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Nation without a State: Imagining Poland in the Nineteenth Century

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Nation without a State: Imagining Poland in the Nineteenth Century

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2004

Nation without a State: Imagining Poland in the Nineteenth Century

Publication No. _____

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2004

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This dissertation tests Benedict Anderson's thesis about the coherence of imagined communities by tracing how Galicia, as the heart of a Polish culture in the nineteenth century that would never be an independent nation state, emerged as an historical, cultural touchstone with present day significance for the people of Europe. After the three Partitions and Poland's complete disappearance from political maps of Europe, substitute images of Poland were sought that could replace its lost kingdom with alternate forms of national identity grounded in culture and tradition rather than in politics. Not the hereditary dynasty, not Prussia or Russia, but Galicia emerged as the imagined and representative center of a Polish culture without a state. This dissertation juxtaposes political realities with canonical literary texts that provide images of a cultural community among ethnic Germans and Poles sharing the border of Europe. The *Realpolitik* of the situation was dictated by the same powers whose interests had divided

and then erased the country. A Polish-Prussian alliance was argued for by Prince Antoni Radziwiłł (1775-1833), until Bismarck made Prussia into the core of the German Empire; a Polish-Russian axis was the focus for Aleksander Wielopolski (1803-77) who argued for Polish culture as Slavic; and a Habsburg-oriented solution, represented by Count Agenor Gołuchowski (1812-1875), defined Galicia as an autonomous cultural region within the political framework of a multiethnic state. These political debates, not surprisingly, are echoed in literary works of the time: Theodor Fontane shares his Prussia with one kind of Polish culture in competition with Galicia; Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach and Jan Lam share a common view of Galicia which is Habsburg, multiethnic, and Polish. Taken together, these images reflect a dialogue about Polish identity, and in consequence about a new European identity, in the context of Austro-Hungarian and German Empires. That is, the debates point to a cultural identity in Europe that does not correspond to ethnic nation-states but rather to a shared culture, history and community experience that Galicia came to represent up until World War I, when Galicia was divided between Poland and the Ukraine.

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Introduction

The year 1795, one of the most significant in Polish history, is the year of the so-called Third Partition, which was the last step in breaking up the Kingdom of Poland by giving the remaining portions of its territory to the three great powers – Russia, Prussia, and the Habsburg Empire.¹ After the three divisions occurring in 1772, 1792 and 1795, Poland vanished from the map of Western Europe. The downfall of the Polish kingdom had begun in the second half of the eighteenth century when the state faced internal anarchy and political chaos caused by lack of democratic laws and complete disregard for the social and ethnic differences within Polish society. Despite some patriotic political attempts to strengthen the Kingdom by introducing the first European democratic Constitution (which, for instance, abolished serfdom and granted the inhabitants of cities the same rights as nobles), Poland ceased to exist as a nation for over 120 years. Throughout this time, the imperial entities that emerged as a result of the three Partitions: Posnania (or Prussian Poland), Congress Poland (or *Kongresówka*), and Galicia (the Austrian Polish province) sought to use the memory of Poland to regain a kind of cultural

¹ Among many other sources covering this moment of Polish history is: Jerzy Lukowski, *The Partitions of Poland: 1772, 1793, 1795* (London and New York, 1999). Broad coverage this period is included in all Polish histories: see, for instance, Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland* (New York: Columbia UP, 1982), Gieysztor, Kieniewicz, Rostworowski, Tazbir, and Wereszycki, *History of Poland* (Warszawa: PWN, 1968), Zamoyski, *The Polish Way: A Thousand-Year History of the Poles and Their Culture* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1994).

capital (Bourdieu) and to preserve a distinctive Polish identity for the elements of Polish culture remaining when the country's political identity disappeared.

In this dissertation, I will focus on the persistence of this distinct Polish identity in all three regions into which the Kingdom of Poland had been partitioned: Prussian Poland, Russian Poland, and Galicia. I will argue that from the three, only Galicia functioned as Polish "imagined community" (Benedict Anderson). This province alone maintained among its citizens a sense of Polish autonomy, a cultural Poland. Furthermore, because of Galicia's multiethnic structure and its geographical position, this Austrian Polish province also served as a bridge between the Russian East and the European West in the nineteenth century.

Significantly, of the three partition powers, only the Western powers, Austria and Prussia, recognized that the rigid hierarchical structure in Poland before the partition was not unique to Poland. Prussia and Austria saw the same weaknesses in their own governmental systems. Moreover, both of the countries perceived the Polish disregard for social and ethnic differences as the main problem that had left the state of Poland vulnerable to partitioning by the end of the eighteenth century. Russia alone did not see it as a common problem because the Russian Empire was absolutist and ruled traditionally without regard for class or ethnic differences. The Russian indifference to ethnic identity was further compounded by the fact that for the Poles, Russia symbolized "barbaric Asia" (Heine, Rousseau), lacking all vestiges of a coveted Western culture and freedom. As we shall see in the later chapters of this project, each political power sought to bring its own "imagined Poland." For now, let me summarize each briefly.

The appearance of Napoleon on the European political scene was extremely promising for those dreaming of the creation of a future Polish state. In 1806, Polish nobility and intelligentsia in Posnania (Prussian Poland) openly supported the French ruler as their historical ally who promised the establishment of an independent Polish nation state that could ultimately free them from Prussian dominance. These dreams, however, were dashed at the Congress of Vienna, which paved the way for the return to the “old” status quo of division and subordination to foreign powers; Poles once again faced the prospect of subordination to their traditional enemies: Russians and Germans; Austria’s domination was relatively new (Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*; Bär, *Westpreussen unter Friedrich dem Großen*).²

However, by creating the Duchy of Posen (Posnania) the Prussian king kept Polish hopes alive that a governing mechanism was in place that could possibly incubate a new autonomous Polish state. This perception was validated by the nomination of a Polish noble, Prince Radziwiłł, to the office of *Statthalter* (a quasi ambassadorial function). Radziwiłł had more than ambassadorial status however. He could, for example, mediate contentious issues between Prussian officials and actually attempted to negotiate the restitution for war losses and reinstatement of Poles not only into the bureaucratic offices of Posnania but also of the Prussian state (Schottmüller).³

Unfortunately, the Polish revolt in Russia in 1830 (the November Uprising in Congress Poland) caused a change in Prussian official policy vis-à-vis the Poles. Fearing

² Max Bär, *Westpreussen unter Friedrich dem Grossen* (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1965); Józef Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska* (Kraków: Czytelnik, 1947).

³ Kurt Schottmüller, ed. *Der Polenaufstand 1806/7: Urkunden und Aktenstücke aus der Zeit zwischen Jena und Tilsit* (Lissa i. P.: Friedrich Ebbeckes Verlag, 1907)

the threat of an uprising among the Polish inhabitants of Posnania, Prussian officials introduce legislation designed to colonize the Polish population by eliminating their voice throughout the local government. As a consequence, the office of *Statthalter* was abolished; Radziwiłł was dismissed and in this position the anti-Polish Eduard Heinrich Flottwell was nominated as the provincial president of the Duchy. As such, Flottwell generally supported bureaucratic measures designed to weaken Polish influence upon the local administration and education. At this time, for instance, German became the exclusive language for internal affairs and the civil administration, while the role of the nobility and clergy (in Poland, traditionally, the best educated social classes) was strongly limited by liquidating cloisters and changing peasants' regulation (Hagen).⁴ Significantly for the Poles, this situation would remain unchanged until 1841, when the new Prussian king Frederick William IV assumed the thrown.

The new king, already on good terms with some leading Polish aristocrats of the Duchy, showed more liberal tendencies toward the Poles than his predecessor. The most significant and satisfying changes for the Poles were the concessions over language and education policies as the use of the Polish language was extended to public administration. In addition, chairs in Slavic studies were established at the universities in Breslau and Berlin. Despite this more lenient policy towards the Poles, by 1848, Frederick William IV faced turbulence, not only in Posnania but also in the heart of the Prussian state, Berlin. The first weeks of the revolution in Prussia were tense with the

⁴ William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772-1914* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1980).

anticipation of an upcoming war with Russia, which was expected to invade German territories in order to restore the *ancien régime*. This growing Russophobia among Prussian liberals, politicians and writers alike, resulted in admiration for the Poles and their revolutionary struggles, especially because they had fought the Russian oppressor.

Ultimately, the Revolution of 1848, leading to a restoration period throughout Europe, meant for the Poles the return to repressive measures and laws in the Duchy of Posen, a loss of a decade of hope. By 1850, the Duchy, which had enjoyed a degree of autonomy to that point in time, became a Prussian province administered by Prussians according to Prussian rules. From 1850 on, the Prussian parliament was led by a conservative and bureaucratic majority desiring to paralyze any liberal or nationalists movements within the Prussian state. That trajectory did not change with the unification of the German states in 1871. If anything, it became more pronounced. Already with the appointment of a German, Eugen von Puttkammer, as the provincial president, a man absolutely committed to the Prussianization of Posnania --, i.e., turning Poles into German-speaking Prussian citizens -- the era of sympathy for the separate Polish identity came once again to a dramatic end, culminating in a law of 1876 which affirmed German the only permitted language in all of Prussia. In time, any utopian vision of Prussia as a German and Polish state receded and was lost to history.

The history of the Poles in Posnania in the nineteenth century provides a picture of a nation struggling to preserve its national identity as a cultural Poland if not a political one. In the case of Posnania, Polish hopes and dreams to create a quasi-autonomous

province for the Poles faded into past. More crucial was, however, the thread to Polish culture exerted by Russia.

At the same time when Prussia was redefining its Poland, the Poles in the other parts of the partitioned Kingdom of Poland, such as in the so-called Russian Poland (known also as Congress Poland or *Kongresówka*), shared a similar fate to the Poles under Prussian rule. Generally, already after 1819, opposition grew as the Poles in *Kongresówka* seemed to have no hope of an essential creation of something like the Duchy of Poznan, and they saw no equivalent of the position of Prussian *Statthalter* to mediate between the Poles and their new foreign rulers. Seeing no hope in direct political mediating, the Poles tried twice to fight openly against their Russian oppressors in the uprisings of 1830 and 1863, yet unsuccessfully. Russian troops relatively quickly put an end to these bloody revolts.

Despite this unquestionable, single-minded suppression of Polish cultural and revolutionary movements, there were Polish leading figures who believed in a Panslavic solution to the Polish problem. Aleksander Wielopolski represented a group that allied itself with the Russian Tsar in the belief that Slavs were the Poles' natural allies, rather than Germans or Austrians (Skałkowski).⁵ However, the majority of Poles disagreed with Wielopolski's premise and remained fundamentally anti-Russian throughout the nineteenth century.

⁵ A. M. Skałkowski, *Aleksander Wielopolski w świetle archiwów rodzinnych (29. XI. 1830 – 1960)*, (Poznań: Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 1947).

Whereas the Prussians vacillated about the issue of Polish autonomy, and the Russians were strict in their refusal of Polish self-governance, the Austrians with their own multiethnic nation accepted the Poles in different way, unlike the Prussians or Russians, Austria and Austro-Hungary attempted to integrate the province of Galicia into their multiethnic structure. Unfortunately for the Poles, their own social and political structures (large landholders and serf status for the peasant majority of the population) led to an internal uprising in 1846 that impacted Polish political credibility. The *Jacquerie* (the peasants' uprising against Polish landowners) became an event that ironically influenced public opinion in Austria in a positive way for Poles by promoting the search for the stability that the middle class and the landowners were set to achieve in Galicia. Thus in 1849, as a consequence of the Revolution of 1848 (also called the Spring of the Nations), much unlike in the Duchy of Posen, the Galicians supported the new status quo and the Austrian *Kaiser* through the so-called *Lwów Address*. For their unconditional support of the Emperor, the Galician Poles were rewarded at the same time as the Poles in Prussia and Russia were suffering increased repression. In Austria, in consequence, new laws granted the Poles freedom of speech and association. Moreover, in 1849, Poles in Galicia gained representation in the Austrian government: not only did Goluchowski become the Viceroy (equivalent of the governorship), but a Pole was also called as a representative in the Austrian cabinet to the Emperor. By 1867, while both Kongresówka and Posnania were experiencing ever increasing oppression, the Poles in Galicia were granted selective autonomy -- i.e., an independent government as well as positions in the Austrian parliament.

This political difference is cultural. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Galicia was the place where Polish language, habits, and modern myth making occurred. For the Poles in all three ex-Polish provinces, Galicia became the asylum of Polishness, the heart of Polish culture in the nineteenth century. I will argue that Poles living in Galicia created a special kind of “imagined community” (Benedict Anderson) and imagined the region of Galicia as a place with specific social habits, structures, geography, frozen in a specific “older” time, and exhibiting distinctive codes and ways of speaking.⁶ To follow Anderson’s theory, this emerging Polish nationalism imagined its community against an ancient backdrop, although the group of progressive Polish Galicians involved in this mental nation building was relatively young.

Yet this Polish hope did not return unaffected by outside forces. After WWI, Galicia was incorporated into two new states in Europe: Poland and Ukraine. Most significantly, this multiethnic structure of the region that had had the potential to be the model for a new Poland, a Poland re-created after 120 years of political non-existence, the model for integrating different ethnic groups and uniting different classes into one new political and social state system. Multiethnic Galicia became ethnic-national Poland and Ukraine, each with their own cultural battles in the twentieth century.

In this project, in sections devoted respectively to the history of Prussian Poland, Kongresówka and Galicia, I will show the more exact portrayal of how history and cultural representations of the three possible options for a future Poland played into the

⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991 [1983]).

nineteenth century's redefinitions of the emerging empires. To do so, following my historical introduction, I will concentrate on the literary depictions of the Poles as presented in the nineteenth century germanophone and Polish literature in works by Fontane, Freytag, Ebner-Eschenbach, and Lam. Historically, Prussia factored earliest into the process of a possible re-establishment of the Polish state, a utopia believed in as long as the Duchy of Poznan had its political existence.

That this history is to us lost does not mean that it lacked symbolic weight at the time. The utopian moment in history of the Duchy of Poznan, defined politically by politicians such as Prince Antoni Radziwiłł, is reflected in various German language texts by Theodor Fontane and Gustav Freytag, as we shall see. Fontane and Freytag point to opposite ends of the political spectrum in Prussia: the position represented by Fontane, who was influenced by other liberal writers such as Herwegh, Freiligrath, Chamisso, von Platen, and Harrig, reflects the intellectuals' fight for solidarity and democracy. On the other end of the spectrum is the xenophobic colonizing perspective represented in works by Gustav Freytag.

In contrast to Freytag, Fontane offers a vision of the contributions of an adherent group to an emerging cultural community. Most significantly, Fontane writes from a historical Prussian point of view that differs from the mainstream of Bismarck's German policy. Fontane's representations argue for a regional rather than an ethnic-national vision of Prussia, a Prussia that is a mixed culture of Germans and Poles -- a nation, not an Empire ruled from Berlin and the extended West. This postulate is especially visible in Fontane's novel *Vor dem Sturm* (1878), where Fontane juxtaposed the lives of two

families living in Berlin of 1806, one Prussian and one Polish, living amicably together.⁷ Throughout the novel, Fontane has a social spectrum of characters, Germans and Poles, who discuss their views on the Prussian state and their disappointment with the “new” Prussian nature and the forgotten old-Prussian spirit. Freytag in his *Soll und Haben*, on the contrary, saw Poles and other Slavs as weak and lazy. Therefore, German superiority seemed for him to be the only solution for the future of these nations.⁸ These two visions correspond to the historical debates in Prussia of that era. As we have seen, the new political option for the re-establishment of an autonomous Poland emerged in the form of Galicia. The real political debates of the era and this vision of Galicia, as we shall see, had their fictional counterparts.

Although born in Moravia, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach (1830-1916) is one of the germanophone authors recognizing the different cultural integrity of this Polish Galicia as the “other Austria,” the Austria of small border villages. The Poles as represented in two of her short stories, *Der Kreisphysikus* (1883) and *Jakob Szela* (1883), emerge as a national group distinct from the Czechs, Jews, and Austrians, a group accommodated within the Habsburg framework and with its own national imperatives.⁹

In both texts, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach uses the historical events of 1846 in Galicia to present her readers with the current circumstances and future possibilities for the reestablishment of a Polish state or some sort of unified region in Galicia. In so doing,

⁷ Theodor Fontane, “Vor dem Sturm,” *Romane und Erzählungen*, vols. 1-2 (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1973).

⁸ Gustav Freytag, *Debit and Credit* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1863).

⁹ Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, “Der Kreisphysikus,” *Gesammelte Werke* vol.1. (München: Nymphenburger Verlag 1961), 45-136 and “Jakob Szela,” *Ausgewählte Erzählungen*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Gebrüder Paetel 1910), 1-65.

she postulates that a new kind of aristocratic leadership must be asserted in order to construct a new Polish community that would strengthen the lower classes and thus avoid a new peasants' uprising. She suggests that only a socially unified Polish community that declared a common cause crossing traditional political lines would be able to justify its claim for independence.

Ebner-Eschenbach's evaluation of Polish Galicia is not simply a German-Austrian one. Jan Lam (1838-1886), one of the most famous and controversial of Lviv's journalists and writers, addresses a number of the same social and political issues. Lam's first novel, *Wielki Świat Capowic* (*The High Society of Tsapowice*, 1869), presents his (Polish? Galician?) vision of Galicia and its society.¹⁰ Although reflecting primarily on Galician reality, Lam also presented his stance on a possible Polish-Russian future of the nation. For many among the more traditional Polish intelligentsia, as we have seen, this Panslavic solution meant that Poland would be Slavic, but not Western. To counter this vision of Poland as a part of Asia, Lam argued for the Poles as a unified ethnic and cultural group, with a self-conscious national position, as reflected in his novel *Koroniarcz w Galicji* (1868-69).¹¹ Thus writing about Galicia, both Ebner-Eschenbach and Lam, although presenting two different perspectives on the Poles, perceived this nation without a state in the region as a separate ethnic group, however, at the same time, as an internal part of the monarchy with its multi-ethnic structure. It was than Galicia, not Prussia that became the Polish cultural capital in the nineteenth century. The presented here literary

¹⁰ Jan Lam, "Wielki Świat Capowic," *Dzieła Literackie* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1956), 47-161.

¹¹ Jan Lam, *Pan Komisarz Wojenny. Koroniarcz w Galicji*, (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1956).

texts reflect thus the *Realpolitik* of the era and the debates about the not existing nation state with strong cultural roots and “imagines community.”

Taken together, this emerging dialogue about a lost political entity seeking new cultural validation fundamentally conditions the identities of the emerging Austro-Hungarian and German Empires in the nineteenth-century, as the partitioned lands -- together with their distinct attitudes about history, multi-ethnicity, and community -- force the region’s inhabitants to re-conceive the boundaries of Europe in the age of Empire. Poland/Galicia could thus function as an example of a Western cultural nation in terms of the ideals of American democracy: solidarity over ethnic and social differences.

Hence, the cultural history of Poland is a nucleus for the new European definition of Western identity, defined not as capitalism and in contrast to the communist East Block, but defined in terms of democracy, equality, equal social status for all citizens (despite problems in achieving this goal). As I pursue in the chapters that follow, the Polish debates of the nineteenth century argue for a definition of Europe that need not be established around ethnic nation-states, but rather around shared cultural history and experience.

PART I

The Prussian Partition and the Polish Nation without a State

Chapter 1

Posnania: the Prussian Part of Poland

The three partitions of Poland in 1773, 1792, and 1795 caused significant changes not only to Europe's maps but also in the *Realpolitik* of the era and arguably most significantly in people's minds. In this part of my dissertation, I will concentrate on the images of Prussian Poland¹ that arose in this political context, images of the western parts of the former Commonwealth ceded to the Kingdom of Prussia, to argue that, once again, literary works depict and comment on mainstream official policy and often create new cultural and political visions for the future nation-states of Germany and Poland. To make my case, I will then discuss some literary works by Theodor Fontane (1819-1898) and Gustav Freytag (1816-1895) to show how history and policy are echoed in their fictional and journalistic works.

¹ The term "Prussian Poland" is variable. According to Davies, "in official usage, it was generally confined to the one area, the Grand Duchy of Poznań, which from 1815-1848 enjoyed a measure of autonomy. . . . In more popular usage, it referred to all the lands which the Kingdom of Prussia inherited from the former Polish-Lithuanian Republic" (Davies, *God's Playground*, 112). I will use in this project the term "Prussian Poland" in the broader, more popular sense because I will refer here not only to the official documents but also to witnesses' relations and literary forms in which Prussian Poland is the ex-Polish territory under Prussian rule.

Because of the early failure of the Polish Republic in 1772, Prussia became the first political force in the nineteenth century to influence the imagined identities of the Polish regions ceded into its territory. Without a doubt, the long and stormy relationship between these two nations going back to the Teutonic Knights and the battle near Tannenberg in 1410, greatly influenced further attempts at cooperation and coexistence between Poles and Germans living in the Prussian province of Księstwo Poznańskie [the Duchy of Poznań or in German, Posen] created from Polish territory after the third partition. Interpreting literary works referring to these regions and placing them in the historical background of the era will allow me to analyze the contemporary situation of Polish-Prussian relations and the authors' position vis-à-vis the so-called *Polenfrage*, which dominated the political discussion of that time.

Significantly for the present project, both Fontane and Freytag used their literary works to comment on contemporary policy and to express their opinion about the state of Prussia and the Polish nation, from the first half of the nineteenth century and well into its future. To understand this paradox, the reader requires a basic understanding of nineteenth century *Realpolitik* and the larger historical context of the era, as presented in their works. Therefore, to create a foundation for my further analysis and interpretation of Fontane's writings, I will in this first section of my dissertation summarize the Polish-Prussian relationship and its history from the time of the Polish partitions to the creation of Bismarck's Reich, including its echoes in one of his most famous political programs, the so-called *Kulturkampf*.

Tracing the historical events occurring during this era in the Polish lands ceded to Prussia is still extremely difficult. Although many history books provide a description of the events and *Realpolitik* of that time, I submit to my readers that the picture they offer is not complete, since most of them present either one opinion about the Polish issue (i.e., from either a Polish or a Prussian perspective) or their vision is limited by other intervening factors such as censorship in communist Poland, which had allowed only certain visions of the tale to emerge. To provide my readers with a clearer, at least somewhat more reliable version of the fate of Prussian Poland, I relied upon both Polish and German documentary sources, which reveal a somewhat different story. Additionally, many of the existing sources about these political events were initially published in the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, but to represented perspectives that no longer exist (Bär, Schottmüller, Ibbeken). I thus have also relied upon more contemporary history books (Davies, Zamoyski) with often clear but limited, simplified accounts; studies on specific issues such as the role of Bismarck (Feldman), the nationality conflict between Germans, Poles and Jews (Hagen) or the role and importance of the 1848 Revolution in Prussia and the Duchy of Poznan (Namier, Schmidt). Literary histories (Whiton, Arnold) have also been relevant to fill in historical background for the era's literary movements.² In the following section, I will retell that

² Robert Arnold, *Geschichte der Deutschen Polenliteratur von den Anfängen bis 1800* (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1966 [1900]); Max Bär, *Westpreußen unter Friedrich dem Großen*; Józef Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*; William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772-1914*; Lewis Bernstein Namier, *1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1947); Hans Schmidt, *Die polnische Revolution des Jahres 1848 im Großherzogtum Posen* (Weimar: Alexander Duncker Verlag, 1912); Rudolf Ibbeken, *Die auswärtige Politik Preußens 1858-1871*, vol. 3 (Oldenburg: Verlag Gerhard Stalling, 1932); Kurt Schottmüller, ed. *Der Polenaufstand 1806/7: Urkunden und*

story from Poland's, Prussia's, and France's perspectives. The Polish problem led to a general realignment of European powers that remained at the forefront of intellectuals' consciousness for decades.

