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HIGH NOON AT THE SOLIDARITY CORRAL: WAJDA'S WAŁĘSA AND THE CLASSIC WESTERN

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A standard complaint in the past used to be how Hollywood exploited world cinema for ideas. The prime exhibit was John Sturges' *Magnificent Seven*, an evident remake of Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, as well as a number of lesser remakes. Largely overlooked was how narratives travelled both ways. For instance, more astute critics knew that in his classic *Tokyo Story* Yasujiro Ozu drew heavily on Leo McCarey's *Make Way for Tomorrow*. In Polish cinema, of course, critics continue to compare Andrzej Wajda's *Man of Marble* with *Citizen Kane*. On occasion Hitchcock's *Rear Window* is brought up in reference to Kiesłowski's *A Short Film about Love*. I myself see Ryszard Bugajski's *General Nil* as clearly patterned on *A Man for All Seasons*. This brings us to Fred Zinnemann and now for the boldest use of one of his films.

Remarkably, the Hollywood director's *High Noon* was not used to buttress one or another film. History itself borrowed the iconic Marshal Will Kane from the film to add the finishing touch to the Solidarity revolution. In the famous poster for the June 4, 1989 partially free general election in Poland that led to a crucial stage in overturning the communist regime, a solitary Will Kane faces the implied totalitarian state armed only with the Solidarity ideals, represented by the iconic banner forcefully depicted in bold red behind his figure. With the odds against the Marshal and the workers movement at the time, history provided the near Hollywood ending in an election, instead of a shoot out — regardless of the presence of Soviet tanks in the country.

Despite dramatic changes, these tanks were to remain in the country for another couple of years. The man responsible for the Soviet Army's final departure from Poland in 1991, which can be counted as symbolic of the return of full sovereignty of the people deprived of it since 1939, was none other than Lech Wałęsa — the legendary leader of Solidarity and President of the Republic of Poland at the time. It was his last moment of glory before his own star began to wane on account of growing suspicions about his possible collaboration with the communist security services in the 1970s before he became involved in the dissident movements that would evolve into Solidarity.

It was to a great extent to salvage what was left of the legend of Solidarity that evidently motivated the preeminent filmmaker Andrzej Wajda to eventually make his last ambitious historical drama: *Wałęsa: Man of Hope* (2013). By that time the eponymous hero was himself more like Will Kane at the end of *High Noon* who had discarded his badge on the streets of the town he had defended; Wałęsa had already parted ways in enmity with what officially remained of the historic trade union in independent Poland.

In light of the role, however slight, of the classic Western in Polish history, one can ask at this point what traces are there of the Western in Wajda's attempt to capture both the legend and history of the hero most closely associated with the movement behind the Solidarity banner that accompanied Will Kane on the poster? Did the Polish filmmaker pay back the film that assisted his country at that crucial juncture? The question might seem facetious, and is partly intended as such. But if we extend the comparison with the entire Western genre, or at least its classic representatives, then we have something to go on. After all if the critics at *Cahiers du Cinéma* valued directors such as John Ford and Howard Hawks, and Andre Bazin himself praised the Western, it is not out of the question that films from the genre in its heyday might have caught the attention of Wajda. Moreover, although — as suggested — the influence of *Citizen Kane* on *Man of Marble* is fairly obvious, especially at the level of the frame story, a closer look at the construction of Birkut, its hero, shows the impact of Frank Capra's *Meet John Doe*. Thus if Wajda has taken inspiration from Hollywood populist comedy, the Western is not that far off. A direct influence is not likely, but some of the problems faced by the filmmaker and the creators of Westerns have their similarities, and so a comparative study might shed some light on *Wałęsa*.

