filmowych środków wyrazu oraz istniejące pomiędzy nimi zależności – obecna w dziele filmowym sieć znaczeń – w odniesieniu do określonych płaszczyzn analitycznych, którymi są podstawowe kategorie świata przedstawionego, a zarazem główne aspekty struktury dzieła filmowego odczytywane w tej koncepcji także jako kategorie antropologiczne: przestrzeń, czas i człowiek postrzegany w fazie analizy jako postać filmowa.

Zebrane w trakcie analizy drobiazgowe ustalenia wraz z proponowanymi kontekstami interpretacyjnymi umożliwiają poszukiwanie sensów na „wyższych” poziomach znaczeń ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem antropologicznych horyzontów interpretacyjnych.

Metodologia zbliża się do stosowanego w antropologii kulturowej „opisu gęstego” i jest przeciwstawiona powierzchownemu, mało wnikliwemu podejściu do filmu. Jednym z jej elementów jest „zasada syzygiów”. Tworzy ona cztery pary określonych obszarów tematycznych odnoszących się do dzieła filmowego. Obszary umieszczone w każdej z par są ze sobą ściśle powiązane. Pozwala to osobom podejmującym pracę analityczną pamiętać o obu obszarach, a równocześnie dostrzegać występujące pomiędzy nimi związki i wynikające z tego faktu znaczenia.

Pierwszą parę, a zarazem jedność, tworzą treść i forma dzieła filmowego. Para druga przypomina o jedności przestrzeni i czasu. W trzeciej parze zostały połączone warstwa obrazowa i warstwa audytywna dzieła filmowego. Para czwarta łączy rzeczywistość otaczającą bohaterów z ich światem wewnętrznym.

Metodologia powstała jako efekt indywidualnej pracy naukowo-badawczej i filmoznawczej akademickiej praktyki dydaktycznej Seweryna Kuśmierczyka.

W rozdziale omówiono podstawowe założenia postępowania analitycznego: sposoby uporządkowania pracy oraz zasady analizy elementów morfologicznych w związku z przestrzenią, czasem i postaciami filmowymi. Przedstawiono

też konieczność prowadzenia opisu analitycznego i jego zasady. Kolejny omówiony etap pracy stanowi analiza wzajemnego przenikania się i zespolenia istniejącego pomiędzy przestrzenią, czasem i postaciami w obrębie analizowanych fragmentów filmu oraz zestawienie i analiza funkcji pełnionych przez poszczególne środki wyrazu na wszystkich tych płaszczyznach równocześnie. W ten sposób pojawia się możliwość szczegółowego i pogłębionego wglądu w całe dzieło filmowe, w jego kompozycję i strukturę, wpisania zawartej w nim opowieści o człowieku w antropologiczne horyzonty interpretacyjne, w ład kulturowy, którego człowiek doświadcza i w którym istnieje.

Wszystkie zamieszczone w książce rozdziały poświęcone filmom są efektem pracy badawczej łączącej metodologię analizy dzieła filmowego i wiedzę filmoznawczą z wiedzą i wrażliwością antropologiczną.

## Antropološko-morfološka analiza filmskega dela kot filmološka praksa

### POVZETEK

V poglavjih, posvečenih filmom *Faraon*, *Svatba* in *Mati Ivana Angelska*, je uporabljena izvirna metoda antropološko-morfološke analize filmskega dela, ki omogoča podrobno analizo elementov, ki soustvarjajo vsak film in izhajajo neposredno iz filmske slike. Metoda se posveča analizi konkretne uporabe izraznih sredstev in razmerij med njimi – mreži pomenov, ki je prisotna v filmskem delu –, in sicer z vidika specifičnih analitičnih ravnin. Te ravnine predstavljajo osnovne kategorije predstavljenega sveta in hkrati glavne vidike filmske strukture, ki so v okviru pričujoče metode razumljene kot antropološke kategorije prostora, časa in človeka, pri čemer je slednji v analizi obravnavan kot filmski lik. Metoda je rezultat individualnega znanstvenega in raziskovalnega dela Seweryna Kuśmierczyka ter njegove akademske prakse na področju filmskih študij.