In other words, the loss of the Polish state did not mean the end of Polish politics in the nineteenth century. The historical background of the Polish provinces acquired by Prussia continued to suggest the possibility of a Polish-Prussian alliance, especially in the period preceding and during the Napoleonic Wars. To support my argument that Prussia became the first new force to redefine Polish culture after the last Partition of 1795 and that, for a time (until Bismarck made Prussia into the core of an ethnically-defined German Empire), Prussia could have played a coordinating role for Poles in all three partitions, I will argue for the importance of the Prussian partition for the Poles (with special emphasis on the Duchy of Poznań) and the role of Antoni Radziwiłł (1775-1833) as one of the pro-Prussian representatives of the *Realpolitik* of that period. This possible Polish future, as a part of or in cooperation with Prussia, ended abruptly with the reign of Bismarck and his anti-Polish policy of *Kulturkampf*, but it remained a viable option to preserve Polish culture in the minds of many Polish intellectuals.

Prussia and Poland before 1800

Polish-Prussian relations are best characterized as a long history of conflicts and wars. Robert Arnold argues that “the commencement of antagonism between Poland and

Aktenstücke aus der Zeit zwischen Jena und Tilsit (Lissa i. P.: Friedrich Ebbeckes Verlag, 1907); and Helga B. Whiton, *Der Wandel des Polenbildes in der deutschen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1981).

the Brandenburg-Prussian state, whose lands were mainly cut out of old-Polish territories, reach back into the Middle Ages.”³ To support this statement, one need only remember the military conflicts of the Teutonic Knights, who fought against the Poles, for instance, in the battle by Tannenberg [Grunwald] in 1410. Because nationalism and the idea of nationhood in the modern sense did not yet play a role in creating these two states, one might argue that the sources of the Polish-Prussian conflict lay in the differences in their mentality, class and state structure, and religion. It is important, however, to emphasize another significant and possibly even dominant element in this analysis, namely the primary interest of the emergent states in land and power.

These two states’ conflict of interests was based primarily on their territorial shapes and territorial greed. The first plans to divide Poland and annex Polish territories were developed in Berlin during the reigns of the first two Prussian kings of the Hohenzollern dynasty, i.e., Frederick I (1688-1713) and Frederick William I (1713-1740). Interestingly, this dynasty and its pursuit of creating a strong, independent state became the historical example and object of admiration for the Iron Chancellor, Bismarck who confessed in one of his speeches on 18 March 1867:

The Hohenzollern created from the very beginning a true monarchy and subordinated to themselves the state-unfriendly nobility . . . Everywhere else in Germany, the nobility preserved the kind of independence with which no state could exist. Only in Prussia, did they learn how to submit to and serve the state. The monarchs ruled absolutely, but this absolutism served the state, and not their personae . . . That is how the development of Prussia occurred. How small was Prussia in the reign of Frederick, who said that the monarchy is the first servant of

³ Arnold, *Geschichte der Deutschen Polenliteratur von den Anfängen bis 1800*, 56.

the state. This lesson was not forgotten by the Hohenzollern. They were brought up in this spirit, and that was in their blood.⁴

Before the First Partition of 1772, Poland had been the third largest independent kingdom in Europe regarding its population and size, but by the end of the eighteenth century, it had disappeared from the world's maps. The main "beneficiary" of Poland's partition was without a doubt Russia. Austria and Prussia joined with the Russian Tsarina, Catharine II (1729-1796), to achieve, as they claimed, a power balance in Europe. Interestingly, however, the Tsarina got the idea to divide Poland directly from the King of Prussia, Frederick the Great (1712-1786), who, following the Seven Years War (1756-1763), sought to incorporate Wielkopolska and Poznań into Prussia to prevent any further Russian expansion towards the West.⁵

Frederick, as an absolute ruler, strongly opposed the Polish constitution and criticized the entire Commonwealth, calling it "the land of fools, madmen, and war."⁶ The basis for his aversion to Poland is best exemplified in the following statement, which appeared in his *Histoire de mon temps* (1746):

That kingdom [Poland] is caught in an eternal anarchy. Conflicting interests separate all the magnate families. They put their own advantage above the public good and unite among themselves only to consider cruel and atrocious means of oppressing their serfs, whom they treat like cattle. The Poles are vain and haughty

⁴ Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 21.

⁵ Along with general history books providing information about the Seven Years War, there are additional sources dealing specifically with this particular war such as: Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: the Seven Years War and the Fate of Empire in British North America* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2000); John Entick, *The General Story of the Late War Containing its Rise, Progress, and Event* (London: E. Dilly, 1763-4); Rupert Furneaux, *The Seven Years War* (London: Hart-Davis MacGibbon, 1973); or Tom Pocock, *Battle for Empire: The Very First World War* (London: Michael O'Mara, 1998).

⁶ Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 36. Konstytucja Trzeciego Maja 1791 was the last, yet unsuccessful, attempt to rescue the corrupt state of Poland, see, for instance Jerzy Lojek, *Upadek Konstytucji Trzeciego Maja* [The Fall of the Third May Constitution] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1976) and the introductory chapter of this dissertation.

when favored by fortune, abject in defeat; capable of the greatest baseness when money is to be gained thereby; but after getting it, they throw it out the window. Frivolous, they have neither judgment nor firm opinion. Without any justification, they adhere to political factions and then they abandon them. Because of their irrationality they get mixed up in the worst kinds of political affairs. True, they have laws, but no one obeys them because of the lack of agencies to enforce them. In this kingdom, reason has become the vassal of women; they intrigue and decide about everything, while their men worship the bottle.⁷

Other similar attitudes were voiced in Prussia and in other parts of enlightened Europe. After the first partition, many European intellectuals blamed the Poles for the loss of their motherland, pointing to the weaknesses of Polish policy and the pernicious role of the aristocracy. No wonder, then, that the first partition was widely celebrated among Prussians, who claimed their superiority over and hostility toward the Polish Commonwealth and saw the division of Poland as a “progressive and praiseworthy event.”⁸

However, while the early opinions about the first partition of Poland did not raise many protests or objections, the next two subsequent ones prompted waves of disbelief and anger throughout Europe. In fact, the French Revolution and Rousseau’s notion of morality, championed by the German *Sturm und Drang* movement, deepened the sympathy for the newly eradicated Polish state, which had introduced the first European democratic constitution (*Konstytucja Trzeciego Maja* 1791) and afterwards fought bravely against the Russian Empire for its own reestablishment.⁹

⁷ Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 72.

⁸ Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and the Jews*, 36.

⁹ For an interesting analysis of Europe’s reaction to the Partitions of Poland see Serejski, *Europa a rozbiory Polski* [Europe and the Partitions of Poland] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1970).

In Germany, then, initial literary responses to the partitions reflected sympathy for the Poles. The first published tribute to the dissolved Polish state was Christian Schubart's (1739-1791) "Polengedicht," in which he expressed his sadness over the Polish tragedy and the loss of "Polonia's children."¹⁰ Historians, such as E. M. Arndt (1769-1860) and Heinrich Luden (1778-1847), tempered their regret with *Polenpolitik*, postulating that the re-establishment of the Polish state was necessary, based on its importance for the power balance in Europe, suddenly facing the growing threat of Russian expansion.¹¹ Later, in 1834, Rotteck wrote: "Der Fall Polens verkündete mit Donnerstimme der zivilisierten Welt den völligen Umsturz des Gleichgewichts, die siegende Herrschaft der Gewalt, und sonstigen Fall alles öffentlichen Rechts."¹² [The demise of Poland announced to the civilized world with the sound of thunder the complete abolishment of balance of powers, the successful dominance of violence, and the demise of public law].

For many Germans, however, the resurrection of a Polish state would mean the loss of new, prosperous Prussian provinces and danger in the form of a Polish-French alliance. These concerns played a significant role in the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly for Prussia, which at that time faced several challenges—e.g., the loss of the Rhineland and the Napoleonic wars. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 put an

¹⁰ Whiton, *Der Wandel des Polenbildes in der deutschen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 70.

¹¹ Initially, Arndt postulated the return of the Baltic shore to the Poles (*Germanien und Europa*, 1803). In 1842, however, he published *Versuch in vergleichenden Völkergeschichte* where he expresses his sympathy for the victims of Russian oppression, calling the Poles an "unfortunate and tragic nation," yet noticing the historical necessity for growth and expansion of Prussia. See Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska* or Laubert, *Die preussische Polenpolitik*.

¹² Serejski, *Europa a rozbiory Polski*, 178.

end to the French threat and prompted the reconstruction of Prussia, soon making the Kingdom a serious challenger to the Austrian Empire, traditionally dominant in the German world. Prussia thus played the most central role in the German League and became a stable nation of laws with its own constitution of 1850. Under Wilhelm I, and of course Bismarck, Prussia was assumed the strongest position among the German countries and, after 1871, was the center of the unified German Empire. In this growing new European power, however, the Polish problem—i.e., the issue of preserving what remained of Polish identity and nationality in the Prussian state emerged as one of the central questions for Prussian policy throughout the entire nineteenth century, an issue that became one Bismarck's policy obsessions.¹³

The period before the Napoleonic Wars in particular gave rise to theories about the opportunity for a Polish-Prussian alliance, as postulated by Polish politician and statesman, Antoni Radziwiłł. This particular time frame, as we will see, is echoed in the literary vision of this era presented by Theodor Fontane and, more specifically, his portrayal of the Polish people in Prussian society. An understanding of this historical era from the Polish perspective is necessary to better understand Fontane's novels because he chose the Napoleonic Wars as the background in which to draw his parallels and substantiate his conclusions regarding Prussia and its geo-political situation following the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

¹³ Many documented historical sources bear witness to Bismarck's interest in the Polish questions, his hatred toward the Polish nation and Poland's re-establishment—see his writings such as political speeches, private letters, unpublished articles. In a later part of this study, I will provide additional quotes from Bismarck's writings and speeches to demonstrate his views and stands on the Polish issue.

As previously mentioned, Prussia had long been interested in Polish lands, as demonstrated by the expansionary policy of Frederick the Great. Its possession of parts of the “old” Polish state following the first partition (1772) allowed Prussia to expand its territory and prompted Prussia’s interest in further weakening the Polish Republic. The first acquisition of “Prussian Poland”¹⁴ through the first partition was thus widely celebrated and also prepared in detail by the Prussian government. The King of Prussia introduced immediately in 1772 a new judiciary system, postal service, schools, and new laws regarding, for instance, national emblems in the acquired territories. Additionally, the Prussian officials strategically targeted their campaign to not only acquire the region but also to change its Polish inhabitants into Prussian citizens: “Das sicherste Mittel, um diesen sklavischen Leuten bessere Begriffe und Sitten beizubringen, wird immer sein, solche mit der Zeit mit Teuschen zu melieren und wenn es auch nur anfänglich mit 2 oder 3 in jedem Dorfe geschehen kann.”¹⁵ Finally, on 27 September 1772, Frederick the Great accepted the Polish provinces in a *Huldigungsfeier* in Marienburg, where he was greeted by his *Etatsminister*, von Rohd, with the following statement:

Der glückliche Tag ist endlich erschienen, an welchem dasjenige Land, so ehemals dem Preußischen Adler entrissen worden, unter seine Flügel wiederum zurückkehren soll und dieser merkwürdige Tag, dieser große Zeitpunkt, war der glorreichen Regierung des großen Fredericks, des mit unsterblichem Ruhme

¹⁴ In numerous documentary sources, especially *Königsorder*, Frederick the Great refers to this region as “Preußisches Polen” [Prussian Poland]. See Max Bär, *Westpreussen unter Friedrich dem Grossen*. (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1965), vol. 2.

¹⁵ K.-O. an den Kammerpräsidenten von Dormhardt. Potsdam 1772, April 1. St.-A. Danzig 131, 6. Ausfertigng. Gedr. Preuss, Urk. V S. 193. in Bär, *Westpreußen unter Friedrich dem Großen*, 18.

bekronten Königes in Preußen, unsers allernädigsten Königes und Herren vorbehalten.¹⁶

In the proceedings, the King himself officially acknowledged the transfer of the Polish lands, claiming his political and historical rights to these regions:

Wir Frederick, von Gottes Gnaden König von Preußen, tun hiedurch kund und fügen jedermanniglich zu wissen, daß, nachdem Wir nunmehr aus dem der ganzen Welt öffentlich im Druck vor Augen gelegten Recht die bishero Uns und Unsren Vorfahren widerrechtlich vorenthaltene und der Krone Polen beseßene Lande Preußen und Pommern und bishero zu Groß-Polen gerechnete Distrikte diesseits der Netze, namenlich:

1. das Ermeland,
2. das Marienburgische Gebiet,
3. das Kulmer-Land oder das Kulnische Gebiet, mit Inbegriff des Michelauer Districts, jedoch mit Ausschließung der Stadt Thorn und ihres Territorii,
4. das sogenannte Pomerellen, und zwar mit Inbegrif alles der Netze oder Notecz belegen, jedoch mit Ausschließung der Stadt Danzig und ihres Territorii, als Unser rechtmäßiges Eigentum in Besitz genommen haben . . .¹⁷

We Frederick, by the grace of God King of Prussia, announce to everyone that by the right given us in the eyes of the world, we take our righteous possession of the lands of Prussia and Pomerania that had been occupied until now by the crown of Poland, and also the territory belonging previously to Greater Poland, this side of the Netz, namely:

1. the Ermeland
2. the region of Marienburg
3. the land of Kulm or the region of Kulm, including the district of Michelau, however, without the city of Thorn and its territory
4. the so-called Pomerellen, including all the regions located on the Notecz river, without the city of Gdansk and its territory.

Such statements were designed to elide Poland's history in this area, making the region seem Prussian.

¹⁶ Reden des Etatministers und Oberburggrafen von Rohd bei der Eröffnung und dem Schluss der Huldigungsfeier zu Marienburg. Geh. St.-A. Berlin R 7 B Nr. 2a 1. Beilage zum Protokoll. Bär, *Westpreußen unter Friedrich dem Großen*, 87.

¹⁷ Notifications-Patent, Berlin 28 September 1772, in Bär, *Westpreußen unter Friedrich dem Großen*, 91.

To further pursue its plan to swallow the rest of Poland and become the dominant power in Europe, Prussia decided to participate in the two subsequent partitions of Poland, which resulted in the disappearance of the Commonwealth from European maps for the next 120 years (with the small exception of the glimmer of hope given the Poles by Napoleon's creating the *Księstwo Warszawskie* [The Duchy of Warsaw] in 1807). At times after 1772, Prussia naturally reacted to the danger of Polish intellectuals' attempts to accomplish reforms and regain some kind of stability and independence. The introduction of the dynastical monarchy and the revolutionary *Konstytucja Trzeciego Maja* [Constitution of 3 May] of 1791 particularly worried the Prussian government, which readily perceived the inherent threat to its interests in giving the Poles a chance for a possible re-establishment of the Polish state. The following letter from Hertzberg (one of Prussia's statesmen) to Lucchesini (a diplomatic aide to Frederick William II) evidences this fear:

The Poles' stake is deadly to the Prussian monarchy, creating a dynastical monarchy and creating a constitution that is worth more than the English one. I suspect that Poland would become dangerous also for Prussia and, sooner or later, would grasp for West and maybe even East Prussia. How can we protect our country, which is open from Klajpeda to Groschen, against a numerous and well-ruled nation?¹⁸

Significantly, the Polish question was also widely discussed on the European forum, as

Feldmarschal Moellendorff stated in a conversation with a British diplomat: "his

¹⁸ Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 47f.

country—to which would agree every Prussian, despite party-division—cannot accept the establishment of a good government in Poland.”¹⁹

As previously mentioned, the first partition was widely accepted and celebrated among Prussian intellectuals and commoners. However, following Prussia’s subsequent acquisitions of Polish provinces, a new dimension arose in the debate about Poland’s future and current condition. Impressed by Polish patriotism, the new constitution, and heroic attempts to re-establish the Polish state (Kościuszko’s Insurrection in 1794), Prussian liberals drastically changed their attitudes regarding their own government and the Polish issue. Poland’s attempts at self-governance had spawned brave and insightful freedom fighters in many ways more liberal than Prussia’s own government. Although officially banned, publications supporting the Poles and voicing the new spirit of idealism were widely distributed in the German-speaking areas. For instance, A. G. F. Rebmann (1768-1824), a well-known Jena historian, belonged to a growing group of oppositionists criticizing the Prussian King:

Ein Tyrann [Frederick Wilhelm II] fällt in ein fremdes Land ein, um – die Jakobiner darinnen auszurotten, bricht die heiligen beschworenen Verträge, hezt die Bürger dieses Landes durch einen verachtlichen Diener seiner Nichtswürdigen [den Gesandten Lucchesi] zum Kriege gegen einen anderen Tyrannen [Catharine II], verspricht Beystand und mordet dann zuerst seinen Bundesgenossen. Das heißt – Staatsklugkeit.²⁰

A tyrant invades a foreign country to destroy there the Jacobins; he breaks all the promised unions; through his despicable servant, he agitates the citizens of that country to a war with another tyrant, promises support, and then murders first his allies. That is called –state wisdom.

¹⁹ Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Longmans, Green, and co., 1907) 214.

²⁰ Robert Arnold, *Geschichte der Deutschen Polenliteratur von den Anfängen bis 1800*, 238.

Later, Albrecht addressed King Frederick Wilhelm directly, writing him: “Geben Sie, Sire, den Polen zurück, was Ihre Heere diesem unglücklichen Lande entrissen haben, und das Andenken an die gebrochenen Enden wird vernichtet sein” [Give back, Sire, to the Poles what your army took away from this tragic country, and the memory of the broken ends will be destroyed].²¹ That the third partition was perceived as a tragic event by German liberals is demonstrated in German poetry by Zacharias Werner (1768-1823), who “apostrophized Kościuszko’s virtues and foretold the inevitable rebirth of the Polish state, establishing a genre of literary philopolonism in German which reached a peak in the 1830s and 1840s.”²²

Officially, as a result of the three partitions, Prussia received lands called West Prussia (1772), South Prussia (1793), and New East Prussia (1795), of which especially South Prussia was characterized as being “100 percent Polish (Stock-Polnisch),” as the Prussian King described it.²³ Interestingly, through the partitions of Poland and the acquisition of Masovia and Warsaw, Prussia also came closer than ever in history to the Russian Empire.

For a time, it seemed that Prussian rule would not interfere with the nature of the Polish people and the Polish nation. Already during the reign of Frederick the Great, the Polish gentry had been promised freedom to practice their religion and retain their privileges, even the peasants were granted certain rights—e.g., in the king’s domains, the peasants were granted personal freedom. At this time, two important attitudes towards the

²¹ Arnold, *Geschichte der Deutschen Polenliteratur*, 238.

²² Arnold, *Geschichte der Deutschen Polenliteratur*, 274. See also Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 57.

²³ Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 53.

new Prussian rule became visible among the Polish nobles. While the patriots joined Kościuszko in his attempt to re-establish the Polish state and re-introduce the May Constitution, calling their political situation “the yoke of the west,”²⁴ others paid homage to the Prussian King: “This nation [although referring only to their small group of nobles – AN] gives Thee, King [Frederick William II], a most precious jewel in sacrifice, with deep feeling and yet without a murmur or any resistance whatsoever.”²⁵

This particular discrepancy—and the existent division—caused Prussian officials to seek new answers to the yet unresolved question of how to integrate all Poles into the core of the new Prussian state. With regard to his initial, negative, treatment of the Poles, Frederick William III issued in his first year of reign the following statement about the officials in Prussian-Polish provinces: “it is almost a proverb among them [the officials] that the erstwhile Pole can be only ruled by the whip, but I am convinced that the South and New East Prussians are a good-natured and compliant people who do not deserve such a treatment.”²⁶

The question of integrating the Poles into the core of the Prussian state was essential to official policy. In 1800, the Poles constituted over 40 percent of the total population in the Prussian territories. As Davies argues, “the prospect of a German-Slav state was briefly very real.”²⁷ An interesting analysis of Prussian laws and attitudes

²⁴ Jan Wąsicki, *Ziemie polskie pod zaborem pruskim: Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie 1815-1848* (Poznań: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1980) and Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 62.

²⁵ Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 62.

²⁶ Richard Breyer, “Die südpreußischen Beamten und die Polenfrage,” *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, 4 (1955) 539. Also, note that the king himself avoids the term Pole, referring to them as Prussians, possibly an attempt to win them over by referring to them as equal/prussianized?

²⁷ Davies, *God's Playground*, 114.

towards the Poles is presented by Hagen in *Germans, Poles, and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East 1772-1914*. A few of the questions raised by Hagen include the issue of preserving the national character in the annexed lands and the role the Polish language played in the process of possible assimilation:

Integration of the Poles demanded more than tying their noble and clerical leaders to the state. At the deepest level, it was a question of whether the Poles would divest themselves of their traditional mentality and acquire a Prussian character. To late eighteenth century Prussian officialdom, the national question was essentially one of patriotism. What counted was neither language, nor secular aesthetic or literary culture, nor religion, but rather loyalty and devotion to the state.²⁸

As we see in the literature as well, initially, language integration—i.e., the introduction of German as the dominant language of instruction at schools and in courts—was not part of the Prussianization process. On the contrary, Prussian officials even promoted the study of Polish, probably to placate locals: “Hence the Prussian government encourages and promotes the learning of Polish by its officials and is most happy indeed to see the former Pole learning German.”²⁹ Of course, such a pro-Polish movement did not last long. Several historical and economic factors contributed to a drastic change in the official language policy in the provinces; as we will see in the next section of this study, the Napoleonic Era, Prussian defeat, and the Uprising of 1806 in Poznań all greatly influenced and changed the general Prussian policy.

To draw a conclusion applying to the first era of Prussian-Polish relationship: in this specific political situation and despite all previous attempts, the Prussian pursuits to

²⁸ Davies, *God’s Playground*, 59.

²⁹ 1798 memorandum of a leading minister to the King, cited in Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 64.

win over the minds of the Polish people were largely unsuccessful. As demonstrated by the long history of relations between the Poles and their western neighbors, Poles and Germans—in this case, Prussians—struggled individually to be on a friendly footing. Yet typical cultural differences, negative attitudes, and stereotypes are evenly projected in both of the languages. Many Polish and German proverbs exemplify these persistent mutual antagonisms and clashes. Consider, for instance, the Polish: *Co Polak to pan, to Niemiec to cham* [a Pole is landlord, a German an uncultured peasant] or the German: *Polack, polnische Wirtschaft*, suggesting that the acquisition of Polish lands by Prussia was unacceptable to many Poles. In addition, the Prussians had their own, increasingly anti-Polish biases, which characterized the Prussian administration and its policy in the region, in contrast with the more liberal officials whose hopes were thwarted. In some cases, to be sure, Prussian officials and administrators were unaffected by the general trend and proposed new treatment of the Poles, admitting that the partition was odious and humiliating to the indigenous population. This particular trend of liberalism seems to have persisted in some cases even after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the incorporation of Posnania into the core of the Prussian state, a trend that only paralleled the official, dominant Prussianization political course. Prussia would not remain liberal towards the Poles, since European politics interfered.