However, before any deeper comparisons are made, it must be stressed that *Wałęsa* is primarily a historical film with all that entails.¹ Although set in the American past, roughly in the period from after the Civil War until most mainland territories attained statehood, it needs to be stated Westerns are historical films only in the broadest sense; with the caveat that some classics could be considered members of

¹ For an analysis of *Wałęsa: Man of Hope* from the perspective of historians, see Szporer 205–212 and Witek 394–472.

the historical genre.² A couple of John Ford films are worth noting and bear some resemblance to Wajda's film. Ford's *My Darling Clementine* of 1946, for instance, is loosely based on the famous shoot out at the OK Corral. One thing that frames the disparate storytelling of both films might be the Catholic imagination that inspires them to different degrees. In the case of Ford, it has been argued, this is primarily one of the marks of the Irish American filmmaker as an auteur (Blake 129–176). It might be partially true in the case of Wajda, but it is also the result of the Catholic culture that shaped the members of Solidarity and reflected the society in which it acted, and which a narrative account must convey at some level. Thus a seminal moment that shaped Wyatt Earp in Ford's film is in the scene of the reflections he voices during his commemoration of his departed brother, which inspires his further actions (Gallagher 226). "When we leave this country," he says by his younger brother's grave, "kids like you will be able to grow up and live free." Such a moment is fairly typical Ford, since a number of his protagonists have dialogues with the departed at critical moments. Judge Priest with his wife, for instance, or the young Lincoln's decision to take up law after "consulting" Anne Rutledge at her grave, serve as illustrations. In the case of *Clementine* another historical element might have been at play at the metaphorical level. Wyatt, it has been noted, has been framed to symbolize America's breaking with isolationism to become engaged in the Second World War (Gallagher 225). At a turning point in the film *Wałęsa* also becomes a tribune of the people when he speaks out in commemoration of the workers that had been killed by the regime in December of 1970: an atrocity which is depicted at the onset of the film. In Wajda's film, however, this is close to the actual historical formation of the people's hero. "Next year will be the tenth anniversary of this tragedy: a monument must be built," he begins, suggesting how they might build the monument themselves. "The people's government fired at its people.... My name is Lech Wałęsa. If next year I'm not here — come for me, and if any of you are not here I will come for you," he concludes. The scene, largely drawing upon the labor leader's actual words, is quite dramatic and, at least in part, redolent of the Catholic culture of the society and the significance it places on properly commemorating the departed.³

Another of Ford's quasi-historical films is *Fort Apache* of 1948, which features a barely disguised version of the Battle of Little Big Horn, commonly known as Custer's Last Stand. A prominent role in this proto-revisionist Western is given to the "waiting women" — almost a trademark of the filmmaker — here the wives of the cavalry officers who will not return from the campaign in the Indian Wars. Wajda's films also feature "waiting women," most notably in his film just previous

² The historical film itself has not been considered a separate genre for that long a period of time in cinema studies; see Burgoyne for one of the standard textbooks on the genre.

³ This is particularly visible in the importance that All Saints' Day has in Polish culture, when Poles visit cemeteries en masse to honor their dead.

to *Wałęsa*, i.e. *Katyń* of 2007. In the film on the Solidarity hero the waiting woman, Danuta Wałęsa, is a less tragic figure, but is certainly portrayed as long suffering on account of her husband's sacrificing family life for potentially dangerous political activism. The Polish cultural type Wajda draws upon is *Matka Polka* — the Polish Mother — but the prototype of that figure is the same as for Ford: *Stabat Mater*, i.e. the Mother of God at the foot of the cross, in communication with her suffering son.⁴

One more element concerning historical films worth indicating is the constant reinterpretation of events or figures. Ford himself deconstructed his earlier version of Wyatt Earp in *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964), when more information on the “hero” of OK Corral became unearthed. One can imagine a radically different film on Wałęsa being created at present, although not by Wajda.⁵ Even at the time of the film's release, the film received a good deal of criticism from its hero's diehard opponents.⁶

Nevertheless, it is not by looking at historical elements or interpretations that Westerns might help us gain deeper insights into Wajda's film. What feature of the American genre could have some kinship with *Wałęsa*? This analysis will focus on what I will argue is the common mythical element of Wajda's film and selected Westerns, particularly *High Noon*, and how they address the question of freedom. However, common by no means signifies identical: it is the contrast that is especially fruitful for my examination.

