

Condensed Version of Martin Schell's Outline of Wojciech Has'

The Saragossa Manuscript

The content of this outline was last modified on November 30, 2006.

Only the segments identified by capital letters match those of the full outline.
All other levels have been condensed into the segments identified by numerals.

Bold indicates the start of new narrations.

During a battle in the town of Saragossa, an officer retreats to the second floor of an inn. He finds a large book with drawings of two men hanging on a gallows and two women in a bed. An enemy officer tries to arrest him but ends up translating the book for him; the second officer recognizes its author as his own grandfather.

- **A. The second officer reads his grandfather's story.** The grandfather, a young captain of the Walloon Guard, plans to take a shortcut to Madrid. His two servants fear they will encounter ghosts, but Captain Alfonso van Worden refuses to change his route. They will stay overnight at an inn called Venta Quemada.
- **B.** Captain Alfonso stops at a desolate place that has a well. He walks around calling for his missing muleteer. Suddenly he notices two men on a gallows and many skulls on the ground. Alfonso returns to the well but his valet has disappeared. He rides alone to Venta Quemada, which seems deserted. He takes a metal pitcher from the dining table. After drinking deeply, he rests his head on his hand.
- **C.** Before he starts to doze, a barefoot woman comes through the inner door. She wears a Muslim jilbab but her left breast is bare. She says, "Two foreign ladies who are staying here would like to invite you to supper." Then she leads him through a tunnel to the two ladies' room. Princess Emina introduces herself and Princess Zibelda as Muslims from Tunisia. She tells Alfonso that he is their "closest relative" and they have been waiting for him. The women seduce him, but say he cannot marry them unless he converts to Islam; Emina says, "You will be allowed to see us in your dreams only." He drinks from a skull chalice and becomes groggy.
- **D.** Alfonso wakes up under the gallows, but both dead men are now on the ground. He runs back to the inn and hurries through the tunnel. Instead of a huge lavish room with a table full of food, he sees a small dirty room with a broken table upon which there are rats and a skull. He leaves, riding through a Christian cemetery to a building where he meets a hermit who warns about the need to confess sins. The Hermit says, "Strange things were happening last night." He asks if Alfonso slept at the deserted inn, but Alfonso refuses to give details. The Hermit asks Alfonso about his family.
 - **1. Alfonso's tale.** His father is traveling through desolate country in a carriage, which overturns when another gentleman's carriage passes it. The father rides a horse into the town of Saragossa and confronts the other gentleman, pressing him to duel. Alfonso's father loses the duel when he is stabbed in the chest.
 - **2.** Alfonso's father is not dead. He lies on a cart drawn by a pair of oxen and cries out for water. When he says he will sell his soul to quench his thirst, a young woman emerges from behind an outcropping of rock, carrying a pitcher of water on her head. She wears Muslim garb but her arms are bare. She gives him a drink and smiles. He marries her in a church in Saragossa.
- **E.** Alfonso tells the Hermit that he was born 9 months later. He then describes returning to his parents as an adult after being raised by another nobleman.
- **F.** The Hermit commands Pasheko, the possessed man, to tell his story.
 - **1. Pasheko's tale.** Pasheko tells his father that he loves Inezillia, the younger sister of his father's new wife Camilla. The father forbids a marriage because it would be "unbecoming" to be his son's brother-in-law. After the father leaves, Camilla tells Pasheko that he can be Inezillia's lover even if he cannot marry her.
 - **2.** While traveling with the two women, Pasheko's father sends a message telling Pasheko to meet them at Venta Quemada. Pasheko rides to the inn and asks to stay overnight. The innkeeper says that the place is haunted -- even he and his wife don't sleep there anymore. Pasheko makes light of the matter, but his valet leaves.
 - **3.** His stepmother comes through the inner door and tells Pasheko that his father is sleeping. Glancing at him adoringly, she leads him through the tunnel to a large room, where Inezillia lies on

the bed. Camilla tells Pasheko to kiss her sister, and says that she will always be present when he and Inezillia make love.