Poles, Prussians and Napoleon

After the final partition of Poland in 1792, Prussia seemed unaware of the real danger that the revolutionary era's politics could catastrophically change Europe,

commencing in 1806 with Napoleon's rise. Instead, as Hagen stated, "they took pride in their new acquisitions and, confidently anchored in Frederickian traditions, began with determination to put the new Polish provinces on a Prussian footing."³⁰ To avoid possible clashes between Polish nobles and Prussian officials, the King called his Polish relative, Antoni Radziwiłł, into the political arena of Polish-Prussian relations. Radziwiłł, as a Polish nobleman and patriot, sought to find a means of conciliation between the two nations, or rather to improve the situation of the Poles under Prussian rule.

When Napoleon marched through Prussia, for example, Radziwiłł suggested to the King several "Ermunterungs- und Lockmittel" towards the Poles. Schottmüller lists them as:

1. the assumption of the title "King of Great Poland" by the Prussian King
2. the acceptance of native South Prussians (i.e., Poles) in all administrative offices
3. nomination of true and well-wishing Polish gentry to state officers/employees
4. all possible support for the economic victims of the war.³¹

Moreover, Radziwiłł proposed connecting two important proposals, i.e., outbreak of an insurrection against the French on the Polish lands ceded to Prussia (thus Polish support for the Prussian army), and a project for political changes giving the Poles certain rights and privileges, Radziwiłł's goal was to secure autonomy for the Polish territory under Prussian rule within the Prussian state. The Prince's memorandum was received by the king and analyzed by the foreign minister, von Zastrow (1752-1830). However, other

³⁰ Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 52.

³¹ Kurt Schottmüller, ed., *Der Polenaufstand 1806/7. Urkunden und Aktenstücke aus der Zeit der zwischen Jena und Tilsit*, 152. See also Laubert, *Die preussische Polenpolitik*, 39.

projects for the future of Polish Prussia emerged on the political arena (for instance, Gruner's) at the same time and Prussia was facing an immediate danger of Napoleonic expansion. In consequence, Radziwiłł's attempts to change the political situation of the Polish lands had to be suddenly postponed.

Radziwiłł strongly favored the Polish element's participating in the official structure of the Prussian state and, on the other hand, still dreamed of the idea of an independent Polish state, created within a Prussian confederation. Moreover, Radziwiłł's goal was not underestimated by the Prussian officials who considered his proposals:

Prinz Radziwiłł ist nach Memel, um sich für das arme Südpreußen zu verwenden und zu verhindern, daß hier nicht ein Blut und Konfiskationssystem nach der Reokupation in Anwendung komme. Der P. Radziwill ist ein sehr gebildeter und schätzbarer junger Mann.³²

Unfortunately for Radziwiłł, on 14 October 1806, Napoleon routed the main body of the Prussian army at the battles of Jena and Auerstedt, putting an end to the absolute Prussian state and any hopes of compromise with a humiliated Prussia. In this situation, many Polish patriots, especially those who previously fought for Polish independence on Kościuszko's side against the Russian troops in 1794, found themselves forming Polish legions in Italy under the leadership of Jan Henryk Dąbrowski (1755–1818) to later support Napoleon Bonaparte. Thus, they once more expressed their desire for the re-establishment of an independent and sovereign Polish nation-state over any other political option, at a time when Prussia's defeat made this seem possible.

³² Freiherr von Stein on 2 February 1807, cited in Wąsicki, *Ziemie polskie*, 49.

After the battles of Jena and Auerstedt and the Prussian defeat in 1806, the French Army entered Berlin, where Napoleon summoned two Polish leaders, Dąbrowski and Józef Wybicki (1747-1822),³³ to his side in support of the fight, which they hoped would result in a free and independent Poland. Moreover, saying “I will see if the Poles are worthy of being a nation,” Napoleon demanded that these two leaders call upon the Poles in Prussia to rise up against their oppressors and start a revolution against Prussian rule.³⁴ This uprising was supposedly a spontaneous reaction of the Poles to the failure and sudden weakness of the Prussian state. However, many German officials remained in the province—even though Napoleon’s army marched triumphantly into Poznań and later, in 1808, into Warsaw (at this time a Prussian possession). In this context of a national uprising and French military successes against Prussia, the surprising fact remains that Poles from the southern Prussian provinces (South Prussia on the map) and from the West and New East Prussia “hardly lifted a finger to influence the events in their midst.”³⁵ Nevertheless, the Poznań-insurgents were, even in the eyes of their Prussian counterparts, “genuinely and honorably motivated by commitment to the Commonwealth past.”³⁶

In the meantime, the defeated and weakened Kingdom of Prussia sought to find a way of reorganizing and rebuilding of the state. Starting in April of 1806 and ending in

³³ Wybicki (1747-1822) – lawyer, writer, and politician. A close friend of Kościuszko and Dąbrowski. Wybicki participated in creating the Polish Legions in Italy in 1797. Dąbrowski – General of the Polish Legions, a known Polish patriot and revolutionary, fought for Polish independence against the Prussian power.

³⁴ Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 68.

³⁵ Wąsicki, *Prusy nowoschodnie*, 263

³⁶ Gruner’s (Poznań’s *Kammerdirektor*) “Denkschrift Gruners für den König. Bericht über den Posener Polenaufstand. Vorschläge für die künftige Verwaltung Südpreußens,” Memel, 25 February 1807, cited in Schottmüller, *Der Polenaufstand 1806/7*, 45-48.

the summer of 1807, the Prussian Minister Freiherr Karl von Stein (1770-1840) prepared a reform program for Prussia.³⁷ In so doing, Stein suggested necessary changes in several domains of the official policy: the war with France, international relations, general issues of the state's internal policy, public income, and jurisdiction. Moreover, he argued that

sollten des Königs Majestät die vorgeschlagene Veränderung der Regierungsverfassung nicht beschließen, sollten sie fortfahren, unter dem Einfluß des Kabinetts zu handeln, so ist es zu erwarten, dass der Staat (den er regiert) entweder sich auflöst oder seine Unabhängigkeit verliert, und daß die Liebe und Achtung seiner Untertanen ganz verschwindet.³⁸

should their Majesty, the King, not adopt the proposed change to the constitution, should they continue, to act under the influence of the cabinet, it could be expected that the state will either dissolve or lose its independence, and that the love and respect of the King's subjects will disappear.

As the history of the Napoleonic Wars shows, before Stein's postulates were introduced into the official legal and political system of Prussia in 1809, the French Army entered Warsaw in 1808 (in Prussian possession at that time). This victory over Prussia led to the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw, which received its own constitution based on the French model.³⁹ Once again, Napoleon was greeted almost ecstatically by the Poles, yet there was no Polish violence against the Prussian officials. Instead, the Poles expressed their enthusiasm and joy over a possible resurrection of their state in manifestos and demonstrations.

³⁷ Wąsicki, *Ziemie polskie pod zaborem pruskim*, 5ff.

³⁸ *Freiherr von Stein*, bearbeitet von E. Botzenhardt, Bd. II. Stuttgart 1957, 214. In Wąsicki, *Ziemie polskie*, 7.

³⁹ According to Davies, after the indecisive battle of Iława (Eylau) in February and Gneisenau's defense of Colberg, Napoleon was prepared to hand his Polish conquest back to Prussia. He even entered into negotiations with the Tsar with the intention of trading those territories in exchange for concessions elsewhere. The Tsar refused to comply. Therefore, the rise of the Duchy of Warsaw directly resulted from the Tsar's refusal to take Prussian Poland for Russia.

The Constitution of the Duchy changed the political system and structure of the new Polish state. Based on the ideals of the French Revolution, the newly introduced Article 4 provided that “all citizens are equal before the law,” and with a simple statement “L’esclavage est aboli,” put an end to serfdom as a legal institution in the Duchy of Warsaw.⁴⁰ The Constitution also retained Roman Catholicism as the religion of state and made Polish the official language of the government. The Constitution was presented in Dresden on 22 July when Frederick August, the King of Saxony, was appointed as hereditary duke and ruler of the nation. The King apparently spoke Polish but visited Warsaw only four times. Therefore, Polish statesmen, such as Stanisław Kostka Potocki, Józef Poniatowski, Stanisław Breza, or Feliks Lubieński, possessed some freedom for political maneuvering and took over some political functions of the government.

Despite the initial joy of the national population and Napoleon’s support in creating a Polish state, the Duchy became an object of French exploitation, as argued by Davies.⁴¹ Moreover, the Duchy was now closely tied to Napoleon’s fortunes, and more importantly, to his misfortunes. From the very beginning, the State was expected to pay a sum of 25 million francs over four years and also to maintain a standing army of 60,000 men. In addition, Napoleon required eight regiments for his Spanish campaign, as well as the famous Chevaux-Légers for the Imperial Guard.⁴² Unfortunately for the Duchy, in

⁴⁰ Davies, *God’s Playground*, 299; Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 101.

⁴¹ Davies, *Gods Playground*, 300.

⁴² Adam Zamoyski, *The Polish Way: A Thousand-Year History of the Poles and Their Culture*. Interestingly, Zamoyski is, without doubt, an open critic of Napoleon - especially his policy toward the

1812 Napoleon was again about to change the face of Europe, but this time to his own disadvantage. The Russian Campaign was a disaster, both for the Napoleonic Army as well as for the Poles, who stood by his side. After entering the burned-out city of Moscow in September, the French Army retreated from Russia throughout the late fall and early Russian winter. Polish units were the first in and the last out of Russia. After Napoleon's defeat, the Duchy was occupied by the Tsarist army for the next two years. The last sign of the Duchy's independent will extinguished with the life of Józef Poniatowski, whose death in the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig became a heroic and legendary act. As I will elaborate in the next part of my study, Poniatowski became an example of a true patriot for the next generation of the still suppressed Poles and the liberal Prussians.

In November 1812, Minister Stein wrote from St. Petersburg of new projects emerging in the Russian court regarding the future of Poland and Poles after Napoleon's defeat. Of course, these proposals threatened and worried Prussia, as Poland would accordingly stay under the protection of Russia. As Wąsicki argues, "aktywność polityków pruskich wzrosła z tą chwilą, gdy wojska rosyjskie wkroczyły w granice Polski i zbliżały się coraz bardziej do granic Prus. W otoczeniu króla podejrzewano, że Rosja pragnie zatrzymać dla siebie Prusy Zachodnie i Wschodnie, posługując się w tym celu ministrem Steinem"⁴³ [the activity of Prussian politicians grew in the moment when Russian troops crossed the Polish border and came closer to the Prussian border. It was

Polish Kingdom and the Polish nation. Zamoyski sees the newly created Kingdom as a toy in Napoleon's hands and as an object of his foreign policy and exploitation.

⁴³ Wąsicki, *Ziemia polska*, 55.

suspected in the king's environment that Russia wishes to keep East and West Prussia for herself, using for this purpose the person of Minister Stein]. Yet, because of these accusations, instead of using the diplomacy of Stein, Prussia decided to send Prince Radziwiłł to Kalisz (a town in the Russian partition) in March 1813 to participate in the discussions about the Polish future between the allies and the Polish army. His presence helped to convince the skeptical Poles to accept the initial proposal of Tsar Alexander to recreate a Polish state. In reality, another, very different project would be accepted—the incorporation of all Polish lands into the three occupying powers.

At least one historian argues that the Congress of Vienna did not set out to decide if Poland was a victim or if it should receive autonomy. Davies, for instance, asserts that the Congress of Vienna, officially ending the Napoleonic Era in Europe, did not assemble in September 1814 to discuss the Polish Question, and no Polish representatives were even invited.⁴⁴ A contrary view is presented in Wąsicki's analysis of the importance of the Congress of Vienna. He writes that the Polish issue was one of the most important questions discussed there.⁴⁵ Despite the contradictory claims of these historians, it is important to realize that the Polish question was significant for the three empires: Austria, Russia, and Prussia, and that the idea of re-creating or re-building a Polish nation-state thus had to emerge during the talks in 1815—although without agreement from the partitioning states who again incorporated the Polish lands into their territories.

⁴⁴ Davies, *God's Playground*, 306.

⁴⁵ Wąsicki, *Ziemia polskie*, 58.

In the final settlement, all the signatory powers agreed that the Poles should receive “representation and national institutions.”⁴⁶ Prussia settled for Poznań and the western fringe of the Duchy of Warsaw, taking half of Saxony, Gdansk, Swedish Pomerania, and several Rhineland principalities, and it agreed that its share of Wielkopolska should be ruled as the semi-autonomous Grand Duchy of Poznań: “Derjenige Theil des Herzogthums Warschau, welchem Seine Majestät der König von Preußen mit aller Suveränität und zum volligen Eigenthum, für sich und und Jahre Nachfolger, unter dem Titel: Großherzogtum Posen, besitzen wird”⁴⁷ [That part of the Duchy of Warsaw which his Majesty the King of Prussia shall possess, with all sovereignty and whole ownership for himself and his successors, under the title Grand Duchy of Posen]. Thus, Poland’s disappearance from the maps of Europe was realized, while a new Polish entity emerged under Prussia.

The Treaty of Vienna was signed on 9 June 1815. Two months earlier, the future Iron Chancellor and politician who would change the course of Prussia and Europe, Otto von Bismarck, was born.

The Era of the Spring of the Nations: Bismarck’s Rise to Power and *Kulturkampf*

The Congress of Vienna in 1815 brought the old monarchical order back to Europe. From the Poles’ point of view, however, it was a political disaster. After years of

⁴⁶ Ludwik Żychliński’s *Historia Sejmów Wielkich Ks. Poznańskiego do r. 1847* (Poznań, 1867) is a good source reproducing the Vienna agreements.

⁴⁷ Wąsicki, *Ziemia polskie*, 60.

fighting and hoping for the re-establishment of an independent nation state, the Napoleonic era's Duchy of Warsaw was dissolved and its territory once again divided among the three powers, with the largest part in Prussian possession. Yet a new possibility for defining a Polish nationality for the new era also arose in the form of the Duchy of Poznań. The Prussian king, Frederick William III, initially assured the Poles that "your language, together with German, will be used in all public functions," adding that "you [the Poles] too have a fatherland . . . You will be incorporated into my monarchy without having to relinquish your nationality."⁴⁸

As historical sources show, the period between the Congress of Vienna and 1830, ending with the outbreak of the Polish Uprising against Russian rule in Kongresówka, was indeed characterized by a rather conciliatory official Prussian policy. Most significant was the nomination of Radziwiłł to the *Statthalter* of the province,⁴⁹ with the expectation that he would mediate between the central government and Polish noblemen. As a consequence, Polish remained the official language in Posnania—equal to German—in schools, courts, and government. However, there is, Davies claims, enough evidence to show that the "King's Polish-speaking subjects thought of themselves not as Prussian Poles, but as Polish Prussians. . . The idea that the population of the Kingdom [of Prussia] could be categorized according to the language which they spoke was entirely alien to the pre-nationalist era."⁵⁰ Moreover, at that time, the majority of the population of the Duchy, regardless of the spoken language, was both Polish and German

⁴⁸ Żychliński, *Historia Sejmów Wielkich Ks. Poznańskiego do r. 1847*, 9-11.

⁴⁹ Interestingly, the Duchy of Poznań held the description of 'province,' used in official and popular language referring to the Duchy, similarly to two other Prussian provinces, Nordrhein and Sachsen.

⁵⁰ Davies, *God's Playground*, 132

at the same time. Indeed, it was rather a mixture of cultures speaking a mixture of languages existing on the old Prussian territory.⁵¹ This multi-ethnic, multi-lingual consanguinity, however, will disappear in the later era of the Polish-Prussian relations.

Prussian officials had not forgotten the uprising in Poznań in 1806 and the support the Poles showed for Napoleon and his army in the war against the Prussian Kingdom. As a result, after the creation of the Duchy of Poznań, more repressive measures were introduced; participants in the rebellion were to be executed or exiled, and no Pole was to be permitted into public service without proof of their competency in German. Despite such new laws, Gruner, the *Kammerdirektor* in Poznań, urged Frederick William III to undertake “the restoration of the Polish bourgeoisie and peasantry,” seeing in the nobles and the gentry the main reason for the outbreak of the Uprising of 1806.⁵² Interestingly, after 1812, Gruner was known for his secret involvement in a society aiming at the unification of Germany. His political counterpart in this respect was once again Radziwiłł, who believed that the Poles had to cooperate with the Prussian officials and become an autonomous part of the Prussian Kingdom. Radziwiłł, as the Prussian King’s relative, a Polish noble, and a conservative politician, suggested granting the Poles an aristocratic self-government and creating the title King of Poland, a crown to be assumed by Frederick William III. Indeed, many of the nobles and gentry expressed openly their support for the Prussian government which, as such, had guaranteed fundamental rights

⁵¹ See, for instance, Edward Martuszewski, *Polscy i nie polscy Prusacy* [Polish and non-Polish Prussians], Olsztyn: Pojezierze, 1974.

⁵² Schottmüller, *Der Polenaufrstand 1806/7*, 145-48.

for the Poles: nationality, language, autonomy, the right to participate in the provincial government, and freedom of religion.⁵³

Officially, the Grand Duchy of Poznań paid homage to the Prussian king on August 3, 1815. Interestingly, Prince Radziwiłł, as the governor of the province, declared its dependence on and allegiance to the Prussian state. Moreover, in his speech, Radziwiłł emphasized the importance of peaceful cooperation between the Poles and the officials and called on the Poles to abandon any thoughts of a revolution:

Odrzućmy te niebezpieczne łudzenie się, które od rzeczywistości odwodzą i czernią ją, przeistaczają, które w miejsce prawdy próżne i uwodzące wystawiają pozory. Dzielność rozsądku wyjawia się na uważanie rzeczy tak, jak są, a dzielność charakteru na poddanie się temu co niezwalczone okoliczności nakazują. Mądrość radzi, interes narodowy wymaga, powinność każe, abyście mieszkańcy Księstwa Poznańskiego zastanawiali się nad pożytkami, które Wam zabezpiecza nowy porządek rzeczy.⁵⁴

Let us abandon the dangerous delusions, which divert us from and blacken reality and change it; which in place of the truth present different vain and delusive pretexts. The bravery of reason is proved by seeing things as they really are, and the bravery of character by accepting that what the circumstances demand. Wisdom advises, the national interest demands, and duty bids you, the citizens of the Duchy of Poznań, to think about the benefits guaranteed by the new order.

In general, Prince Radziwiłł appealed to his native Poles to accept the reforms, which were underway, to cooperate loyally with Prussian officials and, finally, to abandon hopes of foreign intervention in Polish affairs and not to count on any changes in the European political system.

After 1815, the Polish Duchy of Poznań was a semi-autonomous province ruled by the Prussian king, yet administered partially by the Poles themselves. In the

⁵³ In 1815, Count Ignacy Nałęcz Raczyński gave such a statement, which was published in one of the local newspapers. Cited in Wąsicki, *Ziemie polskie*, 70.

⁵⁴ Wąsicki, *Ziemie polskie*, 72.

subsequent decades in the 1830s and 1840s, however, to ensure Prussia's dominance in the Duchy of Poznań, the incorporation of Polish provinces into Prussia took two different official courses. While an anti-Polish tendency was predominantly visible and growing, as represented by General Grolmann (1777-1843) and Flottwell (1786-1865), still a few more liberal politicians expressed their sympathy towards the Poles and their right to an independent state. In 1841, the following statement was made in the Prussian Court by Rochow (1792-1847), Prussian *Innenminister*:

Prussia is in the Grand Duchy of Poznań in possession of the part of the former Commonwealth. . . The spirit of nationhood, the memory of the political independence of Poland has not been extinguished among the Polish citizens of the province. The majority of the gentry and clergy obstinately abide by these memories and by hopes of their renewal; but the sense of nationality is also still alive among the bourgeoisie and the peasants/countrymen.⁵⁵

Surprisingly, the idea of nationhood, in the sense of the above-quoted statement, was accepted even by the supporters of the germanization of the Polish provinces who expressed

the wish to convince the Poles that in Posnania they can find asylum that guarantees free development of all noble signs of the spirit, all reasonable pursuits to improve the internal relationships, and at the same time grant protection and custody to all national characteristics as long as they comply with the common good of the [Prussian] state.⁵⁶

However, the rising danger of a Polish revolution, such as the November Uprising seen in the Russian partition in 1830/31, again changed the position of the Prussian state vis-à-vis the Poles, vigilantly surveying the Polish movement. Moreover, the state of Prussia faced its own internal problems in the form of growing liberal opposition and revolutionary

⁵⁵ Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 56.

⁵⁶ Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 57.

movements in the pre-1848 era—the beginning of the era of the so-called Spring of the Nations.

Seeing the danger that a Polish revolution in their own province aft could follow the November Uprising in the Russian Poland), Prussian official policy reverted rapidly to its anti-Polish traditions, which resulted in the appointment of Flottwell as the Provincial President of the Duchy of Posen. As mentioned before, Flottwell's philosophy was to tame the Polish element and secure Prussian dominance in the region. Therefore, he ultimately decided to abolish the office of the *Statthalter* and to dismiss Radziwiłł from his official functions. Flottwell thus started a process of incorporating or colonizing the Duchy, stating that: "their [the Poles'] complete union, however, can only be achieved through the decisive predominance of German culture."⁵⁷ On 5 May 1831, he uttered the following comment about the Polish nation:

Das mannigfaltiger Auslegung fähige und schwer in einem bestimmten Sinn zu begrenzte Wort "Nationalität" war der Giftbaum, in dessen Schatten der alte Groll und der Hang zur Widersetzlichkeit gegen Obrigkeit und Gesetze keimten und wucherten das Panier, um welches sich alle Unzufriedenen und Insurrectionspläne Schmiedenden sammelten und bildeten eine für alle Zukunft undurchdringliche feste Scheidewand zwischen der Polnischen und Preussischen Vaterslandliebe, so wie zwischen Polen und Deutschen.⁵⁸

The word "nationality" that could be interpreted in many ways and only with difficulties be limited to a certain meaning became the poisonous tree in which shade the old wrath, and the tendency to oppose the authorities and laws germinated and proliferated a coating, which collected all those who were unhappy and those hatching plans for a revolt. They created then a wall of division, impenetrable for the entire future and a solid one, between the Polish and the Prussian love of the fatherland, as it is between the Poles and the Germans.

⁵⁷ Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 87.

⁵⁸ Laubert, *Die preussische Polenpolitik*, 53.

In so doing, he erased all the previous Polish hopes for turning the Duchy into a quasi-independent Polish state ruled locally by Poles. As Flottwell had wanted to see it, now, the Duchy became an integral part of a larger Monarchy; Prussia, and its citizens were Prussians, not Poles from the Duchy.