Great Westerns from the classical period of the 1940s and 1950s are often foundation myths of one order or another. Foundation myths mark periods of transition. The most obvious one concerns the end of the frontier and the possibility of new openings, or their lack in pessimistic versions. Most Westerns take place after the Civil War had ended, which required the reconciliation of the two halves of the country, also throwing many of its citizens into uncharted territory.⁷ As Robert Pippen puts it, “We receive in many Westerns not just a mythic account of the founding of legal, civil society, with an American inflection, but the expression of a great

⁴ Currently, the “Polish Mother” has a much broader range of meanings: from the long suffering woman to the highly independent one. Initially, in Adam Mickiewicz's poem of 1830 “Do matki Polki” (For the Polish Mother), the connection with *Stabat Mater* is clear.

⁵ Andrzej Friszke, a historian with whom Wajda consulted while making his film, finds the most recent evidence of Wałęsa's early collaboration turned up in 2015 fairly incriminating (Web). Even some of Wałęsa's supporters who accept that he was involved with the secret police in the first half of the 1970s, but who feel that it does not overshadow his later accomplishments, nevertheless voice the criticism that he should have admitted the full extent of his involvement.

⁶ Piotr Witek points out that even a more recent historical book on Wałęsa was largely inspired as a polemic with Wajda's film (472).

⁷ One aspect of revisionist Westerns that is historically accurate is the appearance of African American cowboys, since a significant number of liberated slaves took up that dreary career, not nearly as romantic as its cinematic depiction.

anxiety about what this particular founded society will be like, whether it can hold together, whether it can really leave behind what it was" (24).

Pippin also points out in his discussion the importance of what he calls political psychology inherent in Westerns. In contrast to the mythic element, which focuses on the epic and universal, he argues that political psychology can evoke the crucial "experiential or first-person dimension of political experience." He elucidates this point: "At the first-order level of political life, for the actual participants decisions are made, commitments affirmed, sacrifices made, and the like, all in a way that would appear to be much more decisively oriented from and grounded in one's experiences, sometimes crisis experiences of fear, humiliation, resentment, pride, and so forth" (15, 16). And this, he argues, is what film narrative is best at bringing to life.

One of the problems connected with the founding of a legal system portrayed in Westerns is whether violence can be legitimized. Pippin frames the question thus: "What, if anything, distinguishes the organized use of violence and coercion by one group of people against another from the exercise of power in everyone's name?" (11). A number of critics feel there is ultimately no legitimacy. A more optimistic view is taken by Mary P. Nichols. She emphasizes the difference between a hero who simply acts on his own sense of right and wrong and the lawman. Because the law of a given community is not self enforcing, "communities need lawmen, and sometimes even heroes," she argues. "Their heroic acts in turn, stem not merely from their personal integrity and sense of honor but also from their appreciation of the positive pleasures and concomitant duties of community" ("Heroes and Political Communities" 78).

Nichols concentrates on the town-tamer Westerns of John Ford in her analysis. In more general terms Wendy Peek Chapman focuses on the hero, debunking the cliché about masculine violence in the classic Western of the 1940s or 1950s. It is obvious there is far more violence in the later revisionist Western, which Chapman points out as she further argues that the genre of the earlier period, in contrast, forwarded a "romance of competence." Heroes were not successful simply by being masculine, but by using the strategies that were most effective, even if at a given time a "feminine" strategy was called for. Even the fact that heroes were predominantly men gave this gender fluidity more freedom. Chapman gives the example of *Fort Apache*, where the ineffective strategy of Colonel Thursday with its stress on military hierarchy is coded masculine, while Sergeant York is effective because he relies on horizontal strategies which through the depiction of the women at the fort are coded feminine (216–218):⁸ acting as a model for success, the full role of the "waiting women" is thus not so passive as it seems. It is easy to see at this point the

