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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,¹ Wajda proposed to Jerzy Andrzejewski that he write a screenplay in mid-1962.² 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.³ 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.⁴ 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

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.⁵ 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.⁶ During this period, he sought outdoor locations for the film, and a test shooting was also carried out.⁷ 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 Sobociński⁸ 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 1972.⁹

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...”.¹⁰ 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”.¹¹

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 Jasiiek 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”.¹²

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.

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),¹³ 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.¹⁴

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 Gierymski,¹⁵ 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 Rydel¹⁶ and Jadwiga Mikołajczykówna¹⁷ 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's¹⁸ house. Viewers are thus immersed in the event, just as Wyspiański once was, having been one of the guests at the wedding.

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

15 Aleksander Gierymski (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,¹⁹ 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.

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.²⁰ 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...²¹

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.²² 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

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,²³ 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

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.²⁴

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*.²⁵

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.²⁶

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’

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”²⁷

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.²⁸

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

28 Sobociński’s statement in the documentary *Portrait in Space. Tadeusz Wybułt* (*Portret w przestrzeni. Tadeusz Wybułt*), 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...”:²⁹ 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

²⁹ 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's³⁰ painting depicting Wernyhora³¹ 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 Piłsudski³² from a portrait painted by Jacek Malczewski.³³

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

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 kóło)* – “the stoop of the Chochoł 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.³⁴

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

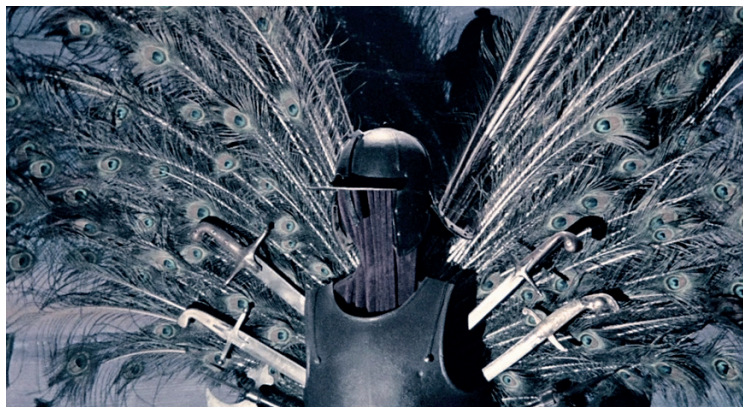


Image 4



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 większą 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, umeščene 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 pravljica 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.