Flottwell's era ended, however, in 1841, a year after Frederick William IV (1795-1861; King of Prussia 1840-1861) took the throne of Prussia. Sympathetically perceiving the situation of the Poles, the new king agreed to their demands denouncing Flottwell, and nominated Graf Adolf Arnim-Boitzenburg as the new official leader of the province. Moreover, Frederick "instructed his officials to respect the Poles' nationality and avoid any appearance of favoring the German population in the Grand Duchy."⁵⁹ This is not to say that the king was unaware of the importance of the Prussian element in the province for its governance and future. In his view, "the natural result of an undisturbed historical development will be the suffusion of the Polish element in the province with a Prussian spirit and German culture. . . ."⁶⁰ Yet Poles did not abandon their dream of the Duchy as a Polish nation-state ruled locally by the Poles. In general, many historians even the pro-German ones such as Laubert described the era "die Versöhnungspolitik" [policy of reconciliation].⁶¹

Feldman has summarized the history of Polish-Prussian relations from the Prussian perspective in the first half of the nineteenth century (before the outbreak of

⁵⁹ Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 92.

⁶⁰ Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 77.

⁶¹ Laubert, *Die preussische Polenpolitik*, 80.

local revolutions in 1848 in Europe), seeing that it mirrored to the main postulates and philosophy of the decades:

Fryderyk II, przedstawiciel wieku Oświecenia i merkantylizmu, tępił żywioł polski ze względów cywilizatorsko-gospodarczych. . . Hoym, radząc germanizować Polaków na Górnym Śląsku, przybrał maskę krzewiciela kultury dbałego o dzwignięcie materialne i moralne powierzonej mu ludności. Justus Gruner uderzał w ton humanitaryzmu i sprawiedliwości społecznej, zwracając się do króla z gorącym wyzwaniem, aby wziął w ręce sprawę emancypacji stanu włościańskiego i stał się przez to dobroczyńcą i odrodzicielem narodu polskiego. Schoen dowodząc, że chciał przetworzyć niewolników i Słowian w ludzi i Niemców, nadawał swojej działalności piętno dźwigania ludności polskiej na poziom wyższej kultury i doskonalszego człowieczeństwa. Flottwell, zgodnie z poglądem na świat liberalnego biurokraty, traktował wszczętą przezeń walkę z Kościołem. . . jako walkę postępu z reakcją. . .⁶²

Frederick II, the representative of Enlightenment and mercantilism, fought the Polish element out of civilisatory-economic reasons. . . Hoym, suggesting the germanization of Poles in Upper Silesia, assumed a mask of a propagator of culture who cared about the material and moral raising of the population. Justus Gruner played the card of humanitarianism and social justice, appealing warmly to the king to take care of the issues of emancipation of peasants and to become the benefactor and regenerator of the Polish nation. Schoen, arguing that he wanted to transform the slaves and the Slavs into men and Germans, gave his activities a stigma of raising the Poles to the level of higher culture and a more perfect humanity. Flottwell, according to the worldview of a liberal bureaucrat, treated the fight he initiated with the Church as the fight between development and reaction.

This situation would be resolved in another way by 1848.

The Revolution of 1848 in the Grand Duchy of Poznań

For nationalists and liberals in Prussia during the 1830s and 40s, a revolution trying to unify Germany into a democratic state, abolishing the old structures of the ancient regime, seemed unavoidable. When that revolution finally broke out in March

⁶² Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 81f.

1848, it was supposedly welcomed and cherished by the masses (or at least by enthusiastic students in the cities). However, the beginning of this “Spring of the German Nation” brought also anxieties and worries, deepened by the circulating rumors of French or Russian invasion to re-establish the old order. For Germans in official positions, the Russian threat became so important that many liberals included discussions about possible solutions of the Russian problem in their political program.

Interestingly, this German Russophobia benefited the Polish cause among the Germans in Prussia and deepened their sympathy for the brave Poles fighting against Tsarist oppression and terror. As many Prussian liberals assumed and postulated, the unification of Germany could only be accomplished after an independent Polish nation-state had been restored as a kind of buffer zone protecting German interests from Russian aggression. This concept of a Polish nation with a right to sovereignty shed an additional and different light on the meaning of the three partitions, which now were perceived as cynical and criminal acts.⁶³

In the eyes of German liberals, only the re-creation of Poland with its 1772 borders could erase German responsibility for the past, and in return, Poland would protect the new German state from the Russian threat, thereby re-establishing the lost power balance within Europe. No wonder the Poles in Prussia began receiving better treatment than previously and were welcomed and greeted on streets as triumphant heroes in their fight against the Tsar. In Berlin, Polish leaders such as Mierosławski obtained

⁶³ Arno Will, *Polska i Polacy w niemieckiej prozie literackiej XIX wieku* (Łódź: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1970) 15ff, 37ff, 80ff.

release from imprisonment and manifested their Polishness in street parades. Forty years later, Bismarck would describe the events of 1848 in his own words:

I remember when I observed a crowd accompanying a funeral procession for participants of the March events. In contrast to the mourning celebration, on a richly decorated carriage stood Mierosławski, dressed in Polish national costume, who became the actual hero of that day. His presence made an almost larger impression on people in Berlin than the King who announced his attempt to incorporate Prussia into Germany.⁶⁴

This exclamation of German support for the Polish nation resulted in accelerated activity by Polish leaders in the Grand Duchy of Poznań.

One practical result of this enthusiasm was that the Polish nobility, gentry, and intelligentsia established a Polish National Committee, “which announced its aim as the independence of whole Poland.”⁶⁵ Additionally, this Committee promised economic relief to the peasants who then supposedly would join the nationals and fight for the abolition of legal class distinctions by championing equality for all citizens, regardless of ethnicity (i.e., Jews and Germans) and religion. On 20 March, the Committee issued a statement, saying: “the unification of Germany has been proclaimed We as Poles, a nation apart, cannot agree to being included in it.”⁶⁶ Soon after this proclamation, the Poles assumed governmental powers for themselves, formed local committees in rural districts and smaller towns, and commenced training many volunteers for a newly created army. This particular situation called for support of the émigrés who now, seeing the “emerging spirit of Polishness,” arrived in large numbers in Posnania. This interesting

⁶⁴ Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 90f.

⁶⁵ Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 106.

⁶⁶ Hans Schmidt, *Die polnische Revolution des Jahres 1848 im Grossherzogtum Posen*. See also Namier, *1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals*, 57.

observation was offered by Adolphe de Circourt (1801-79), reporting from Berlin in March 1848:

A week ago, the emancipation of Prussian Poland occurred in fact, and almost in law. Its German population is now a mere accessory, and follows trembling the direction forced on it by the Slav population. The German troops hold a position intermediary between that of hostages and of a foreign army of occupation. . . . The Polish Committees, formed spontaneously between March 21 and 24, control the administration of the country, and work to reorganize it completely in an exclusively Polish sense. . . . This strange condition of a great province of the Prussian State is, moreover, only the beginning. The Committees have told the King, the Cabinet, the Clubs, and, through the Press, all the inhabitants of the Kingdom that it is their goal to re-establish the Kingdom of Poland. They will transform Posen into a recruiting center, a training ground, an arsenal, a supply base.⁶⁷

Interestingly, at the same time, the Prussian officials seem to support the Polish cause, trying to convince the king to sign a decree allowing a reorganization of the Duchy of Poznań as a first step to recreating a fully or semi autonomous Poland. One of them was the foreign minister, Heinrich Graf von Arnim (1803-1868), who described the re-establishment of Poland as “a sacred duty of the German nation.”⁶⁸

However, with the growing spirit of Germaneness and strong nationalistic feelings in Prussia, initial enthusiasm waned and many voices were raised to criticize the idea of an independent Poland. In the opinion of many, mainly military officers, “silna Polska zmierzać będzie niewątpliwie do zagarnięcia znowu obszaru o charakterze przeważająco niemieckim”⁶⁹ [a strong Poland will without a doubt retake control of predominantly German regions] or “pozostawienie Poznańskiego przy monarchii musi

⁶⁷ From *Souvenirs d'une mission a Berlin en 1848* (1908) I: 305-310. Cited in Namier, *1848*, 59.

⁶⁸ Namier, *1848*, 87.

⁶⁹ General Griesheim, cited in Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 93

być uważane za kwestię życia”⁷⁰ [leaving Posnania connected to the monarchy must be considered as a question of survival]. The fear of a Russian invasion, which had previously paralyzed the Prussian consciousness, suddenly disappeared, just when the Prussian connection to Russia became even stronger.

Importantly, now, all the German nationalist and liberal forces placed their hopes in the constitutional conventions of 1848, especially in the German National Assembly in Frankfurt and the Prussian National Assembly in Berlin, as their authorities to lead them into the new era. As for Poland, the Prussian king did not show any intention of creating or supporting an independent state, especially if it meant sacrificing parts of Prussian territory to form an independent Grand Duchy of Poznań. Determined to maintain full control of the region, Prussian authorities began to re-assert their power within the Duchy. The official constitution proclaimed by the National Assembly in Frankfurt did not even mention the Duchy, treating it rather as an integral part of the monarchy completely integrated into Prussia.

As one result of the revolution of 1848, the legitimacy of the Congress of Vienna and its map of Europe was proclaimed invalid, taking with it the hopes for a Grand Duchy of Poznań and a recreated Polish nation state. Demands for Poland’s independence became less frequent, and in their place new opinions were formed, such as this one expressed by Wilhelm Jordan, the representative of the left liberals in the Frankfurt Parliament:

⁷⁰ Major Voigts-Rhetz, cited in Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 93.

Polen bloß deswegen herstellen zu wollen, weil sein Untergang uns mit gerechter Trauer erfüllt, das nenne ich eine schwachsinnige Sentimentalität. . . . Es ist wohl Zeit für uns, endlich einmal zu erwachen, aus jener träumerischen Selbstvergessenheit, in der wir schwärmten für alle möglichen Nationalitäten, während wir selbst in schmackvoller Unfreiheit niederlagen, zu erwachen zu einem gesunden Volksegoismus.⁷¹

I call the desire to create Poland, only because its fall rightfully fills us with just mourning, a ludicrous sentimentality.... It is time for us to once and for all awaken from such dreamy self-oblivion in which we dreamed of all possible nationalities, while we ourselves floundered in a humiliating lack of freedom, to awaken to a healthy national egoism.

The Poles' reaction was immediate. In the same forum, the Polish Erasmus von Stablewski responded with the following statement about the option of Prussian dominance:

Wenn Sie den Polen alles Recht absprechen, dann werden wir uns erinnern, dass wir nicht nur Polen, dass wir auch Slawen sind. Als solche haben wir eine Zukunft, als Deutsche nie. . . Es gibt jetzt nur diese Alternative, entweder Polen als Ihre Verbündete oder als Slawen Ihre Feinde.⁷²

If you deny the Poles their rights, then we will remember that we are not only Poles but also Slavs. As such we have a future, as Germans never. . . Now there is only this alternative, either to have Poles as your allies or to have Slavs as your foes.

Jordan's "sentimentality" was transformed into a hardheaded political vision.

Numerous proofs of Bismarck's earlier views on the Polish question exist in the form of unpublished articles, unpublished simply because their tone was perceived as too aggressive and too offensive for the readers of that time. Yet, after the revolution and by the time Bismarck gained political power in Prussia, these articles would give testimony

⁷¹ Jordan's speech from 24 July 1848, cited in *Quellen zu den Deutsch-Polnischen Beziehungen 1815-1991*, eds. Pommerin and Uhlmann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001) 54.

⁷² Statement from 2 October 1848, cited in Laubert, *Die preussische Polenpolitik*, 115.

to his consistent disapproval of the Prussian government's Polish policy and his hatred of Poles:

The national evolution of the Polish element in Posen can have no other sensible goal than preparing the restoration of an independent Polish state. One may wish for the resurrection of Poland in its borders from 1772, as the Poles expect, though they do not admit openly; one could give back to Poland all of Posen, West Prussia, and Ermland. In that case, the best sinews of Germany would be severed and millions of Germans would fall prey to Polish arbitrariness. Thus one would gain an uncertain ally, covetously awaiting any sort of trouble on Germany's part in order to tear away from it East Prussia, the Polish part of Silesia, The Polish regions of Pomerania. On the other hand, one might wish to restore Poland in narrower limits, giving it only the decidedly Polish part of the Grand Duchy of Posen. In that event, only he who is completely ignorant of the Poles would doubt that they would be our sworn enemies so long as they had not conquered from us the mouth of Vistula and, beyond that, every Polish-speaking village in the West and East Prussia, Pomerania, and Silesia. Only a German who allowed himself to be guided by tearful compassion and impractical theories could dream of establishing in the immediate neighborhood of his own fatherland an implacable enemy always ready to externalize his feverish domestic turbulence in war and, in any serious complication we might find ourselves in, to fall upon us in the rear.⁷³

Bismarck became known for such engaging and powerful speeches within the forum of the Frankfurt Assembly that promised everyone something. Very much in support of a strong and powerful Prussia, he did not fear the Russian threat, but rather expressed his pro-Russian stance and friendliness.

In so doing, Bismarck's goal was to strengthen the Prussian state and its position within Europe, not necessarily to cheapen any Slavic cause. To a description of Bismarck as cold and calculating (that was often repeated by other delegates to the Assembly), his Austrian opponent Prokesch-Osten added:

⁷³ Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 95f.

Gdyby z nieba zstąpił anioł, Bismarck nie wypuściłby go bez pruskiej kokardy, na odwrot zaś, wprowadziłby pogardę, ale podałby rękę samemu szatanowi, gdyby ten dorzucił do państwa pruskiego jeszcze jedną wieś niemiecką.⁷⁴

If an angel from heaven above would step down, Bismarck would not let him leave without the Prussian ribbon, on the contrary, although with reluctance, he would shake hands with Satan himself, if only the latter would give one more German village to the Prussian state.

And while other politicians expressed their continued Russophobia, Bismarck remained deaf to all explicitly anti-Russian arguments. Even when Europe faced the Crimean War soon thereafter, Bismarck tried to find a solution beneficial for Prussia, which meant that Poland seemed to stand in the way of his achieving this goal. After the “Spring of the Nations,” the Polish issue changed its face and again was perceived as a potential threat to the alliance among France, Prussia, England, Russia, and Austria. Meanwhile, Bismarck continued to focus on protecting Prussia by keeping her away from the fighting camps and by maintaining a positive and friendly relationship with the Tsar.

Bismarck’s utilitarian pro-Russian position became even more significant during his diplomatic mission to St. Petersburg, where he proved himself to be a true friend of the Tsar and an opponent of the pro-Polish Gorchakov. Moreover, it was Bismarck who advised the Russian monarch in foreign policy, especially in the case of Kongresówka, the Russian part of Poland. At the time, it seemed as though Wielopolski’s⁷⁵ idea of an autonomous or semi-autonomous Poland would succeed, and yet the Polish Count had to face his biggest rival, Bismarck, to re-imagine Poland as a buffer zone between two

⁷⁴ Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 113.

⁷⁵ For more information on Wielopolski and the Russian Poland, please refer to Part III of this study.

powers. As the harshest critic of anything and everything that could slightly resemble an independent Polish state, Bismarck stated:

Every success of the Polish national movement is Prussia's failure; we can wage war on this element not based on the rules of civil justice but according to the laws of war. Polishness with all its characteristics should be judged not from the perspective of an objective humanism but as an enemy... There's no possibility of peace between us nor any attempts to resurrect Poland!⁷⁶

In the meantime, in Prussia, Eugen von Puttkammer (1800-1871), the provincial president of Posnania, used the term "ausrotten" [exterminate] in reference to the Polish element in the province. One could thus argue that this is when the Germanization process reached its height.

Historian Hagen implies that "Germanisierung" could, in one sense, be understood as suppression of "Polonism."⁷⁷ If so, this Prussian strategy would mean the suppression of the most politically unchangeable Polish element in the region, most likely the gentry and the clergy. Significantly, despite its growing disagreement and impending fight with the Polish nation in Posnania, the Prussian government did not actually possess, at that time, the necessarily tools to execute this campaign. The postulate of Germanization had thus to deal with older laws, such as the court-enforced right of Poles to communicate with state agencies in their native tongue (from 1832) or the use of Polish as the language of instruction in elementary schools (1842).⁷⁸ Additionally, Prussian officials were aware of the importance of the Catholic Church for the Poles in general, and specifically for their education and language. Hence, a campaign against the

⁷⁶ Bismarck to Bernstorff, in Bismarck, *Gesammelte Werke* III, 251.

⁷⁷ Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 124.

⁷⁸ For more information about specific laws in Posnania see, for instance, Laubert, *Die preussische Polenpolitik*, 140f.

Archbishopric Gniezno [Gnesen] became more visible and symbolic in this climate, as one of Bismarck's concerns was the political influence of the Polish clergy and gentry. In general, economic and political trends in Prussian Poland benefited local German agriculture and urban interests without recognizing the Poles' needs. Consequently, the official *Polenpolitik* between 1850 and 1862 remained essentially negative and hostile towards the Poles.

The verbal politics of suborning Polish identity became more serious when in 1862 Bismarck was appointed Prussian Minister-President. Regarding the Polish issue, Bismarck now observed that no offering could be made to transform the Poles into loyal Prussians. In fact, in his opinion, only the repression of Poles and taming their national movement could possibly force at least the other part of the Polish nation to become integrated into the monarchy. His view of the Poles is best represented in his own words in a personal letter to his sister:

Flay the Poles until they despair of life! I have all sympathy for their position, but if we wish to endure, we can do nothing else but extirpate them.... It is not the wolf's fault that God created him as he is, but nevertheless we kill him whenever we can.⁷⁹

The historical events of the following year, 1863, in *Kongresówka* or Russian Poland, would bring significant changes to Europe and consequently, to Bismarck's Polish policy and his international position in general.

Wielopolski's pro-Russian option (which I discuss at more length in the "Russian" part of this dissertation) caused a wave of disapproval and protest among the

⁷⁹ *Quellen zu den Deutsch-Polnischen Beziehungen 1815-1991*, 60.

more Western-oriented Polish nationalists living in Kongresówka, which resulted in Polish military upheaval—the January Uprising.⁸⁰ The Prussian government also did not welcome the news of the Polish revolt; the available information about the uprising was mostly exaggerated and untrue, but caused great apprehension in a Prussia that had decided to erase Poles from Prussia’s map. The crisis of the Russian government in Kongresówka became a threat to stability in the Duchy of Poznań and prompted Bismarck’s concern over the possible threat to Prussian order. The idea of an independent or semi-autonomous Kingdom of Poland, cooperating with Russia, was a creation of Wielopolski supported by Gorchakov and the Tsar’s brother, Prince Constantin.

This uprising was for the Russians a sign of open war against Russia, but involving only part of the Polish nation in Kongresówka, and not a general sign of Polish nationalism. Their hopes lay in a quick resolution of the “problem” and in developing, afterwards, a “healthy organism.”

Bismarck, however, counted on the fact that St. Petersburg would finally realize that the Polish nation could not be subordinated and that no amount of concessions would change the Poles into loyal citizens. Therefore, on 8 February 1863, Bismarck sent general Alvensleben (1803-1881) to work on and eventually sign a political agreement with Russia. As Feldman argues,

rolę konwencji Alvenslebena należy przeto zredukować do roli udanego pociągnięcia szachowego, które rozstrzygnęło rozgrywającą się w gabinecie rosyjskim partię pomiędzy wpływami monarchistycznymi i antypolskimi a polonizującymi i panslawistycznymi.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Please refer to Part III of this dissertation.

⁸¹ Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 157.

the role of the Alvensleben convention should be reduced to a well-played chess move, which could be decisive in the game played in the Russian cabinet between the monarchists' anti-Polish forces and pro-Polish Panslavists.

Bismarck believed that this agreement would allow Prussia to intervene in Russia's internal affairs, such as in the January Uprising in Kongresówka. As he argued, the Polish revolt was aimed at restoring the historical borders of Poland of 1772 and, as such, it threatened the existence of the Prussian state: "in any event it is a lesser danger to attempt to conquer and rule Congress Poland than to have it as an independent neighbor."⁸²

Specifically, Bismarck was interested in strengthening the position of Germans (especially Prussia) on the international forum. Nonetheless, all his decisions aimed at stabilizing the status of Prussia were criticized by German liberals, the German Catholic Church, and the Catholic Center Party. Additionally, France and Austria, perceiving the Alvensleben Convention as a threat to their dominance in Europe, formed a coalition with the binding element of Catholicism as their common religion.

In 1870, the existing problems, exacerbated by Bismarck's constant attempt to fight his enemies, led ultimately to the creation of the *Kulturkampf*--an internal policy aimed at controlling external influence on the state. At its core, this political program limited significantly the autonomy of the Catholic Church, thereby also causing a change in the treatment of Poles in Posnania. Removed from the Reich mentally (after the unification of Germany in 1871) by their Slavic culture and Polish language, the Poles were predominately Catholic and, as such, were recast as a threat to the Empire.

⁸² Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*, 224. Translation in Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews*, 126.

Although Bismarck's main goal was achieved--Germany was unified with Prussia at the core of the new Empire -- the Polish problem remained important for German policy. Therefore, the political and administrative changes brought by the *Kulturkampf* led to a further alienation of the Poles in Posen and to a strengthening of the Germanization process.

Significantly, the German administration decided to reform the language laws first, linking this move to anti-Catholicism. In his numerous speeches, Bismarck postulated the secularization of all schools in Posen, arguing that

wpływ miejscowych duchownych przeszkadza zastosowaniu języka niemieckiego, bowiem Słowianie i ludy romańskie w przymierzu z ultramontanizmem starają się zachować nieokrzesanie i ciemnotę, a zwalczając germanizm, który stara się rozpowszechnić oświatę w całej Europie.⁸³

the influence of the clergy hinders the use of the German language because the Slavs and the Romans, in their alliance with Ultramontanism, try to preserve primitiveness and ignorance; all over Europe they are fighting Germanism, which seeks to spread enlightenment.

Bismarck's attempts proved to be successful: in 1873 and 1874, based on new administrative decrees, German replaced Polish as the language of instruction in all elementary and secondary schools in the province. The use of Polish remained permissible only for teaching religion to Catholic students. Three years later, in 1876, German became the only permissible language in public administration, in all the courts, and for any official business. Bismarck's cultural goal had been achieved. Inevitably, these new germanization laws and anti-Polish policies led to a new wave of anti-Prussian,

⁸³ Trzeciakowski, *Kulturkampf w zaborze pruskim* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie: 1970) 179.

anti-German reaction by the Poles and to the creation of an even stronger nationalist opposition.

Among the Poles, the *Kulturkampf* of the 1870s and the events in Posnania following the unification of Germany (such as the creation of HaKaTa, the purchase of Polish properties by German landowners, or prosecution of Polish nationalists⁸⁴) strengthened the existing hatred and distrust towards the Prussian state. Similarly, the *Kulturkampf*'s fight against the Catholic Church signaled to the Poles in Posnania yet another attempt to limit their national rights and at the same time meant the beginning of a significant and powerful Germanization process. As Bismarck expressed it: “W początkach Kulturkampfu decydująca dla mnie była przede wszystkim jego polska strona”⁸⁵ [At the beginning of the *Kulturkampf*, the deciding factor for me was its Polish side]. Although, in general, school reform and, in particular, the secularization of the educational system in Germany seemed to be a sign of progression and modernity, it had a sharp anti-Polish tone as a by-product in the Prussian partition. To accelerate the process of educating the Polish youth in the German spirit, the Polish priests who had taught the bulk of Polish students were replaced by German officials. In so doing, the German government provoked the Poles to form a strong opposition and to create a nationalist sentiment in Posnania even more powerful than before. While Germany and Germans celebrated renewed appreciation of their nation and state, the Poles living in the

⁸⁴ See for instance, Trzeciakowski, *Kulturkampf w zaborze pruskim* [*Kulturkampf in Prussian Poland*]; Davis, *God's Playground*; Hagen, *Poles, Germans, and Jews*; or Feldman, *Bismarck a Polska*.