- 4. Pasheko wakes near the gallows, and runs in fear back to the inn. The people act as if they are seeing him for the first time, even though he knows the exact words the innkeeper is about to say. After everyone leaves, Pasheko hears the voices of the two sisters begging him for affection. The two men from the gallows are hanging in the chimney. They drop down and chase him, eventually tearing out his eye.
- G. The Hermit tells Alfonso to sleep in the chapel downstairs. He hears two voices that claim to be his mistresses longing for him. Recalling how Pasheko was lured by demons, Alfonso tells the voices, "Go back to your gallows."
- H. Morning. The Hermit wakes Alfonso and says there was "mischief" last night. He warns, "Devils may assume various forms." Alfonso blithely replies, "They somehow stay away from me." After the Hermit points the way to Madrid, Alfonso rides off. The Inquisition intercepts him on the road and arrests him.
- I. A hooded man puts a horned mask around Alfonso's head like a helmet. The Inquisitor asks Alfonso if he knows "two African princesses" but he refuses to answer. As Alfonso is hoisted from his chair and dangled, he starts to faint. The two Muslim sisters enter with Zoto and armed men wearing Muslim clothing who rescue Alfonso. Zoto introduces his two brothers but mixes up their names. Alfonso says he saw the brothers on the gallows, but they assert that the hanged men were impostors.
- J. Back in Venta Quemada's inner sanctum, the two princesses pry off the mask and kiss him. Suddenly a turbaned man who is head of the Gomelez family descends the stone stairway behind Alfonso and berates him for daring to be with the women. Three armed guards appear and force Alfonso to drink the skull chalice. He faints.
- K. Alfonso awakens under the gallows again, but with a broken rope around his neck. Nearby is a Cabalist lying on a wagon wheel, also with a severed noose around his neck. He talks of Hebrew mysticism as they walk back to the inn. On the dining table are platters of food and the skull chalice. The Cabalist eats heartily and Alfonso reluctantly joins him. As they ride toward the Cabalist's castle, he speaks of various mystical topics, such as how to distinguish Hungarian and Polish zombies.
- L. The Inquisition stops a lone rider and wrestles him to the ground, mistaking him for Alfonso. He declares he is Don Pedro Velasquez, and they release him. He rides away and encounters Alfonso and the Cabalist, who have paused because Alfonso's horse has a thorn in one hoof. The three men decide to go to the Cabalist's castle.

This marks the end of Part One of the movie.

- M. At the castle, the butler Enrico escorts Alfonso and Pedro inside while the Cabalist lingers in the courtyard. His sister Rebecca greets him, asking why he arrived three days ahead of schedule. He says, "Unforeseeable complications."
- N. Alfonso suggests that recent events were due to evil spirits, but Pedro says, "Someone must be after you to put you through all these misfortunes." After Pedro leaves, the Cabalist invites Alfonso to feel "at home." However, Alfonso says he has decided to go to Madrid tonight. The Cabalist advises him to wait, recommending that he read the Spanish stories in the library. Alone in the library, Alfonso finds a large book opened to a page that has a drawing of two women in a bed. He flips to a page bookmarked by a flower stem and sees a drawing of two men on a gallows. Amazed, he hurries down to the wine cellar and tells Pedro, "I've found the answer." Meanwhile, the Cabalist holds the large book and scolds Rebecca for carelessly leaving it in the open: "If he had read the end, the events which are to follow would make no sense." He closes the book and she takes it away just before Alfonso returns with Pedro.
- O. Alfonso and Pedro enter the library but can't find the book. Alfonso says that evil spirits made the book disappear. Pedro observes that Alfonso's "mind is rebelling against inexplicable phenomena" and asks for details. The Cabalist joins them and denies the book's existence. Rebecca comes down to the library, and her brother introduces her to Captain Alfonso and Don Pedro. She asks Alfonso to recount everything that has transpired. He says, "I wouldn't know where to start. I must have been put to sleep with a potion and taken to the gallows."
- P. A band of gypsies arrives. The Cabalist greets the head gypsy warmly and invites him to recount his unusual adventures in life. Pedro flirts with Rebecca, telling her that he fears her magic power, not that of ghosts. The head gypsy says, "I reckon that from one end of the world to the other, the story of love is always the same."
 - 1. **The gypsy Avadoro's tale.** While reclining on two statues of Chinese lions, Avadoro is

approached by a man in a black cloak who asks for help. The man gives him a coin as advance half-payment for the task of following a young lady to discover whether she is going to church or sneaking off to meet a lover.

