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The Elements of Surrealism in Film Adaptations of Prose Works from the Period of Young Poland – *The Story of a Sin* by Walerian Borowczyk and *On the Silver Globe* by Andrzej Żuławski

Abstract

The title of my PhD thesis is *The Elements of Surrealism in Film Adaptations of Prose Works from the Period of Young Poland – The Story of a Sin by Walerian Borowczyk and On the Silver Globe by Andrzej Żuławski*. The aim of this dissertation is to show aesthetic and intellectual connections between the surrealism and the so-called anti-positivist turn in a specifically Polish context. The most significant examples of these associations remain two films made in Poland by directors who worked primarily in the Western Europe: Walerian Borowczyk's *The Story of a Sin*, a 1975 erotic drama based on the eponymous 1908 novel by Stefan Żeromski, and *On the Silver Globe*, a 1987 science fiction epic directed by Andrzej Żuławski and adapted from the „lunar trilogy” by his granduncle Jerzy Żuławski (published between 1903 and 1911). Although both filmmakers weren't declared surrealists they frequently cited the legacy of this movement as an inspiration and their own body of work reveals plenty of surrealist influences.

My dissertation consists of introduction, two chapters (including several subsections) and conclusion. The object of research in the first chapter is to interpret both the film *The Story of a Sin* and its literary source. I analyse these aspects of the novel which Borowczyk interpreted (or re-interpreted) in a spirit of surrealism. I describe this subject in the context of the key surrealist ideas such as surreality, objective chance, surrealist object, psychic automatism, mad love (*l'amour fou*) and so forth.

The subject matter of the next chapter is Andrzej Żuławski's *On the Silver Globe*, a high-budget cinematic spectacle which was actually shot between 1976 and 1977 but came to a halt with the sudden decision of the then Vice-Minister of Culture (probably motivated by political reasons) and edited from the unfinished remnants into a version which finally premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 1988. In my analysis of the literary trilogy and its screen adaptation I concentrate on such topics as relationships between surrealism and science fiction, delirious and catastrophic world view, poetics of transgression and typically „Zulawskian” hysterical acting.

In the conclusion I summarize all the results of my research to prove the idea that many aspects of the Young Poland's culture were and perhaps are still able to spark imagination of the artists with a surrealist temperament.

Keywords: Walerian Borowczyk, Andrzej Żuławski, Stefan Żeromski, Jerzy Żuławski, surrealism, Young Poland