⁸⁵ Trzeciakowski, *Kulturkampf w zaborze pruskim*, 173.

Prussian partition were rapidly losing all hope for an autonomous Polish state created with Prussian help.

Thus, what once, although for a mere moment in time, seemed a possible union between the Prussian state and the Poles now became an unreal vision, an unthinkable image for both the Poles and the Germans. Hence, all future Polish hopes for the rebirth of their state were transferred to Galicia and the Habsburg Empire, which kept the promise of regional autonomy alive and gave the Poles the right to celebrate their Polishness as I will discuss in Part II of this dissertation.

In the next chapter, I will turn to reflections on this Prussian-Polish political struggle to show how significant this Polish reflection was for the evolution of “German literature” of the era. That is, this geopolitical shift of Poland’s image from the first democratic nation of Europe to an oppressed monarchy, which found clear reflections in literature.

Chapter 2

Prussian Writers vis-à-vis the Poles: From Dedication and Admiration to Critique and Condemnation

Prussian Polish Literature

Germanophone literature's interest in Poland did not stop with any particular political event. Especially the 1830s and 1840s brought a new concept to German lyric, a new type of poetry referred to by literary critics as *Polenfreundschaft* to which I will return in the second section of this chapter. Without a doubt, the geo-political situations of that time and especially the growing revolutionary and liberal tendencies prompted repeated interest in the faith and struggles of the Polish nation without a state.

For example, Prussian female writer, Fanny Lewald, remembers the events of the Polish revolutionary year of 1830 (the November Uprising in Russian Poland) in her diaries *Meine Lebensgeschichte* (1861-63) [Education of Fanny Lewald: an Autobiography]:

In Prussia, the war and the fate of the Poles was traced with a lot of compassion, although so-called Prussian neutrality helped Russians many times. This, thus, did not stop us from commiserating with emotion for the Poles, from watching with enthusiasm their triumphs, and complaining with benevolence about their

prospective failures. The pictures of Chlopicki, Lelewel, and most of all, of the heroic Miss Plater [all of them were famous Polish revolutionaries and fighters for Polish independence—AN] were in all hands, one could hear everywhere how Polish songs and marches were played and sung.¹

This political example showed how Polish themes could come to dominate germanophone political poems, as many authors used Poland's example to refer to the possible future and dangers for a Prussian state that they felt was increasingly absolutist.

By reflecting on the Poles in this way, Herwegh, Freiligrath, Zeidlitz, von Platen or Chamisso, to name only a few, sought to better understand their own—i.e., Prussian—need and right to full independence and human freedom through the Polish November Uprising against the Russian Empire and the Tsar's despotic regime, adopting as their own the heroic figures of Polish freedom fighters. Their literary production was not only widely read in the German-speaking countries but also influenced many younger writers to look into Polish history and culture for inspiration. *Polenlieder*, in the form of idealistic descriptions of the events of 1831, helped to shape the Germans' general image of Poland and the Poles and influenced public opinion by being widely circulated and read.

Additionally, because of its importance and popularity, the Polish issue also found its way into the Prussian press. Once again, the problem of the Tsar's injustice and the suffering of the Poles under Russian governance presented an opportunity to a sharp journalistic polemic between *Allgemeine Preussische Staatszeitung* and *Leipziger Zeitung*. While the *Allgemeine* called the Russian intervention in Kongresówka in 1831

¹ Fanny Lewald, *The Education of Fanny Lewald: an Autobiography* (Albany: State U of NY Press, 1992).

an “unerlaessige Notwendigkeit, um die Rebellen zu bestrafen und die Ruhe in Polen wieder herzustellen” [an imperative necessity to punish the rebels and to re-establish peace/discipline in Poland], *Leipziger* posted the following statement:

Daraus, daß der König von Polen zugleich Kaiser von Rußland ist, folgt noch nicht, daß die Polen derselben Art politischer Subordination wie die Rußen unterworfen, noch durch Rußen bewacht, oder auch durch rußische Bajonette unterdrückt werden müssen. Die Einführung fremder Truppen in den Staat ist eine Handlung der Tyrranei und die Unterthanen haben das Recht sich dieser zu widersetzen. . . . Die Verletzung des polnischen Gebiets durch rußische Heere zur Bezwingung der Nationalbewegung in Warschau würde einen offenen Einbruch in das Prinzip der Nichtintervention ausmachen. Der König von Polen hat nicht das Recht, in seiner Eigenschaft als Kaiser von Rußland, mit rußischen Truppen zu intervenieren.²

Because the King of Poland is at the same time the Emperor of Prussia does not mean that the Poles should be either subjected to the same kind of political subordination as the Russians, or controlled by the Russians, or suppressed by Russian bayonets. The insertion of Russian troops into the state is an act of tyranny, and the subjects have the right to protest Wounding of the Polish territory by the Russian army to suppress the national movement in Warsaw would be categorized as infringement of the principle of non-intervention. The King of Poland, as the Emperor of Russia, does not have the right to intervene with Russian troops.

Not surprisingly, the liberal press of that period closely followed the events occurring in Kongresówka, mainly because of the impact on their readership. “Aus fast allen deutschen Staaten, aus Bayern, Württemberg, Hessen, Basen, Hannover und Sachsen berichtete man, daß die polenfreundliche Stimmung des Bürgertums überall dieselbe war”³ [it was reported from almost all of the German states that the bourgeois pro-Polish sympathies were everywhere the same].

² Cited in Eugeniusz Klin, “Zum Polenbild in der deutschen Lyrik des Vormärz,” *Germanica Wratislaviensia* [Wrocław] XCII, No. 1297 (1991)245.

³ Klin, “Zum Polenbild in der deutschen Lyrik,” 254.

The next section of this study will turn to the lyrical work of Theodor Fontane, whose Polish poems are inspired by some of these earlier poems, for instance by Herwegh, von Platen or Zeidlitz, by his knowledge of the history of the Polish nation, and by German public opinion of that time. To make my case that Fontane possessed an extensive knowledge of Polish issues and correctly portrayed the revolutionary disturbances existing throughout Europe, I will place his work in the context of the era and the surrounding literary tradition. As indicated previously, Bismarck's policies and the *Zeitgeist* led public opinion and, in consequence, came to dominate the opinions of many writers, artists, and intellectuals (e.g., Gustav Freytag). Within this context, an utterly independent mind is Theodor Fontane, one of the best-known germanophone realists and novelists.

Perhaps echoing the mood of liberal early nineteenth-century, throughout his literary life, Fontane used the Polish example in poems, novels, and journalistic work to support his anti-Bismarck vision of Prussia—i.e., a new idea of Prussia, yet based on “old” structures of the historical Prussian foundation in regional coexistence, far from Bismarck's ideal of one united and homogenous Germany. I do not claim that Fontane fought openly against Bismarck's ideas. His vision of Prussia's future, however, diverged from the mainstream official policy and, as such, from others' cultural visions of a powerful and supreme German Empire, as represented in other literary production of that time. Fontane sought to preserve Prussia, not Germany, and so acknowledged the Poles as a regional force in his work.

In this chapter of my study, I would like to introduce Fontane's work particularly in terms of his use of Polish motifs: characters, settings, historical events, and certain textual elements to argue that ultimately, in his vision of Prussia, Poles play an integral role: a picture of Prussia as not ethnically homogenous but rather a mix of cultures from the Polish-Prussian borderland. For this purpose, I will first turn to his Polish lyrics: "An der Elster" and "Zum Kampf," before I introduce his "Polish" novel *Vor dem Sturm*, with additional comments on his later published articles and thoughts included in *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg*. These interpretations will allow me to present Fontane's opinion about the Polish nation without a state, the nineteenth century non-existent Poland, with emphasis on two particular regions: the so-called Prussian partition as well as Galicia, the Austrian part of Poland (although the last to a lesser extent).

Additionally, I would also suggest that still more research should be devoted to Fontane's usage of Polish topics in his works. Already in 1978, Sudhof wrote:

Es ist merkwürdig, daß die zahlreichen Arbeiten über Fontanes Werk seine Bemerkungen zur slavischen Welt im allgemeinen und zu Polen im besonderen so gut wie nicht beachtet haben. Die folgenden kurzen Ausführungen beabsichtigen nicht, das Thema auch nur annähernd erschöpft zu behandeln. Es geht vielmehr darum, ein andeutendes vorläufiges Gerüst einer geplanten umfassenderen Arbeit zu geben. Dabei wurde Wert darauf gelegt, daß in der bisherigen Forschung bereits zitierten Stellen nicht ausführlich wiederholt werden. Es wäre jedoch wünschenswert, durch die Diskussion zusätzliche Punkte für die spätere Ausarbeitung zu gewinnen.⁴

⁴ Sudhof, "Das Bild Polens im Werk Theodor Fontanes," *Germanica Wratislaviensia*, vol. XXXIV, (Warszawa/Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1978) 103.

Nevertheless, to date, only a few articles and chapters have been devoted to this topic, which I will refer to at appropriate moments of my dissertation, yet scholars have in general argued for the close connection between Fontane's vision of Prussia and the Polish elements he included in his works.

The making of a Prussian Polish Lyric: *Polengedichte* and Theodor Fontane

Throughout the nineteenth century, as we have seen, with the changing *Realpolitik* and in particular with changing Prussian society, the Polish question, although persistent in the political and intellectual discussions of that time, took different forms and was answered in many different ways. Not surprisingly, literary works exemplify clearly these developments and echo the fluctuating opinions of the era. Especially when Poles, under the heroic General Kościuszko,⁵ fought to prevent the final partition of the Commonwealth in 1795, many Prussian liberals realized that the first European republic was vanishing and, with it, the first constitutional democratic idea. That loss was keenly felt both in Poland and throughout Revolutionary Europe.

Already in 1900, in his *Geschichte der deutschen Polenliteratur von den Anfängen bis 1800*, Robert Franz Arnold was able to devote his thoughts to the notion of Polishness and analyzed the significance of that issue for germanophone literature.⁶ Echoing early nineteenth-century liberals across Europe, Arnold underscored the fact that

⁵ Tadeusz Kościuszko (1752-1817) initiator and military leader of Poles (including the peasants) in their fight against Russian troops to prevent the third partition of Poland. Initially very successful, his final failure was the battle near Praga in 1794, became a hero for all of the Polish people as well as known internationally for his military achievements. He also participated in the revolutionary war in America.

⁶ Robert Franz Arnold, *Geschichte der deutschen Polenliteratur von den Anfängen bis 1800* (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1966 [1900]).

the first wave of support for Poles as a suffering nation after the first Partition came from Prussian writers and intellectuals at a time of Polish revolutionary and political struggles:

Das glänzende Intermezzo der Mai-Verfassung, der Heldenkampf von 1794 und die abschliessende Katastrophe hatten die polnische Nation in Europa nicht nur aus einem Stiefkind der Aufklärung zum Schoßkind aller Fortschrittsparteien umgeschaffen; auch die spezifische Polenpoesie war gleichzeitig entdeckt worden.⁷

The shining intermezzo of the Constitution, the heroic fights of 1794, and the catastrophe that followed it changed the Polish nation in Europe from a stepchild of the Enlightenment to the dearest child of all progressive parties; at the same time, a specific *Polenpoesie* was discovered.

The first Prussian poets to engage literarily in the political moment were, for instance, the previously mentioned Schubart and his *Polengedicht*, Rebmann, Falk, Gretscher, and Werner.⁸

Helga B. Whiton in her *Der Wandel des Polenbildes in der deutschen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts*, supports Arnold's statements and expands her search for the first literary traces of the Polish question in germanophone literature.⁹ In her opinion, however, the eighteenth century does not produce any truly valuable literarily works in German that would support Poland, as she quotes Arnold: "sie [the mentioned poets] sind jedoch Vielschreiber, deren Werke jeden künstlerischen Wert entbehren."¹⁰ Yet Whiton's picture is less critical than was Arnold's. Interestingly, in this constellation of eighteenth-century poets and writers, worthy of an honorable mention might be Schiller's late

⁷ Arnold, *Geschichte der deutschen Polenliteratur*, 168.

⁸ See, for instance, Arnold, *Geschichte der deutschen Polenliteratur*; Will, *Polska i Polacy w niemieckiej prozie literackiej XIX wieku* or Helga B. Whiton, *Der Wandel des Polenbildes in der deutschen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Bern: Lang, 1981).

⁹ Whiton, *Der Wandel des Polenbildes in der deutschen Literatur*.

¹⁰ Whiton, *Der Wandel des Polenbildes in der deutschen Literatur*, 27.

production of *Demetrius*, an unfinished dramatic project presenting an analysis of Polish policy through a broad spectrum of Polish characters.¹¹ In clear parallel to the political situation, Schiller presented his vision of a state governed not by the king but by a group of powerful nobles motivated by their own profit and pride. In so doing, Schiller expressed a reasonably objective and unprejudiced opinion about the downfall of the Polish Republic being prompted by the corrupt aristocracy and gentry. In opposition to the majority of German writers, whose personal beliefs are present in the literary production, Schiller as a historical writer tried to avoid partisanship and to respect at least one set of historical facts. Theodor Fontane sought to be a later example of such a partisanship effort at the end of the nineteenth century.

As a result of the growth of Prussian liberalism and revolutionary tendencies after the Congress of Vienna, the new wave of support and admiration in the 1830s for the Polish nation's fight for independence against foreign oppressors reached and also carried Theodor Fontane. In the 1830s, concurrent with the Polish Uprisings, a new type of lyric, the so-called *Polengedichte* [Polish poems], became popular and widely read in Prussia, echoing "die mutige Erhebung der Polen gegen zaristische Teilungs- und Unterdrückungspolitik im Novemberaufstand von 1830/31, Siege, Heldentaten, Niederlagen, Emigration der Aufständischen und Schicksale der unterlegenen Polen im eigenen Lande und in Verbannung."¹² Fontane is one of many authors who include these

¹¹ Schiller, *Demetrius* (Weimar: Goethe Gesellschaft, 1894).

¹² Werner Rieck, "Polnische Thematik im Werk Theodor Fontanes," *Fontane-Blätter*, 61(1996) 84.

Polish themes in a variety of his literary interests, carrying them into the second half of the century.

Significantly, Fontane's lyrical work could eventually be seen and understood in the context of the literary production of that time and other factors influencing his positions, such as the liberal environment of Leipzig in the 1830s and 1840s, the fresh air of the Spring of the Nations, which reached Prussia and influenced its intellectuals, or the political and artistic debates in the so-called Herwegh-Club, to which I will refer below. "All my poetry," wrote Fontane in his memoirs about his younger years, "was tuned to the theme of liberty."¹³

As already noted, only a few literary scholars, for instance Helga B. Whiton, Arno Will or Werner Rieck, have researched the broad and interesting spectrum of germanophone writers interested in the issue of Polish independence, Polish national heroes, and Polish revolutionary wars against the oppressors in the early nineteenth century. Moreover, most of the scholars place Fontane's lyrical work next to Herwegh's, Zeidlitz's or Lenau's. Interestingly, Fontane also confesses in many passages of his memoirs *Meine Kinderjahre* to his Polish fascination and knowledge of Polish culture and history, writing, for instance, about Polish traditional nationalist songs or witnesses' relations about the November Uprising.¹⁴ Set against their historical background, Fontane's *Polengedichte* take a very significant political tone.

¹³ Fontane, *Von Zwanzig auf Dreißig*, 190.

¹⁴ Fontane, *Meine Kinderjahre* (Berlin: Fischer, 1919).

The first poem analyzed here, “An der Elster,” was published originally in 1841 in Leipzig in the journal *Die Eisenbahn: Unterhaltungsblatt für die gebildete Welt* [“Entertainment Newspaper for the Educated World”]. In its form, it is an elegiac ballad telling the story of the heroic death of the Polish count Józef Poniatowski who died in the waters of the river Elster. Poniatowski, apostrophized by the lyrical subject as “Polens schönste Hoffnung” [Poland’s most beautiful hope], rises from his death only to see that his expectations of a free and independent Poland have not yet come to pass. Thus Poniatowski returns “traurig ... abwärts nieder” [sadly ... downward] seeing many other graves of fallen Polish soldiers and not hearing “Waffenklang” [the sound of weapons] and “Kriegsfanfare” [war’s fanfare] any more. The poem ends with the following statement on the lyrical subject: “Mit mir weint der Himmel nieder, wo der Polen Hoffnung ruht” [with me, the sky weeps downward to where Poland’s hope rests].

Indeed, Fontane exhibits here what seems to be a thorough knowledge of the current political situation and events relating to the Poles, from the Polish point of view. Count Józef Poniatowski was one of the most celebrated and better-known Polish fighters as well as political and military leaders. After the failure of the Kościuszko Uprising, he became a general in Napoleon’s Army, fought and was wounded and drowned in the Elster during the *Völkerschlacht* on 19 October 1813. Because of Poniatowski’s high rank and respect, Polish soldiers built a monument in his memory, which achieved high symbolic value and status for both the Polish émigrés and the Prussians in Leipzig, where it found its final resting place.

Werner Rieck quotes an excerpt by a young Polish student from Leipzig, Józef Alfons Potrykowski, describing in his diaries the importance of this statue and its role for both the local and Polish societies:

Es ist ein eifacher, sechseitiger; nicht größer, nur eine Elle hoher Sockel, den ein Lattenzaun umgibt, auf dem sich Milionen von Namen befinden von Personen, die hier zu Besuch eilten. Nicht weit davon, im gleichen Garten, befindet sich eine winzige Kapelle, in der ein Standbild des Fürsten Poniatowski aufgestellt ist und einige Erinnerungen an ihn aufbewahrt werden. Dort befindet sich auch ein Buch, in das sich alle Personen eintragen, die diese für die Freunde der Wahrheit teure Erinnerungsstätte aufsuchen. Auch ich trug mich in dieses Buch ein. Tatsächlich, beim Anblick dieser fuer unsere Landsleute, die heute heimatlos nach einem neuen Vaterland suchen und nach der alten verwaisten Mutter seufzen, so bedeutsam scheint die Stelle zu zerfließen.¹⁵

In this particular context, the first stanza of Fontane's ballade takes on new meaning:

An der Elster schaut verstohlen
Um sich her ein schlichter Stein;
In ihn schnitten tapfere Polen
Weinend ihre Namen ein.

The importance of this place and the statue was ultimately recognized by local newspapers, such as the *Allgemeine Zeitung* in Leipzig (1832), because the *Poniatowski Denkmal* (Poniatowski Memorial) became a place of political demonstrations, gatherings, and various revolutionary statements. As one journalist reports, the Poles stood in a circle and listened to a speaker with "entblößten Häuption" to later write their names on the statue.¹⁶ Without a doubt then, Fontane was very much aware of the place and its historical significance. As he describes in an autobiographical work *Von Zwanzig auf Dreissig* (1898), he used to take walks in the morning and swim "in Elster oder Pleiße, . .

¹⁵ Rieck, "Polnische Thematik im Werk Theodor Fontanes," 85.

¹⁶ Sudhof, "Das Bild Polens im Werk Theodor Fontanes," 98.

. es war ziemlich genau die Stelle, wo Poniatowski ertrunken war” [it was almost the exact place where Poniatowski drowned].

Significantly, in this particular poem, Fontane uses the figure of Poniatowski to present his explicit stance on the Polish issue: “Polen wieder groß und frei” [Poland once again big and free], “Polen noch nicht aufgewacht” [Poland not yet awakened], “seine Freiheit tief versunken in das Meer der Tyrranei” [its freedom drowned in the sea of tyranny]. These statements alone justify the opinion that Fontane was emotionally involved in the issue of Polish independence and freedom. Such a panegyric, of course, harmonizes with his liberal beliefs and the atmosphere of his Leipzig environment. It is also important to notice that Fontane describes the events of 1813, writing, however, in 1841, ten years after the November Uprising in the Polish Kingdom.

Here, the two traditions come together to reinforce Fontane’s view. Indeed, the City of Leipzig played an enormous role for Polish society in Prussia in the 1830s and 1840s as well as for the Prussian intellectuals who gathered there to discuss current events and their literary works. Additionally, for writers such as Fontane, Leipzig was a place to communicate with and get inspiration from other older, experienced, and already known authors. One of the most celebrated among them was Georg Herwegh (1817-1875), around whom many liberals gathered, creating the “Herwegh-Klub.” Herwegh’s influence on Fontane, who would later write freedom songs in his style, is described by Jurgensen:

In Leipzig was er [Fontane] in den Herweghklub geraten und lernte den Dichter selbst kennen, der durch das Pathos seiner Verse die Jugend für eine künftige

Revolution entflammte. Fontane sang ihn an und produzierte selbst Freiheitslieder in Herweghscher Art.¹⁷

In Leipzig, Fontane belonged to the Herwegh Club where he met the poet who, through the pathos of his verses, was trying to encourage the youth to a future revolution. Fontane praised him and produced himself freedom songs in Herwegh style.

For Herwegh, the idea of a free Poland was essential for his notion of liberalism and independence. In many poems, he expressed his solidarity with “mein Polen” [my Poland].¹⁸ Moreover, he shares von Platen’s sharp criticism of the Russian Empire and the Tsar, mainly in light of the fear and difficulties of Russian Power experienced by many Germans of the time.

In so doing, however, Herwegh’s understanding and sympathy for the Polish nation grew and strengthened. In “An den König von Preussen,” he appeals: “Behüt uns vor dem Frankenkind/ Und vor dem Zaren, deinem Schwager!”¹⁹ and later, in *Polen an Europa* [Poland to Europe] written in 1846, he sees the necessity of a new Holy War in Europe, which would be lead by the “Söhne Polens”:

An dich, du stumme Zeugin unsrer Klage
Und unsrer namenlosen Qual,
An dich, Europa, richten wir die Frage:
Verlässt du uns zum zweiten Mal?
Ist’s nicht ein Kampf für deine Sache?
Ein Kampf von jedem Flecken rein?
Auf! Polens Adler will der Rache
Gebendeiter Engel sein.
Die Saat ist reif, es rauschen unsre Sensen,
Wir schwingen auch für dich den Stahl:

¹⁷ W. Jurgensen, “Theodor Fontane im Wandel seiner politischen Anschauungen,” *Deutsche Rundschau*, Nr. 84 (1988) 563.

¹⁸ Herwegh, *Der letzte Krieg*, published in 1839

¹⁹ Helga Whiton, *Wandel des deutschen Polenbildes*, 95; also in Stanisław Leonhard, *Polenlieder Deutscher Dichter*, vol.2 (Krakow, 1917).

Die Hoffnung sieh in unsren Augen glänzen –
Verlass uns nicht zum zweitenmal.

Significantly, similar motifs are present in Fontane's early Polish poems. A further analysis of "Zum Kampf" reveals the same symbols and type of invocation.

It is important, however, to realize that not only Herwegh, or rather his poems, made a profound impression on Fontane. Comparing Fontane's poems, readers can readily notice that his inspiration was also found among other Prussian authors – many motifs and themes from their literary works are repeated by Fontane, not imitated but rather poetically improved or changed (Polish heroes, Kościuszko and Poniatowski, the resurrection of the Polish country, battle fields of Grochów and Ostoleka, or the tyranny of the Russian Tsar). The popularity of such *Polenlyrik* cannot be underestimated since the poems were widely distributed and published in German-speaking lands. That, of course, supports the argument that young liberal Prussians supported the Poles despite the official anti-Polish policy of their government.