- 2. Upon seeing the lady in front of the church, the gypsy decides to help her. He warns her that someone is suspicious of her affection. She drops a black glove for him to bring to her lover, the Caballero Toledo. Her chaperone offers Avadoro a coin, but he says, "My conscience forbids me taking payment from both sides."
- 3. The gypsy goes to the Lovers Inn to meet the man in the black cloak. He makes a prayer-like gesture, convincing the cloaked man that the young lady whom he spied on went to church. The man puts the remaining payment on the table and leaves. The gypsy gives the second coin to a waiter in exchange for Toledo's address.
- 4. Crossing the town square, the gypsy sees the man in the black cloak lingering on the steps below the church. Avadoro enters the narrow street outside Toledo's house, where a Knight of Malta's doublet, hat, and sword are laid out on the paving stones. He wakes the Caballero from a drunken stupor and gives him the glove.
- 5. **Toledo's tale.** His good friend Aquillar from Malta visits, and announces that he is about to engage in a duel. He tells Toledo to wait until midnight, when he will report about the afterlife if he dies in the duel. Thunder awakens Toledo at midnight. He converses with a voice outside his window, whom he assumes to be the ghost of Aquillar: "Is there a purgatory in the other world?" "There is one. And that's where I am!" Toledo looks out the other window and sees a group of men carrying a corpse. When he asks, "Who died?" the group's leader uncovers the face of Aquillar.
- Q. Back in the Cabalist's castle, Avadoro is interrupted briefly by a fellow gypsy. Alfonso tells his friends that he is confused by the gypsy's story-within-a-story: "I've lost the feeling of where reality ends, and fantasy takes over." Pedro says, "Only an uneducated man who sees a thing every day thinks he understands it. A true researcher proceeds among riddles." Then Avadoro returns and resumes his tale.
 - 1. Toledo is sure that hearing the voice of the dead means he will die soon. He goes to the church to repent, leaving a necklace with Avadoro to deliver to his lover. Avadoro pays the waiter from the Lovers Inn to switch errands. The gypsy goes to the inn and asks for Lopez Soarez. Young Lopez tells how he broke his arm and leg.
 - 2. **Lopez Soarez's tale.** His father, Gaspar Soarez, is the richest merchant in Cadiz. He tells Lopez to go to Madrid to learn about the world, but he forbids any involvement with the Moro family.
 - 3. **Gaspar Soarez's tale.** The banker Livardez of the Moro family gives him 1,000,000 piastres to become a partner in a Philippines venture. Some time later, he learns that Livardez has died, and Moro wants a refund. He returns the money but years later, the investment triples in value and he wants to give Moro 2,000,000 profit. Moro refuses on the grounds that he doesn't deserve it. Soarez feels insulted.
 - 4. Lopez Soarez resumes his tale. He is befriended by a rascal named Don Roque Busqueros who helps himself to every meal that is brought in for Lopez. At a park called Buen Retiro, Lopez falls in love at first sight with a woman named Inez, who is searching for a locket. Lopez finds it and returns it. Roque meddles, telling Inez she is lucky because Lopez's father is the richest merchant in Cadiz.
 - 5. Lopez meets Inez at the park and asks about her background. She says she is from a rich family, too: Moro is her father! Lopez despairs, but the female attendant tells him, "Inez loves you more than her life" and will meet him at sunset the next day.
 - 6. Lopez waits in the park near the spot where he met Inez. Roque surprises him from behind, covering his eyes playfully. He offers to tell an "instructive" story.
 - 7. **Don Roque's tale.** One night, he climbs a ladder that is propped against someone's window. When his head appears in the window, the woman in the bed wakes her husband, Don Diego, who runs off in panic. She explains why.
 - 8. **Frasquita's tale.** Pretending to search for something on the ground, a young man in a black cloak comes close to her father's house, where she sits at the window. He asks her if she has dropped anything, and suggests that her necklace would be a lovely memento. When she yanks it off and drops it outside the window, he picks it up and gives her a small bouquet of flowers. An older man standing across the street sees her receive the flowers. After the cloaked man walks away, the older man bows to Frasquita and smiles at her. After the older man leaves, she removes the ring that was binding the stems of the bouquet, puts it on her left hand, and kisses it.