⁸ The irony in Chapman's interpretation of *Fort Apache* is that Sergeant York, the hero who uses the strategies coded as feminine, is portrayed by none other than John Wayne, the epitome of masculinity in the Western.

complementarity of this view with Nichols' analysis. More importantly, Chapman gives a proto-virtue ethics analysis of the Western hero by drawing upon Aristotle.⁹ This approach focuses on how the hero handles his emotions. As the Greek philosopher insists — in the words of Noel Carroll — “appropriateness with respect to an emotion is a matter of bringing the right emotion to bear on the right object with the right level of intensity for the right reason” (290). And so in an outrageous situation anger is an appropriate reaction but it must be controlled to be effective.

In light of the above discussion, let us return to Zinnemann's *High Noon*. A number of critics simply see the Western as a response to McCarthyism. Indeed, for screenplay writer Carl Foreman, who had appeared before the House of Un-American Activities and been blacklisted, the town that had been corrupted by fear symbolized the Hollywood community. For Zinnemann, on the other hand, the story expressed a variation of a universal theme that pervaded a number of his films: the story of a man and his conscience (Sinyard 61–62). For Nichols, however, the Western is more complex. Kane's defense of Hadleyville despite the townspeople abandoning him is a story of the virtue that upholds the law: “Underlying the government of laws is a government of men, and law must therefore be supplemented by virtue, or, as *High Noon* puts it, brains and guts” (“Law and the American Western” 593). We see how Kane cannot deputize men who will not volunteer; the Marshal himself seems quite mortal. We also see Kane choosing domesticity as an end, before being forced by his principles to temporarily put it aside. This is crucial to the film's message: “Will's attraction to Amy reveals his sense that the law (and the virtue of character that supports it) is a means and that a life of peace is preferable to the life that enforces peace. But *High Noon* shows that both are necessary for a full human life” (“Law and the American Western” 603). The above does not mean Zinnemann's film is optimistic. Many of the questions it raises remain unanswered. Nichols discerns much of the anxiety Pippin refers to in this open-ended film.

Where do the above considerations of the Western place Wajda's *Wałęsa*? For one thing, the filmmaker's historical film is certainly a foundation myth, but of what kind?¹⁰ What obviously sets it apart from the Western is the recent date of the events. For Poles, one might consider it something of a paradox, since their own history goes back much further in the past than the events conveyed in a classic Western. Nevertheless, *Wałęsa* conveys a time when it seemed “history” had come to an appropriate end. Currently that seems naïve, but a certain closure was attained. Above all, the biopic celebrates the Solidarity movement that led to the overthrow of

⁹ For an overview and presentation of virtue ethics for cinema studies, see Kupfer.

¹⁰ Critics have pointed out that Wajda concludes his film at the best possible moment for his hero. But even in terms of a biopic they ignore the fact that most exemplars of the genre focus on a specific period of their subject's life.

an oppressive totalitarian regime — admittedly one that was on the wane.¹¹ Aware of the flaws within the latter movement, Father Maciej Zięba, the first director of the European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk, nevertheless goes as far as to claim: “The social ideals of Solidarity, its mass nature, the threat to its participants, its endurance and effectiveness — the initiation and effective support of the bloodless dismantlement of the bloodiest empire in human history — make it possible to speak of the greatest and most universal Polish victory in its history” (157).

Polish national identity has centuries-deep roots. A strong impetus for its development in more modern terms was the conscious establishment of the largely Catholic Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth century; tolerant of substantial religious minorities within the polity at the time, but nevertheless further shaped by the subsequent struggle against Protestant Sweden and Orthodox Muscovy throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (see Smith, *Cultural Foundations* 109–110). Nevertheless, with the partitioning of the Polish state at the end of the eighteenth century, for the last two centuries the periods of national sovereignty were quite brief, a two-decade one coming to an end in 1939 with the outbreak of World War II and subsequently the joint occupation by the Nazis and Soviets. Worth noting is that in combining *Wałęsa* with the Wajda film that preceded it, *Katyń* (2007), we have a diptych that depicts sovereignty lost and regained.