Among Poland-supporting authors are such names as: Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), Harro Harrig (1798-1879), August von Platen (1796-1835), Joseph Christian Zeidlitz (1790-1862), Wilhelm Hauff (1802-1827), or Philipp Veit (1793-1877). Specifically Veit, as the editor of the *Berliner Musenalmanach für 1831* and the collection of *Polenlieder aus dem Jahre 1832*, called in his "An Deutschlands Dichter" for German poets to forget "die kleinen Leiden" and "Herz und Stimme jenem großen Schmerz zuzuwenden, der Europas Herz [Polen] zerrissen habe."²⁰ Moreover, the

²⁰ Rieck, "Polnische Thematik," 91.

Poniatowski figure, as a recurring *topos* for many authors, serves as a point of reference and example of the bravery and persistence of the Polish nation. Harro Harrig, in his *Memoiren über Polen unter Russischer Herrschaft*, for example, emphasizes the role of Poniatowski's death for the future freedom fights; Karl Beck (1817-1879)²¹ sees the importance of his grave for the suffering Poles; and finally, von Platen in "Gesang der Polen bei dem Vernichtungsmanifest des Selbstherrschers," stated that Poland's downfall happened while the German nation waited and watched "kalt und müßig" [cold and idly].²² Clearly, these poets found a liberal hero in a Pole rather than in a German.

In this context, Fontane's "Zum Kampf" seems like a perfect example of the literary production inspired by the Leipzig Club. To even better place this poem in the context of the historical era and the Leipzig environment, it is important to notice the motto he chose, which is a fragment from Georg Herwegh's "Lied vom Hasse":

Bekämpfet sie ohn Unterlass,
Die Tyrannei auf Erden,
Und heliger wird unser Hass,
Als unsere Liebe werden.

Fight them without pause
The tyranny upon the Earth
And our hate will be holier
Than our love.

Interestingly, "Zum Kampf" takes the form of a call to all Germans (as Fontane understood the term, of course, meaning Prussians) to support Poland in its fight for independence and to demand freedom and rights for this country. As we have seen

²¹ Karl Beck, "Phantasien am Grabe Poniatowskis," in Leonhard, *Polenlieder Deutscher Dichter*, 321.

²² Leonhard, *Polenlieder Deutscher Dichter*, 238.

previously, Herwegh used a similar invocation calling for Europe's support in a "holy war" to fight for Polish independence and democratic values. Fontane thus follows his literary predecessors and their works to create his own manifesto. The emphatic and rhythmic verses of his poem echo Herwegh's motto: "Ergreift den Schwert!," writes Fontane, "Ihr Deutsche, hört's, dem armen, armen Polen / Stiehlt er [der Zar] den Namen jetzt; - wohlan zum Streit!, "Auf, auf, ihr Deutsche, auf! an eurer Seite / Ficht ja das Recht als bester Kampfgesell, Und die Begeisterung siegt im Drachenstreite / So sicher, wie der Engel Michael."

For the first time in his poetry, Fontane addresses directly the issue of the Tsar's injustice and Russian terror. Using the Argonaut Myth as a metaphor of the Polish situation, where Poland's independence is the highest reward, the Golden Fleece, the lyrical subject calls the Prussians to take an active role, to participate in this heroic mission:

Laßt einen Argonautenzug uns machen:
Der Polen Freiheit sein das Goldne Vlies,
Du Preußen sei der Jason, der dem Drachen
Das gute Schwert tief ins Gekröse stieß.
Nur warn ich vor Medeas Drachenzähnen,
Auf daß ihr, Deutsche, fern der Zwietracht seid,
Ihr habt schon selbst von Herkules die Sehnen,
Steht gleich den Dioskuren nur im Streit.

Let us create for ourselves an Argonaut quest:
The Poles' freedom will be the Golden Fleece,
You Prussians will be Jason, who stabs the dragon
With a good sword, deep in the neck.
I only warn of Medea's dragon teeth,
On that you, Germans, should be far from discord,
You already have from Hercules the chords,
Stand equal only to the Dioscuri in controversy.

Astute readers of that time may also have recognized a reference to Austria and Germany as “Dioscuri,” thus to the Order of the Golden Fleece, the symbol of the Habsburg House.

Even such a brief reference to the Germanophone lyrical production of the first half of the nineteenth century shows how Fontane was strongly influenced by current events and new liberal tendencies in society and literature. Significantly for the Polish issue, Fontane employs these motifs, which are also present in his subsequent works, to present his notion of liberalism and values in Prussia. Using the Polish issue and arguing the historical injustice the Polish nation was experiencing, Fontane very early juxtaposes Poland’s plight with the situation of Prussia to present his vision of a possibly liberal and democratic society.

Fontane vis-à-vis Gustav Freytag: The Image of Prussia and Bismarck in Their Literary Works

As already noted, the era of the Iron Chancellor Bismarck began to change people’s perception of the Polish issue and Poland’s future. One of the representative writers (and a very visible one) following Bismarck’s call to build a strong, powerful, unified German Empire was Gustav Freytag, whose views regarding the Polish question differ from those presented earlier (and subsequently) by Fontane. Freytag, an admirer of the German work ethic and German spirit, tried to capture in his journalistic work and in his novel *Soll und Haben* what he represents as Bismarck’s idea and thought.²³ In 1863,

²³ Gustav Freytag, *Debit and Credit* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1863).

for example, Freytag published in *Die Grenzboten* his article “Die polnische Bewegung und die Deutschen,” based almost entirely on Bismarck’s Polenrede from 26 February 1863. In this anti-Polish pamphlet, Freytag comments also on Bismarck’s Russian policy, stating that the Polish noble conspirators will not play any significant role in the process of re-establishing a Polish state as long as Prussia and Russia remain on a friendly footing, adding:

aber wenn, was ich nicht für wahrscheinlich halte, den Polen in der That gelänge, sich von den Russen zu lösen, dann werden wir die Landkarte in die Hand nehmen und uns erinnern, daß Warschau bereits eine preußische Stadt war. Und unsere lebhaften Nachbarn mögen überzeugt sein, daß wir einen solchen neuen Erwerb, wie arbeitsvoll und unhold er immer sei, nicht wieder aufgeben werden. Wir werden ihr Land deutsch machen. Denn jetzt haben die Polen nicht mehr eine einzelne Regierung gegen sich, sondern das ganze deutsche Volk.²⁴

but when, which I do not consider probable, the Poles should succeed in freeing themselves from the Russians, then we will take the map in hand and remind ourselves that Warsaw was already a Prussian city. And our lively neighbors can be certain that we would not again give up such an acquisition, as difficult and distasteful as it may be. We shall make their land German. Because now the Poles do not merely have a single government against them but rather the entire German nation.

Moreover, a similar attitude toward the Poles is included in Freytag’s *Soll und Haben*, where the Poles are depicted as lazy, uncontrollable, and even wild in contrast to the hard working, superior Germans.

Interestingly, Fontane reviewed the novel, adding a few remarks about the Polish issue presented:

Das alles ist nicht nur Labsal für ein deutsches und preußisches Herz, es ist auch ebenso wahr, wie es schön ist. Die Polenwirtschaft ist durch sich selbst dem

²⁴ Muller-Seidel, “Fontane und Polen: Eine Betrachtung zur deutschen Literatur im Zeitalter Bismarcks.” *Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Polenbildes 1848-1939*, ed. Hendrik Feindt (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 1999) 48.

Untergange geweiht; Preußen ist der Staat der Zukunft, weil er, solange es einen Protestantismus gibt, immer einem “tiefgefühlten Bedürfnis” entsprechen wird, und das Bürgertum . . . ist unbestritten der eigentliche Träger aller Kultur und allen Fortschritts.²⁵

All this is not merely a refreshment for a German and Prussian heart but it is also just as true as it is appealing [i.e., not]. The Polish economy has doomed itself; Prussia is the state of the future because it, as long as there is Protestantism, will have a corresponding “deeply felt need” and the middle class is the irrefutable means for all culture and progress.

It is important to notice here Fontane’s comment: “it [the novel] is as true as it is beautiful,” which in this context seems almost cynical, definitely ironic. Freytag’s depiction of Poland and Poles in his novel is anything but pretty: so following Fontane, how true is this presentation? To underscore his opinion, Fontane added at the end of his review: “Wohin soll das führen?,” noting at the same time his distance from Freytag’s hateful vision. Additionally, he remarks in a letter to Storm on 16 June 1855:

Wenn ich Sie sehe, wollen wir über Freytags Roman plaudern. Ich halte es für kein geniales Produkt, aber mit für das Beste, was ein Nichtgenie, unter Benutzung (nicht Nachahmung) großer Vorbilder zu leisten imstande ist.²⁶

When I see you, let’s discuss Freytag’s novel. I do not consider it an ingenious product, but rather the best of a non-genius using (not imitating) great models.

The major difference between Freytag und Fontane lies, then, in the perspectives of the two writers in regard to the Polish problem and in a different way of understanding the importance of Prussia and/or the German Empire. Fontane saw the novel as important, but damaging.

²⁵ Muller-Seidel, “Fontane und Polen,” 48.

²⁶ Eberhardt, *Fontane und Thackeray* (Heidelberg: C. Winter Universitätsverlag, 1975) 25.

Freytag remains a true admirer of Bismarck; Fontane, on the other hand, focuses in his writings on what he sees as the two faces of the Chancellor. Even more so, fearing the end of Prussia and the Prussian spirit caused by the dominant idea of the unified Germany, Fontane writes in *Unzeitgemaessbare Betrachtungen*:

Dieser Wahn [the unification of Germany] ist höchst verderblich: nicht etwa, weil er ein Wahn ist. . . sondern weil er imstande ist, unseren Sieg in eine völlige Niederlage zu verwandeln: in die Niederlage, je Exstription des deutschen Geistes zugunsten des “deutschen Reiches.”

This illusion [the unification] is very perishable: not because it is an illusion...but rather because it is capable of changing our victory into a total defeat: in the defeat, extirpation of the German soul for the benefit of the “German Empire.”

Especially in his letters, Fontane reveals at the same time his admiration for and criticism of Bismarck. Interestingly, literary scholars have very diverse opinions on Fontane’s stances vis-à-vis the Chancellor—while Gordon A. Craig sees the writer as a follower of Bismarck and his idea, Mueller-Seidel sees a more complex picture of this relationship.²⁷

I concur with Mueller-Seidel’s argument, which can be supported by reference to Fontane’s own writing: “Er ist ein großes Genie aber ein kleiner Mann,” “diese Mischung von Übermensch und Schlauberger, von Staatengründer und Pferdestall-Steuerverweigerer, . . . von Heros und Heulhuber, der nie ein Wässerchen getrübt hat, erfüllt mich mit gemischten Gefühlen und lässt eine reine helle Bewunderung in mir nicht aufkommen.”²⁸ [He is a great genius but a small man. This mix of Übermensch and clever clog, of founder of states and horse-stall tax evader, ...of hero and a cry baby

²⁷ Gordon A. Craig, *Theodor Fontane: Literature and History in the Bismarck Reich* (New York: Oxford UP, 1999).

²⁸ letter to Fontane’s daughter from 1895 in Fontane, *Briefe*, eds. Schreinert and Jolles (Berlin: Nymphenburger Verlag 1968) 237.

who's even looked innocent, fills me with mixed feelings and does not permit a pure, bright admiration to arise in me.] Thus, the pictures of the Chancellor, as seen through Fontane's letters and journalistic works, are full of discrepancies and contrasts. This juxtaposition embodies the special feelings Fontane experienced while dealing with Bismarck and while rethinking the future of Fontane's beloved Prussia, but which is clarified in reference to the Polish situation. He hoped for a greater future, which Bismarck was probably walking toward, yet with all the wrong tools.

A similar depiction of Bismarck was also captured by the Polish writer Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916) who published in *Die Grenzboten* his opinion of the Chancellor, his policy, and the treatment of Poles:

Bismarck przedstawia się nawet Niemcom tylko w połowie—jako wcielenie siły; w połowie zaś—jako uosobienie najrozmaitszych nienawiści, poczynając od tej istotnie antychrześcijańskiej i zarazem parweniuszowskiej nienawiści do bezbronного wielkiego narodu polskiego, a skończywszy na nienawiści do różnych partii niemieckich, które prowadziły przeciwną mu politykę.²⁹

Even to the Germans, Bismarck only presents half of himself—as the embodiment of power; the other half represents diverse hatreds, starting with the really antichristian and parvenus, including hatred of the harmless great Polish nation, and ending with hatred towards different German parties who were proclaiming a policy against him.

Fontane could not agree more with opinions like Sienkiewicz's. In letters to the editor Friedrich Stephany and to Gustav Karpeler, the translator of the Polish text, Fontane praises not only the writing style of Sienkiewicz but also his knowledge and the accuracy of his portrayal of Bismarck in his text: "großartig," "Tiefe der Erkenntnis," "es ist nicht

²⁹ Henryk Sienkiewicz, "O Bismarcku," ed. Lech Ludorowski, *Antypruska polityka Henryka Sienkiewicza* (Lublin: Wyd. Uniw. Im. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1996) 31-33.

bloß das weitaus Bedeudendste und Richtigste, was über Bismarck gesagt worden ist. . . .
Es ist überhaupt das Bedeutendste.”³⁰

Significantly, Fontane expresses his political statements not only in private and public correspondence and journalistic works but also through certain motifs and multiple allusions in his novels. Once again, one of his ways of presenting his opinion about the *Realpolitik* of that era was to include the more questionable elements on pages of his works. In this way, Fontane chooses Polish themes to emphasize his personal statement about the future of Prussia and the Polish nation without a state.

One of the next substantial examples of Fontane’s engagement in current political events is his historical novel *Vor dem Sturm* (1878). In the following section, I will analyze this work in terms of Fontane’s use of Polish elements and motifs to establish an expended connection between his perception of the Polish nation and his vision of Prussia.

Fontane’s First Historical Novel: Polish Motifs in *Vor dem Sturm*

As presented previously, Polish themes and motifs were well known to Fontane, as shown in his poems that express his solidarity with and sympathy for the Poles in their political situation. However, Fontane realized early in his carrier that his best assets might not lie in the poetry, stating “das Lyrische hab ich aufgegeben, ich möchte sagen blutenden Herzens. Ich liebe eigentlich nichts so sehr und innig wie ein schönes Lied, und doch ward mir gerade die Gabe für das Lied versagt. Mein Bestes, was ich bis jetzt

³⁰ Pniower and Schlenther, eds., *Briefe Theodor Fontanes* (Berlin 1909) II: 348.

geschrieben habe, sind Balladen und Charakterzeichnungen historischer Personen.”³¹

Thus, turning to prose gave Fontane a chance to explore his historical knowledge and his storytelling talents in other ways. No wonder, then, that someone who sought to research Prussia’s past would discover that Poland’s past became an “unavoidable” part in this process. As Sudhof stated:

In seiner [Fontane’s] *Abhandlung über Vaterländische Reiterbilder aus drei Jahrhunderten* betonte Fontane, daß Preußen (d.i. Ostpreußen) zwar „bereits 1618 an Brandenburg gefallen“ sei, jedoch „bei der Krone Polen zu Lehn“ ginge. Diesem konnte Friedrich II. dann abhelfen, indem er „in die erste Teilung Polens“ 1772 zu Petersburg einwilligte, um „Ostpreußen mit Pommern und der Mark zu verbinden.“ – Fontane hat die Geschichte Preussens grundlich studiert; er kannte die Ereignisse und Fakten, die zur Entstehung und zur Vergrößerung des Staates führten. Auf diesem Hintergrund sind die Ausführungen zum Thema „Polen“ in den schriftstellerischen Werken (im engeren Sinne) zu sehen.³²

In his *Abhandlung über Vaterländische Reiterbilder aus drei Jahrhunderten*, Fontane stressed that despite the fact that Prussia (i.e., East Prussia) was already in 1618 granted to Brandenburg, it became a fief of the Polish Crown. Frederick II resolved the issue by agreeing to the first partition of Poland in 1772 in St. Petersburg, to “connect East Prussia with Pomerania.” Fontane had studied Prussian history very thoroughly, he knew the facts and events that lead to the establishment and enlargement of this state. His digressions about “Poland” in his literary work should be seen from this standpoint.

Probably the most “Polish” among Fontane’s novels is *Vor dem Sturm* (1878),³³ his

“Arbeit und Inhalt [seines] Lebens,” his “Schmerzenskind.”³⁴ Theodor Fontane’s first

novel was and still is undervalued by many literary critics and deserves more credit for its

³¹ Fontane’s letter to Wolfsohn on 10 November 1847, cited in Eberhardt, *Fontane und Thackeray*, 107f.

³² Sudhof, “Das Bild Polens im Werk Theodor Fontanes,” 103 f.

³³ Fontane, Theodor. “Vor dem Sturm,” *Romane und Erzählungen*, vol. 1-2. (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1973).

³⁴ Otfried Keiler, “Vor dem Sturm,” ed. Christian Grawe, *Interpretationen: Fontanes Novellen und Romane* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1991) 14.

historical accuracy and for Fontane's elaborate writing style. In fact, no other novel by a canonical germanophone author is set in the difficult Prussia of 1812-1813.

Without a doubt, *Vor dem Sturm* is a complex novel in which time, place and characters create a web of issues for Fontane to confront. As mentioned before, many critics did not see this novel's potential value, since they had difficulties with the plethora of characters, places, and issues involved in the main story. Even a more sympathetic literary critic Julius Rodenberg, normally an admirer of Fontane, mentioned in his diary: "silly book. I ask myself continually, what's coming next? Will they travel into the countryside again (with the ponies)? Will they sit down at the table again? Will they go to sleep again?"³⁵ Much later, after the Second World War, this nostalgic piece of old Prussian culture found its way into the hands of readers who now read it with satisfaction and interest.

Nonetheless, as Fontane's first prose work, *Vor dem Sturm* can be regarded as a turning point in the creative life of Fontane as an author, as "das künstlerische Bindeglied zwischen dem 'jungen' und dem 'alten' Fontane."³⁶ Yet, in current literary research, Fontane's *Vor dem Sturm* is marginally explored and analyzed to the benefit of such works as *Effi Briest* or *Irrungen, Wirrungen*. Fontane's work remains of interest not only for the germanophone readership nostalgically seeking to find and restore the "old" Prussian world, but also as an example of the writer's thorough analysis of the Prussian state in the nineteenth century, i.e., as a mix of cultures of different origins and ethnicity,

³⁵ Gordon A. Craig, *Theodor Fontane: Literature and History in the Bismarck Reich* (New York/Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999) 145.

³⁶ Gotthard Erler, "Anmerkungen," Theodor Fontane, *Vor dem Sturm* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1973) I: 327.

rather than a pure ethnic nation-state. To comment on the politics of Fontane's *Vor dem Sturm*, let me now turn to the Polish motifs, Polish characters, elements of history, and Prussian attitudes vis-à-vis the Polish stateless nation in the nineteenth century.

The events of the novel revolve around two geographical locations and two families connected to them: Berlin and Oderbruch, Vitzewitz and von Ladalinski. In other words, Fontane focuses his novel on two Prussias: one in its current state and the other "old" Prussia as he also described in *Wanderungen*.³⁷ *Vor dem Sturm* presents a historically and socially adequate critique of Prussia and its policy by connecting two potentially very different worlds in his portrayal of Ladalinskis and Vitzewitzs. Interestingly, the two protagonist families, Prussian and Polish, are not juxtaposed in just the present tense of this novel; on the contrary, they are connected by future plans, a potential long-lasting friendship between them, with their lives intertwined. While both are equally important for the plot and the meaning of *Vor dem Sturm*, I will turn first to the Polish Ladalinskis to see why and how Fontane placed them in the social and historical context of his novel.

While the Vitzewitzs' hereditary house is the palace Hohen-Vitz located on the western bank of the Oder River, the Ladalinskis, meeting their new faith in Berlin, own the property Bjalanowo, close to Czestochowa, described as "ein alter halbverfallener Backsteinbau. . . , wie ein Schloß aus dem Märchen" (33). Significantly, Fontane described Bjalanowo dichotomously: on one hand, the reader sees Bjalanowo as an

³⁷ Hans-Heinrich Reuner argues that *Wanderungen* is Fontane's work of "Vordeutungen und Vorbereitungen auf das Romanwerk." Reuner, *Fontane* (Berlin: Nymphenburger Verlag 1968) I: 377.

almost ruined palace, and on the other, Fontane uses the phrase “as in a fairytale.” It is my argument that his short depiction of Ladalinskis’ property was intended to evoke in the reader not a sense of ruined heritage but rather of something almost magical, imaginary, and unusual. A place lost in history but preserved idealistically in people’s minds is a good stage for any discussion of Polish history of the era.

My emphasis on the location is a result of the fact that for a careful reader, his suggestions are immediately clear. Hohen-Vitz is part of “old” Prussia, familiar to readers from *Wanderungen*, connected here with the history of the “Tage der letzten Askanier” [the days of the last Askanies].³⁸ Ladalinski’s lands belonged to Poland before the Partitions. In the nineteenth century, however, they were divided between Russia and Prussia, unexpectedly making the family into Prussia’s subjects.

Fontane’s protagonist families meet in Berlin, where the father, Aleksander von Ladalinski, leads the life of a true Prussian nobleman with a magnificent mansion, a new religion (as he converted to Protestantism), and the king’s blessing in the form of an important governmental office. Yet, he already has in his younger “Polish” years “eine hervortretende Hinneigung zu Preussen” (32) [a visible inclination to Prussia], his background and past present a different picture. In fact, his previous experience is anything but Prussian, and the reader discovers that his Prussian sympathies developed only after Poland had lost its independence. Moreover, his emigration to Prussia was caused by his aversion to and hatred of the Russian government in the Polish provinces. Ladalinski, with his Polish background and newfound Prussian devotion, could thus

³⁸ Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke* (München: Nymphenburger Verlag, 1959) I: 11.

exemplify what in *Realpolitik* was expressed by Prince Radziwiłł—an assimilation of Poles within Prussia motivated by a search for a new life, new political identity, in times when the motherland is lost, not as an affirmation, but at best a marriage of convenience. Interestingly, Ladalinski's life proves Radziwiłł's postulate right: initially, a young politician in Polish parliament and an independence fighter in Kosciuszko's Uprising, he discovers after the failure of the Polish Republic that his nature is "mehr preußisch als polnisch" [more Prussian than Polish] (37). In consequence, he develops a successful career within the Prussian political and social system.