V postopku tovrstne analize filmskega dela raziskovalec zbere podrobne informacije in opažanja, ki skupaj s predlaganimi interpretacijskimi konteksti omogočajo iskanje smisla na »višjih« pomenskih ravneh, zlasti znotraj antropoloških horizontov interpretacije. Metoda je podobna »gostemu opisu«, znanem iz kulturne antropologije, in je nasprotje površinskemu in nepoglobljenemu pristopu k filmom. Eden izmed njenih elementov je »pravilo sizigijev«. Ta določa štiri pare izbranih tematskih področij, ki se nanašajo na filmsko delo, področji v vsakem paru pa sta medsebojno tesno povezani. Tistim, ki se lotijo analitično-interpretacijskih nalog, to omogoča, da ne zanemarijo posameznega elementa, hkrati pa upoštevajo povezave med njimi in iz njih izhajajoče pomene.

Prvi par in hkrati celoto tvorita vsebina in oblika filmskega dela. Drugi par spominja na enotnost prostora in časa. Tretji par združuje vizualno in zvočno plast filmskega dela, četrti par pa združuje resničnost, ki obdaja filmske like, z njihovim notranjim svetom.

V poglavju so opredeljena osnovna izhodišča analitičnega postopka: načini načrtovanja in organizacije dela, izhodišča za analizo morfoloških elementov, povezanih s prostorom, časom in filmskimi liki. Predstavljena sta tudi nujnost analitičnega opisa in njegov potek. Drugi korak je analiza medsebojnega prepletanja in povezanosti prostora, časa in likov v izbranem odlomku filma ter primerjava in analiza funkcij, ki jih posamezna filmska izrazna sredstva na teh ravlinah opravljajo istočasno. Ta pristop odpira možnost podrobnega in poglo-

bljenega vpogleda v celotno filmsko delo, njegovo kompozicijo in strukturo ter možnost, da v filmu predstavljeno pripoved o človeku povemo z antropološkimi obzorji interpretacije v kulturno ureditev, ki jo človek doživlja in v kateri obstaja. Vsa poglavja te knjige, posvečena filmom, so rezultat raziskovalnega dela, ki metodo analize filmskega dela in filmološko znanje povezuje z antropološkimi kategorijami.





## FILMOGRAPHY



## *Pharaoh (Faraon)*

Director: Jerzy Kawalerowicz; cinematographers: Jerzy Wójcik, Wiesław Zdort; set designer: Jerzy Skrzepiński; screenwriters: Tadeusz Konwicki, Jerzy Kawalerowicz; storyboard: Jerzy Kawalerowicz, Jerzy Wójcik; makeup: Teresa Tomaszewska; camera operator: Witold Sobociński; music: Adam Walaciński; costume designers: Andrzej Majewski, Barbara Ptak, Lidia Rzeszewska, Maria Czekalska, Czesław Piaskowski; second directors: Andrzej Czekalski, Mieczysław Waśkowski; assistant directors: Andrzej Herman, Henryk Bielski, Marian Wróblewski, Urszula Orczykowska; assistant camera operators: Czesław Grabowski, Eugeniusz Gawrysiak, Jacek Stachlewski, Aleksy Krywsza; set builders: Franciszek Trzaskowski, Albin Wejman, Romuald Korczak, Bronisław Chromy, Tadeusz Łodziana, Kazimierz Zieliński; makeup assistants: Irena Kosecka, Jan Płażewski, Mirosław Jakubowski; sound recording: Stanisław Piotrowski; recording assistants: Janusz Rosół, Henryk Klimczak, Zygmunt Nowak; music advisor: Anna Izykowska-Mironowicz; editor: Wiesława Otocka; riding trainer: Antoni Byszewski; Egyptology advisor: Kazimierz Michałowski, Shadi Abdel Salam (Cairo Film Institute); production manager: Ludwik Hager; second production manager: Jerzy Rutowicz.