Thus the foundation myths of the Western primarily forward the concerns of an implicit sovereign state while Wajda's pertains to regaining such a state. The difference then can be expressed as the foundation myths that address the problem of positive liberty in the case of Westerns, i.e. “freedom to” in Isaiah Berlin's classic distinction, and Wajda's version focused on negative liberty — “freedom from” (Carter). Positive liberty is admittedly more complicated, which is why Westerns seem to yearn for the moral simplicity of earlier times, when the tasks to focus on seemed straightforward. However, it needs pointing out that the struggle for freedom, which is a primary focus of negative liberty, is no longer as simple as it once was in this “post-heroic” era, as it has been called (Schwartz). The end of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century zeitgeist has an egalitarian spirit that has little patience for heroes.¹² Heroes, on the other hand, crucial as they may be for a successful struggle, are individuals who simultaneously transcend and are mired

¹¹ That the Communist regime was much weaker at the juncture Solidarity arose does not detract from the accomplishment of the movement. Historically, revolutions — even self-limiting ones — rarely take place during periods of the greatest oppression by a given regime.

¹² Schwartz argues that the post-heroic era was ushered in by the egalitarian spirit of the Civil Rights movement in conjunction with the media exposing the weaknesses and failures of contemporary heroes. In Poland it is the weaknesses of living heroes that influence a similar post-heroic attitude, albeit pure historical heroes continue to be popular, usually in the form of martyrs from the Home Army who did not survive past their moments of glory.

in their humanity.¹³ A cinematic foundation myth must carry out a balancing act: one that focuses too much on the how the hero transcends his humanity loses its sense of authenticity, so important for contemporary audiences; one that focuses too forcefully on the extent the hero is mired in his humanity becomes a mere drama, and loses much of its power to effect any consolidation within a national community.

The ur-text for the struggle for negative liberty is the biblical Exodus narrative, where the Israelites break away from slavery. Significantly, an unused version of the screenplay for *Wałęsa* has the regime's agents observing the protagonist during the first Catholic mass for the striking shipyard workers utter half in irony and half in awe: "A Catholic Moses" (Głowacki 166). The comparison has more truth than might be expected: the biblical hero also starts out in a morally ambiguous manner with a period of collaborating with the Pharaoh, while Wałęsa has his period of collaboration with the oppressors of the Polish people which Wajda briefly depicts.

Overall, the heroic pattern that Wajda projects for his protagonist might best be approached as a modern version of the "messiah-savior" hero who leads to national regeneration, such as William Tell in Switzerland or, even more appropriately, Joan of Arc in France. As Anthony Smith notes, both exemplars of this mode "were close to the common folk, they shared their lifestyle, they spoke for them against the interests of the nobles, bailiffs, and clergy, and they were seen in retrospect as instruments of a national destiny" (*Chosen Peoples* 41). Wałęsa is a working class hero with roots in the country and shares his class's lifestyle and interests, as well as its problems. In this sense as a heroic type he is more like Shane than some of Western heroes mentioned above. And *Shane*, with poor farmers suppressed by the powerful ranchers, is the classic Western that perhaps most closely simulates the struggle for negative liberty among films of the genre. But one thing that links the heroes on both sides of the positive and negative liberty divide is the necessity to use a variety of strategies in order to succeed. The romance of competence is common for both parties.

