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## **“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*], *Varsavian 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-

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 Kraszewski (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 narodowi*) – 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 Raławice".

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 (Mickey-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 Staniewiczowa, 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 *Raclawice*. 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 Raclawice. 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/Włodzimirz Tetmajer collaborated in the painting of the monumental canvas (15 m × 120 m, 1800 m<sup>2</sup>) *Panorama of Raclawice*, 1894, which, like the Matejko canvas, depicts the Battle of Raclawice.



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. Podrżaj 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 odvracala 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 neobstoje 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).