### Cast:

Jerzy Zelnik (two roles: Ramses XIII, Lykon), Wiesława Mazurkiewicz (Queen Nikotris), Barbara Brylska (Kama, Phoenician priestess), Krystyna Mikołajewska (Sarah), Ewa Krzyżewska (Hebron), Piotr Pawłowski (Herhor), Leszek Herdegen (Pentuer), Stanisław Milski (High Priest Mefres), Kazimierz Opaliński (Beroes), Mieczysław Voit (High Priest of Samentu), Alfred Łodziński (Hiram, Tyrian prince), Andrzej Girtler (Ramses XII, father of Ramses XIII), Emir Buczacki (Thutmose), Józef Czerniawski (High Priest Mentezufis), Edward Rączkowski (Dagon, Phoenician merchant), Ryszard Ronczewski

(Ennana), Leonard Andrzejewski (Tehenna, Libyan commander), Jerzy Block (Fellah), Bohdan Janiszewski (High Priest – Keeper of the Labyrinth), Wiktor Grotowicz (Nitager), Jarosław Skulski (Sargon, Assyrian envoy), Marian Nosek (Rabsun, Phoenician merchant), Lucyna Winnicka (Priestess at the mummification of Ramses XII).

Literary basis: Bolesław Prus, *Pharaoh* (novel)

Production: Zespół Filmowy “Kadr”, 1965

Premiere: 11 March 1966

Premiere of the film after digital restoration: 16 April 2012

Length: 176 minutes

Length of the shortened and digitally restored version: 145 minutes

Prizes:

1967 – nomination for the Academy Award of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in the category Best Foreign Language Film

### *The Wedding (Wesele)*

Director: Andrzej Wajda; cinematographer: Witold Sobociński; set designer: Tadeusz Wybult; screenwriter: Andrzej Kijowski; storyboard: Andrzej Wajda, Witold Sobociński, Andrzej Kotkowski; makeup: Halina Ber, Irena Czerwińska; camera operators: Sławomir Idziak, Jan Mogilnicki; music: Stanisław Radwan; music assistant: Eugeniusz Rudnik, Studio Eksperymentalne Polskiego Radia; costume designer: Krystyna Zachwatowicz; second director: Andrzej Kotkowski; assistant directors: Krzysztof Bukowski, Witold Holz; assistant set designers: Felicja Blaszyńska, Piotr Dudziński; interior set designer: Maciej Maria Putowski; dramaturgy assistant: Ryszard Kosiński; sound recording: Wiesława Dembińska; recording assistants: Małgorzata Jaworska, Anna Grabowska, Kazimierz Kucharski; lighting: Aleksy Krywsza; assistant costume designers: Alina Sienkiewicz, Marek Wolski; editor: Halina Prugar; photography: Renata Pajchel; advisor: Zdzisław Szewczyk, Kraków Ethnographic Museum; producers: Barbara Pec-Ślesicka, Tadeusz Drewno.

Cast:

Marek Walczewski (Host), Izabela Olszewska (Wife), Ewa Ziętek (Bride), Daniel Olbrychski (Groom), Emilia Krakowska (Marysia, Bride's sister), Mieczysław

Stoor (Wojtek), Kazimierz Opaliński (Father), Henryk Borowski (Old Man), Marek Perepeczko (Jasiek), Janusz Bukowski (Kasper), Andrzej Łapicki (Poet), Wojciech Pszoniak (two roles: Journalist, Stańczyk), Andrzej Szczepkowski (Nos), Mieczysław Czechowicz (Priest), Barbara Wrzesińska (Maryna), Gabriela Kwasz (Zosia), Małgorzata Lorentowicz (Radczyni), Maria Konwicka (Haneczka), Franciszek Pieczka (Headman), Hanna Skarżanka (Klimina), Bożena Dykiel (Kasia), Leszek Piskorz (two roles: Staszek, Kuba), Anna Górska (Isia), Mieczysław Voit (Jew, Rachel's father), Maja Komorowska-Tyszkiewicz (Rachel), Czesław Niemen (Straw-man – voice only), Olgierd Łukaszewicz (Ghost), Czesław Wołłejko (Hetman), Wirgiliusz Gryń (Szela), Artur Młodnicki (Wernyhora), Wiktor Grotowicz (apparition accompanying Hetman), vocal and dance groups: Kamionka (Łysa Góra), Koronka (Bobowa), Opocznianka (Opoczno).