In one long paragraph, Fontane summarizes the correlations between the fate of Poland and Ladalinski's life—it represents the complete failure of his motherland ("Es gab kein Polen mehr" (37) [There was no Poland any more]) that caused him to decide to reside in Prussia and fully accept the Prussian "costume":

Es bereiteten sich jene Ereignisse vor, die schließlich Polen aus der Reihe der Staaten strichen. Rußland machte seine Pläne, und diese zu vereiteln, darauf waren jetzt, wie die Anstrengungen alle Patrioten, so auch die seinigen [Ladalinkis] gerichtet. Er schloß sich der Kosciuszkoschen Partei an und entwarf eine liberale Verfassung, die den Beifall der Whigfuhrer im englischen Parlamente fand; endlich, als die Waffen entscheiden mußten, trat er in die Armee. Was ihm an militärischer Erfahrung abging, wußte er durch Mut und Eifer zu ersetzen. Es war keiner, dem Kosciuszko mehr vertraut hätte als ihm. Bei Szekoszin hielt er bis zuletzt aus. Als nach dem unglücklichen Treffen bei Maciejowice der Rückzug auf Praga ging, wurde ihm das Kommando der nur aus vier schwachen Batalionen bestehenden Arrieregarde anvertraut. Das "Finis Poloniae" seines Kampfgenossen, wenn er es nicht sprach, so empfand er es auch. Es war ihm klar, daß das Land rußischen werden wuerde; vielleicht mit einem Scheine der Selbstständigkeit. Dieser Gedanke war ihm unerträglich. Es gab kein Polen mehr; so beschloß er, sich zu expatriieren. (36f.)

Events are unfolding that will finally paint Poland out of the line of states. Russia made its plans to defeat and that is where his [Ladalinski's] and all patriots' efforts have been focused. He joined the Kosciuszko Party and created a liberal

Constitution, which received the applause of the British Parliament's Whig leader; finally, as weapons had to decide, he joined the army. What he lacked in military experience, he knew through bravery and eagerness to replace. There was no one, Kosciuszko trusted more than him. He held out to the last at Szekoszin. During the retreat to Prague, after the unlucky meeting near Maciejowice, he was entrusted with command of the Arrieregarde consisting of only four weak battalions. ...The "Finis Poloniae" of his battle comrades, when he did not say so much, is also what he felt. It was clear to him that the land would become Russian; possibly with an appearance of independence. This thought was unbearable for him. There was no Poland any more; so he decided to expatriate himself.

Throughout the novel, this family's Polish heritage is not commented upon, and yet this heritage plays a significant role in the development of the story and the main characters. It is Ladalinski, for instance, who tried to give his almost adult children a good, Prussian upbringing, and potentially he might have succeeded in his attempts.

Initially, Tubal and Kathinka, who are conscious of their Polish identity, do not express a strong feeling of belonging to the Polish nation. This also might seem paradoxical, given their activities and life style: every ballroom dance started with a mazurka, and Kathinka, dressed in typical Polish fashion, would be the best dancer on the floor:

Die vier Mazurkapaare, Bninski und Kathinka, dazu die schlessischen Grafen Matuschka, Seherr-Thoss und Zierotin mit ihren jungen und schönen Frauen waren eben zum Tanze angetreten, Herren und Damen in einem Kostüm, das ohne streng national zu sein, das polnische Element wenigstens in quadratischen Mützen und kurzen Pelzrocken andeutete. . . . Und nun begann der Tanz, der, damals in den Gesellschaften unserer Hauptstadt Mode werdend, dennoch, wenn Polen oder Schlesien von jenseits der Oder zugegen waren, in begründeter Überlegenheit immer nur von diesen getanzt zu werden pflegte. (71f)

The four Mazurka pairs, Bninski and Kathinka and the Silesian Counts Matuska, Seherr-Thoss and Zierotin with their young and beautiful wives, were ready for the dance; ladies and gentlemen in costumes that, without being exceedingly national, pronounced the Polish elements in square hats and short fur jackets. . . .

Then began the dance, which became fashionable in our capital at that time, however, when Poles or Silesians from the other side of the Oder were present, it was usual that only they were dancing because of their proven superiority.

This particular quote, despite its possible neutrality, shows Fontane's immediate interest in the Polish culture as a reference point. Additionally, commenting that the Polish dance had become fashionable in Berlin, he presents this culture as accepted and celebrated in Prussia at that early date. In so doing, Fontane mirrors in his book the reality of the early nineteenth century Prussian state and the liberalists' movement supporting the Polish cause and the Poles' right to independence.

Throughout the entire novel, Fontane focused in detail on the lifelines of his Polish characters. While developing the story, he shows the changes happening not only in the lives of his protagonists but also in their minds. To best exemplify this transformation, one can focus on Kathinka and her life, which undergoes a radical transition upon the arrival of new characters in the novel. Initially, raised and taught in the Prussian spirit, she expresses her devotion (as a Pole, however) to Prussiandom: "je suis polonaise de tout mon Coeur et me voila prete a travailler pour le roi de Prusse" (305) [I am Polish with all my heart and I am ready to work for the king of Prussia]. Significantly, she makes this statement in French, not German, which in the time of Frederick the Great became arguably another of Prussia's hereditary languages, when the Huguenots were invited into the country. To this point, Fontane's portrayal relates to the proposal of the historical figure of Prince Radziwiłł³⁹ who postulated a co-existence of

³⁹ Although sporadically mentioned in history books, many documentary sources prove the importance of Radziwiłł in the Prussian Poland and his influence on Polish-Prussian relations. See, for instance: Kurt Schottmüller, ed. *Der Polenaufstand 1806/7: Urkunden und Aktenstücke aus der Zeit zwischen Jena und*

Poles and Prussians in the Prussian state, as Mueller-Seidel phrased it: “ein Miteinander der Nationen.”⁴⁰

Yet, as the story continues, she meets the only truly Polish character in this novel, Graf Bninski, who will ultimately change her worldview. Throughout the entire novel, Bninski is portrayed as a very strong person, aware and proud of his Polish nationality. It is clear that Fontane sympathizes with this character, presenting him idealistically and giving only him the opportunity to express an opinion regarding Prussia and Prussians. In this context, Bninski’s statements can be read as being close to Fontane’s own, as a vision of a liberal believer in the Polish cause and a critic of the present *Realpolitik*. The Polish Graf (and herewith Fontane himself) sees Prussia and Prussians as:

. . . Karg und knapp, das ist die Devise dieses Landes. . . . Angenährtes Wesen, Schein und List, und dabei die tiefeingewurzelte Vorstellung, etwas Besonderes zu sein. Und woraufhin? Wie sie jene rauf- und Raublust haben, die immer bei Armut ist. Nie ist es satt, dieses Volk; ohne Schliff, ohne Form, ohne alles, was Wohltut oder gefällt, hat nur *ein* Verlangen: immer mehr! (190)

Meagerly and scarcely, this is the motto of this land...sewn on creature, appearance and cunning along with the deeply rooted conception of being something special... And on what basis? Because you have the hunger, to be higher and to rob, that always accompanies poverty. It’s never content, this people; without manners, without form, without anything that does good or pleases, it has only one demand: always more!

These statements resemble Fontane’s private views, expressed in his journalistic work and correspondence, as it was presented in the previous part of this project.

Unquestionably, Fontane’s literary mastery lies additionally in his art of connecting and

Tilsit (Lissa i. P.: Friedrich Ebbeckes Verlag, 1907), where personal letters and other documents shed a little more light on the historical figure of the Prince.

⁴⁰ Muller-Seidel, “Fontane und Polen: Eine Betrachtung zur deutschen Literatur im Zeitalter Bismarcks.” *Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Polenbildes 1848-1939*, ed. Hendrik Feindt (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 199) 56.

intertwining Bninski's character with other characters in the novel. The Polish Graf immediately influences not only Kathinka, but also Tubal and, through these two, Bninski changes the lives of the old Ladalinski and the Vitzevitz family.

In Fontane's novel, Bninski is presented as the true Pole: patriotic, romantic, stubborn, and proud. Describing Bninski, mainly through Kathinka's and Tubal's utterances, Fontane returns to the motifs of the Polish uprising against foreign oppressors and the bravery of the Polish soldiers fighting for independence and their homeland, as presented in his poetry discussed earlier in this chapter. Through Kathinka, the readers learn that Bninski fought until the end on Kosciuszko's side, despite his relatively young age, exhaustion, and wounds. Interestingly, Kathinka is without a doubt taken with the Count's charm, but even more so by his past. Her value system becomes defined by Bninski and his life story, as she describes his loyalty to Renate Vitzevitz:

Als Kościuszko im letzten Treffen, das ber Polen entschied, am Saume eines Tannenwaldchens lag, das er drei Studnen lang gegen Übermacht verteidigt hatte, stand ein Fahnenjunker, ein halbes Kind noch, neben ihm und deckte den von Blutverlust ohnmächtig Gewordenen mit seinem jungen Leben. Er hatte sich retten können, aber er verschmähte es. Endlich überwältigt, bat er um eines nur: seinen gefangenen General pflegen und dieselbe Zelle mit ihm teilen zu dürfen. Dieser Fahnenjunker war ein Graf." Siehe, Renate, das war Treue; nicht solche, wie ihr sie liebt, die jeden heimlichen Kuß zur Kette für Zeit und Ewigkeit machen möchte, aber doch auch eine Treue und nicht der schlechtesten eine. Und wie der Fahnenjunker war, so blieb er. Er war mit ihm in Spanien. Das polnische Lancieregiment, das er führte, Tubal hat mir davon erzählt, nahm einen Engpass; den Namen habe ich vergessen; aber wie sie sagen, der Fall stehe einzig da in der Kriegsgeschichte. Unter den wenigen, die den Tag überlebten, war der Graf. Nach Paris schwerverwundet zurückgeschafft, empfing er aus des Kaisers Hand das rote Band der Ehrenlegion. Und ich darf sagen, es kleidet ihn... Nein, Renate, du erkennst mich und dich nicht minder. Wir empfinden gleich. (244)

When, in the last encounter that decided the fate of Poland, Kościuszko lay unconscious from loss of blood at the edge of a grove of fir-trees that he had

defended for three hours against superior forces, an ensign, still hardly more than a boy, stood beside him and defended him with his young life. He could have saved himself but scorned to do so. At last overcome, he asked only one thing: to be allowed to tend the general and share the same cell with him. This ensign was the count. That, Renate, was loyalty; not of the kind that you are fond of, which would like to make every secret kiss a binding chain for all eternity, but a kind of loyalty nonetheless, and not the worst kind. And as the ensign was then, so is he now. He fought in Spain. The Polish regiment of lancers he led—Tubal told me of it—captured a defile; I’ve forgotten its name; but they say it was an event unique in the history of warfare. The count was one of the few who survived that day. Sent back to Paris severely wounded, he received from the Emperor’s hand the red sash of the Legion of Honor. And I may say it becomes him. No, Renate, you misjudge me, and yourself no less. We feel the same...

Significantly, under the influence of the Count and his stance about Prussia, Kathinka undergoes a rapid change. The initially Polish-born yet at heart Prussian subject becomes an independent, self-acting and thinking woman.

Despite her father’s desire for her to marry Lewin Vitzevitz and fulfill old Ladalinski’s dream of a Polish-Prussian union in marriage, Kathinka discovers her real nature and her destiny, different from the father’s vision. Her development, this conscious process of finding her identity, especially her national identity was triggered by the events in her personal life. Realizing that she cannot marry Lewin, Kathinka discovers her calling—to return with Bninski to Poland, although still under foreign rule. To do so, Kathinka convinced herself that “sie kennt nur noch zweierlei: Polen und ‘die Kirche’“ [she knows only two things: Poland and the Church] (444). Thus her family’s heritage is re-born, as she stated in a letter to Tubal:

Wir gehen morgen über Miechowitz und Nowa Gora auf Bninskis Güter. Ein katholischer Geistlicher wird uns begleiten. Ich gedenke (Bninski wünscht es) in unsere alte Kirche zurückzutreten. Es ist nichts in mir, was mich daran hindern könnte; alles in allem gefällt mir das Römische besser als das Wittenbergische. (295)

Tomorrow we are leaving for Bninski's estate through Miechowice and Nowa Gora. A Catholic priest will accompany us. I plan (Bninski wishes it, too) to return to our old Church. There is nothing in me that would prevent me from it; all in all, I like the Roman Catholic better than the Wittenberg Church.

In returning to this Church, she returns to Poland rather than Lutheran Germany.

As we have seen in this analysis, Fontane purposefully let Bninski's life interfere with the story lines of Kathinka, Lewin, Ladalinski, and finally also Tubal. The other of Ladalinski's children, the older son of the family,

received the name Pertubal, a name belonging to the family from earliest times and worn with distinction at least once every century: a Pertubal von Ladalinski had participated in the campaign against Ivan the Terrible, another Pertubal was at the Battle of Tannenberg, a third fell before Vienna with Sobieski. (312)

How significant is then the fact that, from his birth on, Tubal was meant to be yet another Polish national hero? Initially, however, it seemed as though Tubal was not interested in anything Polish except for the mazurka, so perfect for entertaining his father's guests. Less emotional and sensitive than his sister, Tubal remains Prussian at heart, unmoved by Kathinka's newfound devotion to Poland.

However, Fontane once again presents his mastery of creating multidimensional characters. Facing death after the attempt to rescue Lewin from the French, Tubal returned in his memory to his homeland and images of his childhood. While experiencing these deep religious feelings, he envisioned his parents and Count Miekusch in Bjalanowo, and one image in particular came to preoccupy Tubal's mind: a memory of a Latin prayer, a part of the Catholic celebration of Easter, a memory of the death of Christ. As Tubal recalls:

Es war noch früher, viel früher, und wir waren noch in der alten Kirche, da sagte mir der Kaplan ein lateinisches Lied vor. Und als Ostern herankam, da mußte ich es hersagen vor meinem Vater und meiner Mutter und Graf Miekusch. Und meine Mutter lachte, weil sie das Lateinische nicht verstand. Aber mein Vater war ernst geworden und Graf Miekusch auch. . . Das ist nun zwanzig Jahre. . . oder noch länger, und ich hatte es vergessen. Aber nun habe ich es wieder:

Salve caput cruentatum
Totus spinis coronatum
Conquassatum, vulneratum
Facie sputis illita. . . (417 f.)⁴¹

It was earlier, much earlier, and we still belonged to the old Church, when the priest taught me a Latin song. And when Easter came, I had to perform it in front of my father, mother, and Count Miekusz. And my mother was laughing because she did not understand Latin. But my father was serious, and Count Miekusch, too. . . . It has been twenty years. . . or even longer, and I forgot it. But now I have it again: Salve caput cruentatum
Totus spinis coronatum
Conquassatum, vulneratum
Facie sputis illita. . . .

Without a doubt, Fontane uses this prayer as a symbol of Tubal's return to his past and Polish tradition. Stating "ich hatt es vergesen" [I had forgotten it], Tubal admits to having neglected the Polishness in him; the statement "nun habe ich es wieder" [now I have it back] symbolizes Tubal's discovery of his true nature. With his last breath, in the moment of his death, he adds "Kathinka hatte recht" (418) [Kathinka was right], admitting his deep feelings for a life style in the Catholic, i.e., Polish tradition.

In this rather dramatic moment of Tubal's death, Fontane draws a connection to the entire Ladalinski family. The old Ladalinski arrives to mourn Tubal and discovers his son's newfound understanding for Catholicism and Poland. It is Tubal's wish to be buried in his fatherland, in Bjalanowo. Up to this point, as we have seen, the old Ladalinski has

⁴¹ *Salve caput cruentatum* [O Sacred Head] is a popular Catholic (and Protestant) hymn sung during Lent. As the Catholic Encyclopedia notes, it is considered one of the most beautiful and powerful Latin poems.

been the loyal servant of the Prussian king, a subject of the state, respected in Berlin society. Yet, with all of his sympathy for and loyalty to Prussia, his past plays a significant role in the development of the story line. Significantly, the one-time independence fighter in Kościuszko's Uprising in Poland adopted Prussian traditions, including his conversion to Protestantism, and tried to forget the Polish cause: "Die Ladalinskis sind aus Polen heraus, und sie können nicht wieder hinein. Ich habe die Bruecken abgebrochen" [The Ladalinskis have left Poland and they cannot go back again. I have burned our bridges in that direction] (112). Significantly, the truly Polish Count Bninski still perceives Ladalinski as "Pole vom Wirbel bis zur Zeh. Er täuscht mich nicht mit seiner loyalen Preussenmiene" [a Pole from head to toe. He will not trick me with his loyal Prussian mask] (191). Furthermore, Bninski expresses his doubts and thoughts about Ladalinski's life in Prussia and the clash of his Polish nature with the Prussian environment, stating:

Was zog ihn nur hierher? Greade *ihn*? Es bleibt ein Rätsel und ein Widerspruch. Denn er hat ein Überschuss von jedem Edelsinn, dessen gänzlich Fehlen in diesem Lande mir dieses Land so widerwärtig macht. Er ist ein großer Opfer und großer Entschlüsse fähig, und selbst der unheilvolle Schritt, der ihn in die Selbst Verbannung trieb, trägt immer noch den Stempel der Entsagung an der Stirn. Und was herrscht hier? Der Vorteil, der Dünkel, die großen Worte! (190 f.)

What drew him here? Exactly *him*? It remains a puzzle and a contradiction. Because he has an overabundance of all the noble senses, the lack of which in this country makes this land so disgusting to me. He is capable of great sacrifices and great decisions, but this fatal step, which pushed him into the self-exile, carries a stamp of resignation on his forehead. What reigns here? Favor, conceit, big words!

Although Bninski's criticism plays a role in changing Kathinka's views on Poland and her national identity, and hence in Ladalinski's life, the critical moment for the father of

this family comes with the death of his son. Tubal's wish to return to Poland, as

Ladalinski notes himself, to his *Heimat*, will be fulfilled by his father, the Prussian

Ladalinski:

Ich gedenke gleich von hier aus die Leiche meines Sohnes nach Bjalanowo ueberzufuehren. Alle Ladalinskis stehen dort. Leben hat seine Forderungen, aber auch der Tod. Es liegt mir daran, im Sinne meines Sohnes zu handeln, der, wie mir wohl bewusst, diesen Zug nach der Heimat hatte. (421)

I plan to immediately transport the body of my son from here to Bjalanowo. All Ladalinskis are there. It is important to me to act in accordance with my son's wish, who, as I am aware, was drawn back towards his homeland.

And with Ladalinski's return to Poland, the storyline of *Vor dem Sturm* comes full circle:

the once patriotic and active independence fighter who afterward became a "gehorsam"

Prussian politician and citizen and whose nature is described by Fontane as "more

Prussian than the Prussians are," will be returning to his homeland and his Polish culture:

Und siehe, das alte katholische Gefühl, wie es sich erst in Kathinka und dann zuletzt in Tubal geregt hatte, es wurde jetzt ebenso in dem Herzen des alten Ladalinski wieder lebendig. (425)

And see, the old Catholic feeling that first moved Kathinka and then also Tubal came alive in the heart of the old Ladalinski.

This Poland, however, may be only in their hearts.

As we have seen, Fontane provides in *Vor dem Sturm* his answer to the problem of the unsuccessful Prussian-Polish political relationship. In his novel, the failure of the Polish-Prussian alliance is clearly symbolized by the proposed marriage between families Ladalinski and Vitzevitz—it simply cannot happen. And although himself a Prussian, Fontane, in my view, is not putting the blame on the Poles for this failure—on the contrary, throughout the novel, he clearly expresses his sympathy and solidarity with the

Polish nation, pointing out at the same time, however, their flaws and weaknesses. As Fontane sees it, the reason for the miscommunication between the two nations lies not necessarily in their nature, but rather in the political structure of “new” Prussia, in the “new era,” so different from the “old” Prussia with its traditions and lifestyles. This is not to say that the discrepancies between the Polish and the Prussian nations do not play a role in this process, but rather that the new state structures are failing to put them aside.

To better understand this statement, let us note Fontane’s opinion expressed in the words of one of the characters in *Vor dem Sturm*, a true *Altpreuße* [old Prussian],

Hirschfeld:

Und je mehr in diesem Land geheuchelt werden muss, desto wohltuender berühren mich Einzelfiguren, die, wenn Sie mir den Ausdruck zugute halten wollen, durch En-detail-Ehrlichkeit die nationale En-gros-Schuld zu tilgen trachten. Bewußt oder unbewußt ist gleichgiltig. . . . (Es war Tubal, als ob er Bninski gehört hätte). Es wundert Sie, Ladalinski, mich so sprechen zu hören. Mich, einen Altpreußen. Aber es klärt sich leicht. Ich war lange draußen und draußen lernt es sich. Jeder, der zurückkommt, wird durch nichts so überrascht als durch den naiven Glauben, den er hier überall vorfindet, dass im Lande Preußen am besten sei. Das Große und das Kleine, das Ganze und das Einzelne. Am besten, sage ich, und vor allem auch am ehrlichsten. Und doch liegt unser schwacher und schwächster Punkt gerade nach dieser Seite hin. Welche Politik, die wir seit zwanzig Jahren gemacht! Lug und Trug, und wir mußten daran zugrunde gehen. Denn gleichviel, Staat oder Person, wer wankt und schwankt, wer unzuverlässig und unstet ist, wer Gelöbnisse brincht, mit einem Worte, wer, wer nicht Treue hält, der ist des Todes. Und nun Gott befohlen. (344)

As Fontane carefully adds, Hirschfeld’s words resemble Bninski’s earlier statements.

Knowing Fontane’s devotion to *Altpreussen*, he clearly identifies with this view voiced by Hirschfeld as well as with the harsh criticism vis-à-vis this new image of Prussia expressed by the Polish Graf. In so doing, Fontane sadly acknowledges the discrepancies between the new and the old Prussian systems and sees the disappearance of the old-

Prussian spirit seen in such virtues as sobriety, lack of pretense, simplicity, modesty, truth, and incorruptibility.⁴² “I happen to be Prussian,” wrote Fontane to Wilhelm Wolfsohn, “and I am glad to be one.”⁴³

Polish themes and motifs are present in most of Fontane’s work, starting with his *Wanderungen*, through *Unterm Birnbaum*, *Mathilde Moehring*, and including *Stechlin*. In *Unterm Birnbaum*, potentially a crime story, Fontane masterfully introduces the Polish motifs once again by including a scene where a Polish traveler tells his German listeners about the tragic events of the Polish Uprising against Russia in 1863 in Warsaw. Thus, Fontane returns to his romantic notion of the bravery, fight for independence, honor, and suffering of the Poles under Russian rule. In his later works, Polish motifs are less visible and frequent. Although usually reduced to characters, names, and places, they still play a significant role in the story-line and for Fontane.

As argued in this study, despite the official policy of *Kulturkampf* and the general anti-Polish bias in Prussian society after 1850, Fontane deliberately includes Polish elements in his works, not only presenting his broad knowledge of Polish history, customs, and traditions but also postulating regionalism and individualism. While Freytag supports the Bismarckian Polenpolitik and *Kulturkampf*, Fontane presents a vision that differs from the mainstream of Bismarck’s German policy. His representations thus argue for a regional vision of Prussia, as a mixed culture of German and Slavs—a nation, not an Empire ruled from Berlin.

⁴² For a more personal account of the Prussian values, see Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Die Ehre Preußens* (Stuttgart: Vorwerk, 1951).

⁴³ Remak, *The gentle critic*, 56.

This vision of a multiethnic region embracing the Germans, the Jews, and the Slavs perished in the case of Prussian Poland, but at the same time Galicia emerged as the legendary multicultural space. Significantly, for the Polish nation without a state, it became the new hope for a future Poland.

PART II

GALICIA

THE POLISH “IMAGINED COMMUNITY”

Chapter 3

Galicia in the Nineteenth Century

Historical Background



Polska w XVII w.