Wajda's film is structured around an interview that Wałęsa gave to the renowned Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci in March of 1981, when Solidarity was at its height. The driving force in the cinematic messiah-savior is not revelation, but — as he admits to Fallaci — anger. Ryszard Koziółek observes the cultural and historical anger expressed through Wajda's Wałęsa: "the peasant's anger at the license of the lord of the estate; worker's anger at cynical exploitation and humiliation; the citizen's anger at the deception and persecution from the rulers; and finally holy anger, which consumes him and hurts others" (3). Nevertheless, it is when Wałęsa transcends his

¹³ For an interesting discussion on the difficulty educators have in presenting heroes to young Americans, who are generally skeptical, see Gibbon.

anger and constructively channels it together with that of his fellow workers that allows him to fulfill his calling.

A touch of history must be brought in again to make greater sense of the film. What made Solidarity unique in the entire socialist bloc controlled by the Soviet Union, and actually within the Polish militant romantic tradition as well, was its nonviolent nature. From the initial movement itself after the Gdańsk Accords that legalized it in 1980, to the response to Martial Law, to the peaceful, negotiated transition to a multi-party democracy, Solidarity abstained from violence in its various incarnations. This stance evolved from the political realism that resulted from the experience of World War II — for all the romantic valor of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, the fact that the Nazis killed over a hundred and fifty thousand civilians through punitive actions had a sobering effect, as did witnessing the brutal interventions of the Soviets in neighboring Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1956 and 1968. Moreover, one cannot discount the role of leading players that inspired and created the movement: the workers, the opposition of the 1970s, and the Church in Poland — Pope John Paul II was adamant in his rejection of political violence — all contributed to the “self-limiting revolution” that set the trend for the neighboring countries and the retreat of Communism before the “velvet revolutions” (Smolar 128–131).¹⁴

In both experiencing and then transcending his anger the cinematic *Wałęsa* embodies Solidarity and the self-limiting revolution in the film. At times this distorts the historical figure's actions. At the beginning of the film he attempts to restrain the shipyard workers from senselessly protesting in the face of tanks. Evidence suggests this is not quite how it was (Szporer 208–209), but in the scene *Wałęsa* represents the hindsight that the future movement would gain, justifying the strategy that would be taken.

Wajda seems most akin to Ford when it comes to the care he takes in building the community that their heroes protect at different levels. In *Clementine*, when they see the tight spot he is in, the mayor and the Deacon are eager to help Wyatt Earp in his confrontation with the Clantons. The Marshal knows that such help would endanger them, but instead of turning them away he finds a role for them that minimizes the danger but allows them to keep their dignity by participating (see Nichols, “Heroes and Political Communities” 81–82). One of the primary communities in *Wałęsa* is that of the shipyard workers. There is a scene where a shipyard worker who had been effectively bribed earlier forwards a motion at a meeting organized by the authorities that is detrimental to his colleagues. Later *Wałęsa* goes to the home of this worker to reprimand him, but when he sees the abject living conditions of the

¹⁴ The term “self-limiting revolution” to describe the dynamics of the Solidarity movement was coined by the sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis.

worker and his family, he himself offers them assistance, realizing the regime would not live up to its promise of installing electricity.

Similarly, Wałęsa the communicator is stressed in a number of scenes. In a key portion of the film dedicated to the final stage of the creation of the Independent Self-governing Trade Union “Solidarity” we see that Wałęsa first meets the workers and gives them a report on the negotiations. Then the viewers are treated to different aspects of the concluding negotiations, a number of them presented through documentary footage from the actual events up until the signing of the Gdańsk Agreement on August 29, 1980. But the extended sequence ends with Wałęsa back in front of the crowd, much larger now, thanking them for their support in this extraordinary event.