- 9. Frasquita sits at a dressing table, dreamily rubbing the ring. She is married to the older man, who is unsure of her fidelity. She concocts a fake lover named Pena Flor and engages various people in a conspiracy to get her husband out of town.
- 10. Lopez interrupts Roque and angrily says he is wasting time. He challenges Roque to a duel but the latter disarms him and pokes him in the tricep. When Lopez notices a spot of blood on his arm, he faints. Back at the Lovers Inn, Roque and two of the prostitutes attend to the wound. A woman brings a message from Inez, saying she will be forced to marry someone else tomorrow if Lopez doesn't meet her tonight.
- 11. The waiter leads Roque and Lopez, who are followed by two men bringing the ladder. Roque counts three windows to Inez's bedroom and tells Lopez the signal: "When I clap my hands, go up to heaven!" Lopez ascends and knocks on the shutter, but there is no response, so he glances back at Roque. At that moment, someone opens the window, causing Lopez to lose his balance. The occupant is Toledo, not Inez. As the ladder falls backward, Lopez cries, "Oh God!" Toledo shouts, "Is there purgatory in the other world?" From below, Lopez replies, "There is one and I am in it!" He has fallen into a barrel and is stuck upside-down: purgatory instead of heaven.
- 12. Avadoro immediately realizes that it was Lopez Soarez, not the ghost of Toledo's friend Aquillar, who answered Toledo's questions. He hurries out of the room and finds Toledo lying prone on the church steps. Avadoro whispers the newly discovered context of the "ghostly" conversation. Toledo declares that his penance is over and says he wants to meet Roque to hear him recount the story in detail.
- R. The gypsy pauses before explaining how he found Roque. One of his band calls him away briefly. Alfonso traces the nesting of the story from Frasquita to Roque to Lopez to Avadoro, and comments, "It's enough to drive you crazy." Pedro remarks, "We are like blind men lost in the streets of a big city. The streets lead to a goal, but we often return to the same places to get where we want to be." Seated again, Avadoro says, "Toledo regained his former gaiety and balanced soul." He resumes his tale.
 - 1. That same day, Roque approaches the two lion statues. He sizes Avadoro up and says, "I like you. I'll take you as a servant." The gypsy replies that he was raised as a gentleman and is a beggar by fate, not birth. As Roque starts to explain the duties of the job, the gypsy interrupts and asks if he is Don Busqueros "to whom Lopez Soarez owes so much." When Roque confirms, Avadoro says Toledo wants to meet him.
 - 2. Roque and Avadoro enter a tavern to seek the elder Soarez, whom they have never met. They loudly pretend to have opposing views of the Moro-Soarez feud. After Roque dismisses Avadoro, a man sitting nearby calls Roque "an honest negotiator" and introduces himself as Gaspar Soarez. Gaspar says that Lopez disobeyed all his advice. He wants his son to marry "a young lady from a spotless family" immediately. Roque says he knows one and promises that Gaspar will meet her later that day.
 - 3. Gaspar comes to the suite at the Lovers Inn, but does not know that it is rented by his son, who is bedridden behind the curtain. Inez arrives with her female attendant and pulls back her veil. Gaspar is awed by her beauty and kneels before her. At that moment, Inez's brother enters and confronts Gaspar, asking if he is Senorita Moro's suitor. Gaspar is astonished that she is a Moro. The brother challenges him to a duel and Roque supplies a sword. Instead of fighting, Inez's brother makes a cooing sound. On this cue, Roque pulls the curtain aside, revealing Lopez.
 - 4. Gaspar rebukes his son for disobeying him, but Lopez and Roque point out that he just broke his own rules by associating with the nobleman Don Roque Busqueros, by drawing a sword, and by admiring Inez Moro.
 - 5. Moro comes in and recognizes Gaspar Soarez. He says he would be honored if their children marry. He excuses Lopez's attempt to enter his daughter's window as due to the grudge between the fathers. He says he will now accept the 2,000,000 unclaimed profit and give it to Lopez as a dowry, plus another 2,000,000. The two fathers embrace warmly and chuckle. Roque gets paid by Inez's brother.
 - 6. Avadoro and Toledo roar with laughter when the Moro story ends. Toledo compliments Roque and asks about the other story, involving Frasquita. Roque recounts the demise of her husband Diego. The assassin who pretended to kill Pena Flor on Diego's orders eventually kills Diego himself, following Frasquita's orders.
 - 7. Toledo laughs tensely and walks to his window. He asks what happened to the widow Frasquita. Joining him at the window, Roque says she married her lover and "has led a model life" ever since. He points out the window, saying, "Here she is!"

