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— FRANK BRON

Wedding dir. Wajda

on power in a culture remote in time and place – however linked by its undercurrent to Polish history – lacks the direct symbolic power of a Grunwald battle or the even more alive issue of *Ashes*, and it certainly has none of the fun of *Saragossa*.

In box-office terms all it could sell was bigger battles, bigger sets, more beautiful women, etcetera. But at the end of it all, those thousands of soldiers and weapons, those months of contact with desert snakes and scorpions, the awesome sands and the heat are all crammed into a few flat tin cans. The most unbelievably spectacular scenes in some of the great Hollywood spectacles were achieved with glass shots and miniatures.

The Story of Sin

Not an epic in production terms *The Story of Sin* (*Dzieje Grzechu*, 1975), Borowczyk's film of Stefan Zeromski's 1906 novel, marked his return to Poland.

Invited by the *Tor* unit to make a film after his recognised success with *Blanche*, Borowczyk already had a reputation as an eroticist if not pornographer. Coupled with his choice of a turn of the century novel which was originally condemned as indecent and included on the Index by the Church, this made his producers nervous. Krzysztof Zanussi, now head of *Tor*, recalls the conferences between Borowczyk and his colleagues in an attempt to thrash out a scenario that had some chance of a green light from the Ministry of Culture. The film was the most explicit to date in Poland, though not explicit enough for Borowczyk's taste.

The plot has Ewa (Grazyna Dlugolecka), the respectable daughter of a landowning family (now settled in Warsaw), falling in love with the married Lukas, who is trying to obtain a divorce. Lukas disappears to Rome where he hopes to facilitate his divorce. Ewa is pregnant

and, unable to care for the child, kills it. She eventually discovers that Lukas has obtained his divorce and married a wealthy young girl.

Sinking into prostitution, she becomes the mistress of a villain named Pochron (Roman Wilhelmi) who plans to burgle the Roman apartment of Lukas, whom Ewa still loves. Ewa prevents Pochron from killing Lukas and in the scuffle she is mortally wounded and dies in the arms of her love.

The Wedding

That other 'Elizabethan', Stanislaw Wyspianski, in addition to being a successful stage designer and painter, was a powerful playwright who wrote *The Wedding* (*Wesele*), a play about a turn of the century wedding between a poet and a peasant girl. The play is spun around the actual wedding of a poet friend, Lucjan Rydel, to a peasant girl from a village near Cracow. The wedding took place on November 20 1900 at Our Lady's Church in Cracow. Wajda's screen treatment in 1972 was written by Andrzej Kijowski, and stars Daniel Olbrychski and Ewa Zietek.

The reception intermixed the intelligentsia (in effect the gentry) with guests from among the peasants – that vast estate of Poland (85% of the population when the Partitions began) who had never been included in the 'democracy' which the nobles had abrogated to themselves. It is the superficial democratic attitude of the intelligentsia that Wyspianski attacks in his play.

Wyspianski integrated his design skills into his writing in the same sense that the plastic skills of Borowczyk as a graphist animator are evident in his films and screenplays. Wyspianski's design experiments were far ahead of their time and he stands alongside Gordon Craig and Max Reinhardt as a theatrical innovator.