Foundation myths are more often than not morality plays where the character of the hero is tested. *Wałęsa* presents a clear moral character arc. The greatest moral failure of Wałęsa is presented at the onset of the film during the regime’s crushing of the workers’ protests. Although the future Solidarity leader is shown attempting to tone down overheated worker responses, he is arrested by the secret police and forced to sign compromising documents. Wajda shows forbearance toward Wałęsa on account of the latter’s fear of torture and his sense of responsibility for his family — his wife has been shown as about to give birth. It is likely not without meaning that the most fearless in the filmmaker’s pantheon of endangered heroes is the celibate and childless Janusz Korczak. Nevertheless, if Wajda’s narrative is lenient toward Wałęsa, his protagonist seems much harder on himself and his deed haunts him throughout the film. In part the narrative might be interpreted as a quest for redemption by the protagonist.

During the first mass at the striking shipyard, security agents who have hounded Wałęsa are overlooking the scene. Significantly, the Solidarity leader looks up apparently in their direction and next confesses his sins. In the film’s narrative Wałęsa finally atones for his earlier collaboration when during his internment he refuses to sell out Solidarity by collaborating with the regime and turning the free trade union into a state puppet union. This was indeed a seminal moment in the history of Solidarity and allowed it to maintain its moral authority. Wałęsa gained even higher esteem in that he was acting in isolation and under great pressure. Wajda stresses the fact that the messiah-savior hero has come to fruition through the near Gospel framework of the narrative sequence drama, where he refuses compromising advances three times.

Near the beginning of *Korczak* there are some scenes from the September Campaign in which the Polish army resists the Nazi juggernaut in Warsaw. The eponymous hero is serving as a doctor in the armed forces and we witness him attending to a fallen soldier. It is not without meaning, however, that the soldier was hit by enemy fire immediately after senselessly shooting at a passing aircraft with his rifle — a weapon as effective as a peashooter for the purpose. Wajda is quite critical of

such unrealistic gestures that are part of the Polish romantic tradition. This is one of the reasons why he wished to point out the political realism of Solidarity in *Wałęsa*; the question was how to give it dramatic form.

One of the key problems of the self-limiting revolution is spelled out at a juncture in the film in which the hero is not onscreen, after the August strike has been renewed despite the seeming initial success. Kid gloves are off and the regime's forces are gathering for what seems to be an inevitable violent confrontation with the workers who occupy the shipyard. Two workers are near the gate and discussing the turn of events. The first worker is young and unmarried. He is ready for a fight because he can no longer tolerate living under the "Russian" heel — an important statement, because it shows which foreign regime ultimately pulls the strings in Poland. The second worker is slightly older and married. He wishes that they had quit while they were ahead. Wajda seems to stress how both workers' arguments have their validity. This scene is the key to understanding the "experiential or first-person dimension of political experience" of *Wałęsa*.

The struggle of both perspectives is personified most intensely in *Wałęsa* himself who fights for freedom and dignity, but is always aware of the consequences for his family. Indeed, in the mid-1970s he loses his job for standing up to the regime's representatives at the shipyard, which his family can ill afford. He is constantly imprisoned, if only for a couple of days at a time in his early activism. In one of the most dramatic moments for the family, when in the middle of the night at the onset of Martial Law in December of 1981 he is about to be interned, *Wałęsa* calls his children from bed to witness the crime. But it is his wife Danuta that bears the brunt of his actions. She is shown to have a measure of political savvy herself, not to mention courage. When Lech reports to her in the hospital after childbirth in 1970 that he signed some papers when he was detained, she is rightfully concerned. A decade later when the secret police is shown searching the apartment when Lech has been arrested, she speaks boldly to the agents while deftly hiding incriminating contraband. Yet there are times when Danuta protests his actions, indicating the difficult situation of the family. It might seem she is restraining her husband with little concern of what is at stake. Nevertheless the tension created by the domestic aspect of *Wałęsa*'s life is crucial for the formation of his political realism: by his dissident activism he risks making a bad situation worse for his family; if he does not act it might never get any better, either for the family or the larger national community beyond its bounds.