Literary basis: Stanisław Wyspiański, *The Wedding* (play)

Production: Zespół Filmowy "X", 1972

Premiere: 8 January 1973, Juliusz Słowacki Theatre, Kraków

Premiere of the film after digital restoration: 13 December 2010

Length: 102 min

Prizes:

1973 – Silver Shell at the San Sebastián International Film Festival

1974 – Golden Camera in the category Best Polish Film for 1973 (*Film* magazine award)

### ***Mother Joan of the Angels (Matka Joanna od Aniołów)***

Director: Jerzy Kawalerowicz; cinematographer: Jerzy Wójcik; screenwriters: Tadeusz Konwicki, Jerzy Kawalerowicz; set designers: Roman Mann, Tadeusz Wybult; makeup: Teresa Tomaszewska, Roman Kęsikowski; camera operator: Antoni Nurzyński; music: Adam Walaciński; costume designers: Roman Mann, Tadeusz Wybult; assistant directors: Maria Starzeńska, Marian Ziętkiewicz, Urszula Orczykowska; assistant camera operators: Maciej Kijowski, Zdzisław Borowczyk; assistant set designers: Zdzisław Kielanowski, Wiesława Chojkowska; assistant costume designers: Zdzisław Kielanowski, Wiesława Chojkowska; lighting: Aleksander Lewandowski; sound recording: Józef Bartczak; assistant sound designers: Zygmunt Nowak, Józef Tomporek; musical performers: Polish

Radio Choir; conductor: Tadeusz Dobrzański; editor: Wiesława Otocka; assistant editor: Felicja Rogowska; advisor: Władysław Tomkiewicz; production manager: Ludwik Hager; production assistants: Zygmunt Wójcik, Jan Włodarczyk.

#### Cast:

Lucyna Winnicka (Mother Joan of the Angels), Mieczysław Voit (two roles: Father Józef Suryn, Rabbi Reb Ishe), Anna Ciepielewska (Sister Małgorzata), Maria Chwalibóg (the Roma woman Awdosia), Kazimierz Fabisiak (Father Brym), Stanisław Jasiukiewicz (Chrzęszczewski), Zygmunt Zintel (Wołodkowicz), Jerzy Kaczmarek (Kaziuk), Franciszek Pieczka (Odryn), Jarosław Kuszewski (Juraj), Lech Wojciechowski (Piątkowski), Zygmunt Malawski (Exorcist), Andrzej Antkowiak (young Jew; not in the opening credits), Halina Billing (nun; not in the opening credits), Lech Rzegocki (Alunio; not in the opening credits), Iwona Słoczyńska (nun; not in the opening credits), Magda Teresa Wójcik (nun; not in the opening credits).

Literary basis: Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, *Mother Joan of the Angels* (novella)

Production: Zespół Filmowy "Kadr", 1960

Premiere: 9 February 1961

Premiere of the film after digital restoration: 8 March 2010

Length: 103 min

#### Prizes:

1961 – Special Jury Prize at the Cannes International Film Festival

1961 – Crystal Star for lead actress Lucyna Winnicka (French Film Academy Award)

1963 – West German Oberhausen Young Critics Award

1966 – Tribunascope Award for the lead actress Lucyna Winnicka at the Panama International Film Festival

1966 – Tribunascope Award for Anna Ciepielewska at the Panama International Film Festival

1966 – Tribunascope Award for Zygmunt Zintel at the Panama International Film Festival



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The book collection *Masterpieces of Polish Literature and Film* presents important works of Polish literature and their film adaptations, which are distinguished by a high artistic level and are among the classics of Polish cinematography. Each book in the collection consists of literary chapters contributed by Lidija Rezončnik and chapters written by Seweryn Kuśmierczyk that contain analyses and interpretations of films based on literary works. The literary works are presented in a broader literary and cultural context. This context is also taken into account in the film analyses and interpretations, which are based on the method of anthropological-morphological analysis of the film work.

The first book is dedicated to the novel *Pharaoh* by Bolesław Prus (*Faraon*, 1895) and the film *Pharaoh* by Jerzy Kawalerowicz (*Faraon*, 1965), the drama *The Wedding* by Stanisław Wyspiański (*Wesele*, 1901) and the film *The Wedding* by Andrzej Wajda (*Wesele*, 1972), and the novel *Mother Joan of the Angels* by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (*Matka Joanna od Aniołów*, 1946) and Jerzy Kawalerowicz's film *Mother Joan of the Angels* (*Matka Joanna od Aniołów*, 1960).

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