- 8. Accompanied by her chaperone, the woman who gave Toledo the glove via Avadoro enters the narrow street below. She stops at a table that has been set with two chairs and two goblets. Then she lifts her veil: she is Frasquita!
- 9. Toledo says he thought her name was Dona Iscariz. When she walks toward his house, he panics. While Avadoro braces a spear against the door, Roque helps Toledo go out the window. Roque and Avadoro follow him, but Roque tumbles straight down. The three men stop fleeing when they reach the plaza. Toledo walks toward the church, flagellating himself with vines that he grabbed as he went out the window.
- 10. Avadoro supports the limping Roque as they walk to the Lovers Inn, where a crowd blocks the entryway. Passing through the crowd into the courtyard, they see two men dueling. The winner is a man in a blond wig: Alfonso's father!
- S. The gypsy says to Alfonso, "If I'm not mistaken, that brave officer was your father." Alfonso confirms that his father's chronicles mention 11 duels that day. Avadoro announces that the story is over and "We must part." Suddenly, the butler Enrico tells Alfonso, "Important affairs are calling you." Alfonso is confused by the fact that he is the one who is leaving. Forlorn, he returns to the table where the tale was told. Pedro guides Alfonso back to the courtyard and tells him that he doesn't have much time left. A rider in black approaches the castle and waves to the Cabalist. Then Alfonso gallops out of the castle, following the rider back to Venta Quemada.
- T. Three bearded men in black with truncated conical hats greet Alfonso in the stable of the inn. The leader says, "Welcome to Gomelez's land" and gestures toward the small dining area. Holding the Aladdin-style lamp in her left hand, the serving woman with the bare left breast approaches, greeting Alfonso with a silent smile.
- U. Alfonso follows her to the huge room at the end of the tunnel. The turbaned man sits at the table, opposite Emina and Zibelda. The two sisters get up and embrace Alfonso fondly. The turbaned man acknowledges that he is the Hermit, and says his real identity is Sheik of the Gomelez family. He explains that the entire adventure was a "planned game" to test Alfonso's honor and courage while waiting to see if Emina and Zibelda had become pregnant as a result of their first night with him. The Zoto brothers, the Cabalist, and Pasheko were all in on the game. The Sheik gives Alfonso the book, saying it contains "everything you saw and experienced." Emina holds up a quill pen that was marking the page of the two women on a bed. Alfonso takes it and looks to the Sheik for permission. The Sheik nods, "The rest you can write yourself." Zibelda says, "We want to live in your memory forever." Emina tells him to close his eyes, and then puts the skull chalice in his hands. He drinks but remains awake.
- V. Alfonso opens his eyes and stands up. He is alone. He looks through the large portal, which is now lit by sunshine instead of interior lighting. Alfonso sees himself a short distance beyond the portal, walking behind Emina and Zibelda toward a bed in a desert. When he gestures toward the three figures, they turn around and face him. The outdoor Alfonso points at him and then comes through the portal. The two Captains mirror each other's expressions: first amazed, then giddy, and finally terrified.
- W. Alfonso wakes under the gallows again. He finds his two servants napping nearby. The valet leans against the wagon wheel and has the book on his shins. He asks, "Can we make it before dark?" Alfonso replies, "This time we can. For sure." The two servants laugh. They all mount and ride off.
- X. In the town of Saragossa, Alfonso sits at a table on the second storey of the inn. With a crazed look, he "recounts" being reunited with the Gomelez family. As he writes this new "script" in the book, his muleteer Mosquito informs him, "Two foreign ladies, who are spending the night at this inn, would like to invite you for supper."
- Y. Alfonso drops the quill pen and goes to the window. Opening it, he sees desolate country like that near Venta Quemada. Zibelda sits in a chair on the left while Emina stands on the right, her back toward Alfonso. Emina turns and takes a few steps toward him, then stops and waves. Alfonso comes away from the window and whimpers at the table. Suddenly he laughs wildly, throws the book across the room, and goes downstairs. We see the book lying open to page of two women in a bed.
- Z. Alfonso rides toward a hill on which two men are hanging from a gallows.