As an exemplar of a crucial agent of positive liberty whose life is endangered by his vocation, Will Kane stands out as one of the few Western heroes in such a situation who is actually married. This puts him in a similar symbolic space as Wajda's champion of the struggle for negative liberty, Lech *Wałęsa*. As we have seen, although domesticity creates tensions, ultimately it is not at odds with political realism, but part of its dynamics. Moreover, the hero must aid in building commun-

ity. After the shipyard workers have been crushed by the regime in 1970, their sense of solidarity resembles that of the citizens of Hadleyville, and a number of Wałęsa's actions are aimed at restoring community.

Kane is shown by Zinnemann as a tired hero: the camera likewise shows the actor's age (see Sinyard 63); his wrinkles, so to speak. Despite showing a positive moral character arc, Wajda also displays the "wrinkles" of his hero's character. One example is the immature cockiness, which is evident during his interview with Fallaci (see Witek 431–435). Wałęsa does not exactly ride off into the sunset, but Wajda's film ends with one of his hero's moments of greatest triumph, where he addresses the combined House of Representatives in the United States, victoriously representing the nations liberated from Communism after 1989. The filmmaker actually uses documentary footage, and Wałęsa himself is onscreen for the final seconds of "his" biopic. It is as close to putting him on a monument as possible: a fitting conclusion for a Polish historical film with a Hollywood ending. But the narrative depicting the hero with his virtues and vices, the character "wrinkles" and all — in short, a human being — is far more interesting. That Wałęsa and Poles having regained sovereignty would then have to face positive liberty with all its messiness and anxieties is another story.

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HIGH NOON AT THE SOLIDARITY CORRAL: WAJDA'S WAŁĘSA AND THE CLASSIC WESTERN

Summary

In 1989 the iconic figure of Marshall Will Kane from the classic Western *High Noon* was effectively used by the Solidarity opposition for a poster during the campaign for the historic June 4 elections of that year. Almost a quarter of a century later, Andrzej Wajda released his *Wałęsa: Man of Hope* (2013), which more or less concludes at that historic turning point. One thing that relates Wajda's film to Fred Zinnemann's is that both can be considered foundation myths. In this article foundation myths from classic Westerns in general and Wajda's film in particular are analyzed on the basis of their relationship to Isaiah Berlin's distinction of negative and positive freedom. Typically the classic Western deals with the problem of positive freedom, especially in the town-tamer subgenre to which *High Noon* belongs. Conversely, Wajda's *Wałęsa* is concerned with the problem of negative freedom. Both positive and negative freedom myths within the examined film narratives cope with the problem of the hero in relation to political psychology and shed light on the issue of political realism.

W SAMO POŁUDNIE W CORRALU SOLIDARNOŚCI — WAŁĘSA WAJDY A KLASYCZNY WESTERN

Streszczenie

W 1989 roku ikoniczna postać szeryfa Willa Kane'a z klasycznego westernu *W samo południe* była skutecznie używana przez solidarnościową opozycję na plakatach podczas kampanii poprzedzającej historyczne wybory 4 czerwca tego roku. Prawie ćwierć wieku później Andrzej Wajda zrealizował film *Wałęsa: człowiek z nadziei* (2013), który mniej więcej reasumuje ten historyczny zwrot. Jedną rzecz, która nawiązuje w filmie Wajdy do utworu Zinnemanna, to iż oba filmy mogą być postrzegane jako fundamenty mitów. W niniejszym szkicu fundamenty mitów z klasycznych westernów w ogóle i w filmie Wajdy w szczególności są analizowane na podstawie ich powiązań z rozróżnieniem pozytywnej i negatywnej wolności przez Isaiaha Berlina. Typowy klasyczny western podejmuje wątek pozytywnej wolności, szczególnie w odmianie *town-tamer*, do której należy *W samo południe*. Film Wajdy o Wałęsie — odwrotnie — podejmuje problem wolności negatywnej. Zarówno mit pozytywnej, jak i negatywnej wolności w ramach badanych opowieści obejmują problematykę bohatera w relacji do politycznej psychologii i rzucają światło na zagadnienie politycznego realizmu.

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