Nabytki Rosji, Prus i Austrii



Ekspansja Prus i Rosji



Upadek Rzeczypospolitej

Arguably the most important of the entities that emerged as a result of the three partitions was Galicia, which became the largest province in the Austrian Empire. By the end of the twentieth century and right now, at the beginning of the new millennium, Galicia has once more returned to discussions and political debates in Europe. Forgotten as a unit after World War II, the region is becoming a model for European integrity and culture today. It serves as perhaps the best example of unity, cooperation, and regional rather than ethnic coherence. Furthermore, Galicia still exists as the “imaginary” province for many Poles, especially those recalling the end of the Habsburg Empire, a vanishing generation who keep portraits of the Kaiser and refer to the “good old times.” Galicia’s Habsburg past is integrated in this way into every day life of Krakow or Lviv. Visiting these two cities in the summer of 2001, I noticed on numerous occasions various symbols and images of nineteenth-century Galicia, right next to contemporary modern Polish motifs (e.g., portraits of Franz Joseph in local pubs or bottled water produced in Poland with a picture of the Kaiser on its label).

Contemporary scholars research the richness of the regions, providing new theses and arguments in many areas of scholastic work, for instance: history, socio-politics, nationalism, and Jewish studies. Interestingly, Galician studies have become visible in North America and are under development in Austria, although Polish scholars prefer to concentrate on more modern topics, such as German-Polish relationship. Yet Galicia is the focal point of some North-American-based scholars such as John-Paul Himka (who concentrates on the religious issues in Galicia with special emphasis on the Ukrainian national movement), Keely Stauter-Halsted (who provides a social commentary on the

region, especially on the peasants), Beauvois, or Wolff (who provides a larger picture of nineteenth-century Eastern Europe).¹

To begin my study of this region of Polish memory, I will return to the history of Galicia to look for specific elements distinguishing this region from Prussian and Russian partitions, allowing me to place analyzed literary texts in the specific context of the era. In subsequent chapters, I will turn to literary representations of this historical era.

Galicia from its Roots to the Peasant Uprising of 1846

After the First Partition of Poland, much of Galicia was awarded to Austria, and after the Congress of Vienna and the repression of the Duchy of Warsaw,² which had been created for the Poles by Napoleon Bonaparte, also Austria received the districts of Złoczów, Brzeżany, Tarnopol, Zaleszczyki,³ as well as the salt mines in Wieliczka.

¹ There are numerous publications referring to Galicia and concentrating on specific element of Galician life. For my study, I referred to newer publications, such as: Daniel Beauvois, *The Noble, the Serf and the Revizor. The Polish Nobility between Tsarist Imperialism and the Ukrainian Masses (1831-1863)* (Chur, Switzerland, and New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991); John-Paul Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988) and *Religion and Nationality in Western Ukraine: The Greek Catholic Church and the Ruthenian National Movement in Galicia, 1867-1900* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1999); Paul Robert Magosci, *Galicia: A Historical Survey and Bibliographic Guide* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1983); Martin Pollack, *Po Galicji: o chasydach, Huculach, Polakach i Rusinach* (Olsztyn: Borussia, 2000); Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848-1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2001); or Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford UP, 1994).

² The Grand Duchy of Warsaw as a creation of the Napoleonic Era (1807 after Napoleon's victory over Prussia) destined to vanish after 1815 and the Congress of Vienna. The Congress of Vienna did not assemble in September 1814 for the main purpose of discussing the Polish Question. No Polish representative was even invited. Nonetheless, the Powers still had to find a compromise in the Polish issue. Prussia settled for Poznan and the western fringe of the Duchy of Warsaw, taking the half of Saxony, Danzig, Swedish Pomerania, and several Rhineland principalities. Austria gained Tarnopol, kept most of New Galicia, but lost her claim to West Galicia. Krakow was to be a free city under the protection of the three Powers (it remained as such until 1846). The Holy Alliance agreed to recognize the creation of a Kingdom of Poland (Kongresowka) bound in personal union to Russia.

³ These districts have been separated from Eastern Galicia.

Galicia, with its capital in Lwów,⁴ in its final form covered over 20,000 square miles (77,000 square kilometers) with a population of 3.5 million people⁵ of different origins: 47.5% Poles, 45.5% Ruthenians,⁶ 6% Jews, and 1% Germans. Although many sources refer to Galician Ruthenians as Ukrainians, thus according to John-Paul Himka “retaining the old nomenclature,” the term “Ruthenians,” *Ruthenen, rusini, rusyny* “is arguably preferable because it is neutral with regard to the two competing paradigms of national identity that divided the Ruthenians in the late nineteenth century, the all-Russian and the Ukrainian.”⁷ That is, a single cultural group in Galicia, the Ruthenians, had potentially two different national identities.

This conflict of identity was exacerbated by the different degrees of “belonging” to Austria in the different periods. For example, Kraków was a separate region, which had already been under Austrian rule from 1795-1809. This nominally separate republic (known universally as *Rzeczpospolita Krakowska*) was established at the Congress of Vienna as a Free City under the protection of the three Powers participating in the Partitions of Poland: Russia, Prussia, and the Habsburg Empire. However, after the

⁴ Lviv is the official name of the contemporary city in the Ukraine. Yet in the nineteenth century, the name changed from the Polish Lwów to the German Lemberg, until after Word War II, it became the second largest Ukrainian city ‘Lviv.’

⁵ According to Groniowski, Skowronek, *Historia Polski 1795-1914* (Warszawa 1987). Norman Davies presents different data - the numbers of population rose from 4.8 million in 1822 to 7.3 million in 1910 (45% Poles, 41% Ruthenians, 11% Jews, 3% Germans).

⁶ Interestingly, the term ‘Ruthenians’ is used by Davies and Himka; all Polish sources, however, use the term ‘Ukrainians.’

⁷ John-Paul Himka, *Religion and Nationality in Western Ukraine: The Greek Catholic Church and the Ruthenian National Movement in Galicia, 1867-1900* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Quenn’s UP, 1999).

events of 1846⁸ in Galicia, the Free City was incorporated into the Austrian Monarchy, despite the resistance of Prussia, which had derived from Kraków considerable profits.

Undoubtedly, 1846 became a caesura in the history of the province of Galicia and Lodomeria which is reflected in many literary texts from this and later periods, for instance, by the Austrian author Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach and the Polish fin de siècle writer Stanisław Wyspiański. In this year, Galician authorities received advance notice of a conspiracy to restore Polish independence, which Ludwik Mierosławski was planning to launch simultaneously in Prussia, Kraków, and Galicia on 21 February 1846.⁹ In Austria, the local officials seemed to have panicked. Nonetheless, the long awaited uprising began in February and proved to be a nine-day wonder. Cooperation of the rebels in the province of Galicia and Lodomeria with the other parts of Polish cultural sphere was stopped by timely arrests; cooperation between the peasants and the nobility was interrupted by the outbreak of the peasants' insurrection, the *Jacquerie*.

Nevertheless, when the Austrian Army under command of General Collin entered Kraków, the whole city was surrounded by barricades and ready to defend itself. On 22 February 1846, a manifesto "To the Polish Nation" announced the formation of a National Government under the dictatorship of the little-known lawyer Tyssowski, at

⁸ The year 1846 is the year of the Polish Uprising against the Austrian rule and the peasants' *Jacquerie* against Polish landowners. Details of the events are presented further in this chapter.

⁹ Ludwik Mierosławski (1814-1878) as a youth fought in the November Uprising. As an *émigré*, he joined the Carbonari and belonged to Young Poland; he had been designated to lead the insurrection of 1846, but appeared instead as the chief defendant in the Berlin Trial. He was sentenced to death but was granted amnesty at the eleventh hour by the outbreak of revolution in Prussia. In 1848-49, he headed the insurrectionary forces in Posen, then in Sicily, and later in Baden. In the 1850s, he provoked a schism in the Polish Democratic Society, antagonizing the left-wing revolutionary democrats no less than the conservative Hotel Lambert (Paris). In 1863, he returned to Poland, fought in Kujawy and was briefly the dictator of the uprising. Thereafter he lived in exile, writing as a historian and publicist.

whose side the actual leadership was held by the young Polish philosopher Edward Dembowski (1822-1846).¹⁰

The revolution did not, however, have a clear focus, because it was directed as much against internal reform as at presumed external enemies. At the same time, therefore, the peasants revolted against the Polish noblemen, landlords, bailiffs, and officials. The District Officer of Tarnów, Johann Breindl von Wallerstein, used the help of one of the peasants, Jakub Szela (1787-1866), to set to work bands of serfs who were promised an end to their serfdom and their feudal obligations if they would turn against the noblemen.¹¹ The effect of that promise was cold-blooded murder. The peasants were even paid in salt or money for the heads of their victims. More than two thousand Polish noblemen were killed. However, that result had little direct bearing on the overall future of the Galician countryside. It does not mean that the peasants planned to defend the Emperor and the existing Austrian rule; rather they had risen against the feudal system and the oppression they experienced at the hands of the Polish gentry in Galicia. In fact, this peasants' uprising was a shocking awakening for the Polish patriots, who realized that uneducated peasants could not be relied on to support Polish noblemen in patriotic movements. That is, any ideas about a Polish nation that arose from a common Polish culture would not necessarily hold across class lines. Moriz Ritter von Ostrov wrote in 1869 an analysis of this event stating:

¹⁰ For Dembowski's bibliography see Andrzej Walicki's *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Notre Dame Press, 1982).

¹¹ Interestingly, in 1846, Galician peasants did not seem to possess a strong national identity. They could not consider themselves either as Polish, Austrian or Ruthenian. In later years, however, the peasants especially in Eastern Galicia established a strong connection to the Ruthenian/Ukrainian cultural sphere.

Die Patrioten Polens wollten ihr Vaterland von der Fremdherrschaft befreien, und in diesem Zwecke die Mitwirkung der Volksmassen in Anspruch nehmen. Allein diese, mit dem Bestande der österreichischen Regierung – so viel diese auch zu wünschen übrig lies – sich begnügend, wollten von einer zweiten und verbesserten Auflage des Polenthums nichts wissen und protestierten auf eine lutige Weise.¹²

As I will argue, this event was taken up by Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach as a pretext for investigating Polish nationalism and a national cause in the stories “Der Kreisphysikus” and “Jakob Szela.”¹³ These literary examples will serve as case studies examining Polish nation building during and after the *Jacquerie*.

Nonetheless, the outbreak of the Kraków Uprising led several patriots to return to Kraków and fight for independence. One of them was already mentioned: Edward Dembowski, whose stands and views serve as a background for the story line of Ebner-Eschenbach’s “Der Kreisphysikus.” When the peasants’ *Jacquerie* broke out, he undertook a bold attempt at winning the revolting peasants to the side of the patriotic insurgents. Dembowski organized a large religious procession carrying crosses and church emblems, marched out of Kraków in the direction of Wieliczka, a nearby salt mine. This procession was then attacked by Austrian Army, and Dembowski died fighting. After his death, he became a legendary hero for peasants and aristocrats alike - many believed that he was hiding somewhere and would reemerge at some point to lead the Poles in the fight for independence and human rights.

Despite the Galician massacre of 1846, one cannot say that efforts to win the peasants to a Polish national cause were complete failures. In the Tatra Mountains, at

¹² Moriz Ritter von Ostrov, *Der Bauernkrieg vom Jahre 1846 in der österreichischen Provinz Galizien* (Wien: Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1869) 1-2.

¹³ Both of these texts will be analyzed further in this dissertation.

Chochółów, for example, the Jacquerie assumed a completely different character. A band of locals led by the village priest raised the flag of Polish independence and came out against the Austrians. Not surprisingly, the consequences of the failed Uprising were catastrophic for the peasants of Chochółów - the Austrian authorities arrested them, started pacification, and sent the organizers to jails in Moravia and the Czech territories.¹⁴

As a general result of the Kraków Uprising, the Free City was suppressed, ending even modest hopes for its eventual political independence. An Austro-Russian Treaty, signed on 16 November 1846, awarded Kraków to Galicia. The *Kaiser* added the title of the “Duke of Krakau” to his already long list of official titles. Other restrictions were introduced which had a fateful influence on the Polish cultural sphere in Galicia after 1846. In the wake of the Uprising, Metternich formed a plan to divide the province into Western and Eastern segments, and proposed to use the Ruthenians against the Polish national movement to support German colonization and strengthen the German character of schools and towns. In so doing, the Austrian government did what it could to instill into the minds of educated Ruthenians the conviction that the Empire would defend them against decadent Polish influences. Especially the Greek-Catholic clergy declared themselves “good” Austrian citizens and patriots and foes of a separate Polish cultural sphere. However, for many of Ruthenians, this step towards a Ukrainian identity was merely a way to disguise their inclination toward Russia and the Tsar. Yet another disparity between the Poles and the Ruthenians arose based on the religious beliefs of the two nations. The Poles, traditionally Catholic, felt separated from the Greek

¹⁴ Stanisław Piotrowski, *Skalne Podhale w literaturze i kulturze polskiej* (Warszawa, 1970).

Catholic/Orthodox confession held by the Ruthenians, despite the fact that this Church had been accepted in Poland since the Union of Brest in 1595.¹⁵

Galicia after 1848

These conflicts did not pass easily. Two years after the Kraków Uprising and the *Jacquerie*, in the wake of the so-called Spring of the Nations, Galicia felt again revolutionary disturbances. In March 1848, as a result of the Revolution in Vienna, Metternich fled the city, and the newly crowned Emperor Franz Joseph promised several liberal changes in the Constitution as a way to secure Austrian succession. As soon as the news from Vienna reached Kraków and Lwów, street demonstrations forced the local authorities to release political prisoners. At this point, national committees were formed in Kraków and Lwów.

On 19 March 1848, a group of Galicians wrote the so-called *Lwów Address* to the Kaiser a petition to grant the emancipation to the peasants, to institute Polish as the official language of the administration in Galicia, and to grant provincial autonomy for Galicia. Surprisingly, this document demanding Polish independence, signed by the Polish liberal bourgeois leaders and many landowners, was delivered to the Emperor in Vienna. From July to October, a Galician Delegation, led by a Lwów liberal, Franciszek Smolka (1810-1899), attended the meetings of the insurrectionary Assembly in Vienna. In the meantime, the Austrian Constitution granted freedom of association and freedom of speech to Galicia as well. Unfortunately, the Austrian Army re-entered Vienna, and

¹⁵ See, for instance, Norman Davies, *God's Playground*, vol.1.

shortly thereafter Kraków was bombarded, making it the first of the rebellious cities to be reduced to obedience. Soon after that, in Vienna, Prague, Lwów, as well as in Hungary, the local revolutions were also put down and military governments came to power. In December, Franz Joseph was crowned the next Austrian Emperor, and Austria returned to its absolutism.

Nonetheless, sentiments and artists working towards Polish/Galician autonomy still existed in Galicia. In 1849, Agenor Gołuchowski (1812-1975) became Governor of Galicia, later its Viceroy (from 1850 to 1859, 1866 to 1869, and 1871 to 1875), and finally President of the Imperial Council of Ministers in 1860-61. Accepted in this position by the Emperor, Gołuchowski started a process of reforming Galicia as part of the Empire, giving the Poles the right to use their native language and attend Polish schools. Like many Poles, Gołuchowski thought that in order to strengthen the national element in Galicia, it was necessary to reconcile with Austria over the long term. He himself was a wealthy landowner who already in his youth volunteered to serve Austria, seeing in it an opportunity to serve the Polish community in Galicia.

Gołuchowski perceived the social and economic reforms as being extremely urgent, since the prosperity and future of the province depended on them. However, his dominant goal was to give equal status to several languages co-existing in Galicia and to allow each nation to develop its own culture, within the original boundaries, and be recognized as distinct political units within Austria. This emerged as especially important in light of the rising Ruthenian national movement and the process of germanization led by the Austrian government from Vienna, which was seeking through centralization a

way to strengthen the Empire. Although Gołuchowski ultimately lacked the power necessary to resist these centralizing and germanizing tendencies, he nonetheless succeeded in replacing many German bureaucrats and actually began a gradual process of polonizing the Galician administration. In the case of the Ruthenian nation, he was not against granting them several laws in order to avoid future conflicts based on nationality and religion with the Poles.¹⁶ While politicians like Gołuchowski worked to create a space where multiple nations could cohabit one political space, this tactic was generally abandoned in fear of more absolutist and violent approaches to nation building. Most significant for this study is the fact that his preferred political tactic (conciliation) would reappear in works by such authors as Jan Lam or Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach.

During the crisis provoked by the defeat at Königgrätz in December 1866, the Galicians once again requested autonomy for the land. This time the petition was accompanied by a loyal address to the Emperor: “We stand beside Thee, most Gracious Lord, and so we wish to stand.”¹⁷ Such loyalty was rewarded in the Kaiser’s Fundamental Law of December 21, 1867, giving Galicia relative autonomy. As a result of the *Ausgleich* (the Compromise), the Law granted several governmental changes for Galicia, including an elected legislature (*Sejm Krajowy*), and the provincial executive body (*Wydział Krajowy*). Nonetheless, some groups were still disappointed by the fact that ethnic Poles, Ruthenians, and other Slavs did not receive as many privileges as the Hungarians enjoyed.

¹⁶ Whereas the majority of the Poles living in Galicia was Catholic, many of the Ruthenians (later, Ukrainians) joined the Greek-Catholic Church, which, although a part of the Catholic Church, differed slightly from the Latin tradition.

¹⁷ Davies, *God’s Playground*, 150.

Despite this disappointment, the Galician Poles and Ruthenians could still enjoy more rights in this region of the partition than in any other hereditary parts of the lost Polish territories. In 1869, the Polish language (already admitted into schools and courts) was granted equal status with German in all official business; in 1870, Jagiellonian University re-established Polish as the principal language of instruction; in 1871, a Ministry of Galician Affairs was created in Vienna; in 1873, the School Board began to provide a system of full-time primary education in the local languages. None of these circumstances existed in Polish-speaking lands under Russian or Prussian control.

The achievement of this cultural autonomy was a wake-up call for all forms of Polish national consciousness. The best examples were the patriotic demonstrations celebrating several important events, such as the reopening of the tomb of Casimir the Great,¹⁸ the presentation of the statue of Adam Mickiewicz in the Market Square in 1898, or the Grunwald Monument in 1910. In consequence of these superlative political conditions, the number of Polish books and newspapers published in Galicia exceeded those that appeared in the Russian and Prussian partitions. The theater also achieved an outstanding level of growth, especially in Kraków, with such representative playwrights as Aleksander Fredro (1793-1876) and Stanisław Wyspiański (1869-1907).¹⁹

¹⁸ In 1869, a workman digging in the crypt of the cathedral in Kraków accidentally opened the tomb of the last kings from the Piast dynasty in the cathedral, which provoked a series of demonstrations and popular rejoicing. For more information on commemorations and the role of monuments in the Habsburg Empire see Maria Bucur, and Nancy M. Wingfield, eds., *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue UP, 2001).

¹⁹ Wyspiański is the best-known representative of Polish modernism and the reformer of the Polish theater. His plays, paintings, and graphics belong to the extraordinary examples of Polish art of the fin de siècle.

Kraków produced a number of eccentrics, unusual figures who possessed enormous literary talents in odd combinations of genres. One such figure was Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński (1874-1941), a medical doctor performing in a Kraków cabaret, the author of a best-selling romance novel, and a translator into Polish of classics of French literature. Another was Karol Estreicher (1827-1908), a librarian at Jagiellonian University, who prepared *Bibliografia Polska* (Polish Bibliography) in 22 volumes. Lwów was the home of Ossolineum, an institute founded in 1827 by Józef Maksymilian Ossoliński for the dissemination of Polish arts and sciences. It also saw the founding of the Polish Historical Society and the senior Polish historical journal, the *Kwartalnik Historyczny*. Both Kraków and Lwów had large municipal theaters modeled on the Paris Opera.

Not only national struggles shaped the history of the province. Heavily rural, Galicia was the most peripheral and provincial of the lands belonging to the Empire, and its economic situation was rather catastrophic; very little industry developed in this particular region. Galicia was predominantly agricultural, although some small industry was begun in the province in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, even the development of small industry, mainly crafts produced in certain villages, collapsed after the opening of the railroad, the so-called “Kaiser Track” (1842 from Kraków to Wrocław, and in 1856 a direct connection between Kraków and Vienna). For a while, it seemed as though the railroad would become the key to Galicia’s prosperity and development, but on the contrary, it ultimately helped industries in other Austrian provinces when Galicia became the biggest market for their products.

Because of Kraków's traditional special status as a Free City (until 1846) and the relative independence of Galicia within the Austrian Empire, this province played a special role in constructing Polish identity and culture in the nineteenth century.²⁰ Its citizens created their own kind of Polishness and became the dominant "imagined community"²¹ for Polish culture well into the twentieth century in no small part due to the cultural production I have just outlined. As I argued in the introduction, compared to the Polish regions ceded to Prussia and Russia, Galicia became for many Poles a mythical land of relative independence, where "old" Polish social structures, along with Polish habits, were maintained. In many ways, *Kaisertreue* to House Habsburg then seemed to guarantee a free Polish culture nation, if not the state hopes lost with its eighteenth-century liberal constitution.

Significantly, the particular character of this province was known not only to Poles in Galicia, but also in Polish lands ceded to Prussia and Russia, and to the émigrés in Paris. Indeed, the danger of this energetic "Polish element" viewed by Metternich as a threat to Austria:

Polonism is only a formula, the sound of a word underneath which hides a revolution in its most glaring form; it is not a small part of a revolution, but revolution itself. Polonism does not declare war on the monarchies, which possess Polish territory, it declares war on all existing institutions and proclaims the destruction of all the common foundations, which form the basis of society.²²

²⁰ Kraków and Galicia played a special role already after the Polish November Uprising in the Kingdom of Poland in 1830 and became a center for conspiracies and asylum for many refugees/insurgents fleeing from Russia to avoid prosecution. See, for instance, Part III of this study.

²¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991 [1983]).

²² Reddway, Penson, Halecki, Dyboski, eds., *The Cambridge History of Poland*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: UP, 1941) 338.

Metternich thus saw “Polonism” as a formula for revolution, not believing in the potential union between the Galician Poles and the Empire. Authors in Galicia, however, would disagree, as we shall see in the next two chapters.

Chapter 4

Images of Galicia in Nineteenth Century Literature: Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach and the Polish Nation

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach (1830-1916) was a descendant of an old Austrian aristocratic family—not “paper” aristocracy (see Joseph Peter Strelka)—born in Moravia, another Austrian border region of small border villages and multiethnic populations. Interestingly, through numerous literary critiques and analysis of her work, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach is known as the aristocratic female writer who struggled for perfection in her art and tried to overcome obstacles in the form of family prejudices, social conventions, and even illness in her later years.¹ She is also known for her devotion to social issues and for her “humanist message, liberal learnings, her political

¹ See, for instance, Doris Klostermeier, *The Victory of a Tenacious Will* (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 1997) or Edith Toegel, *Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach: Leben und Werk* (NY: Peter Lang, 1997).

and personal embracing of a moderate and humane socialism,” as stressed by Carl Steiner.²

In 1883, the publishing house Gebrüder Paetel accepted a few of Ebner-Eschenbach’s stories for a publication entitled *Dorf- und Schloßgeschichten (Tales from a Village and Castle)*, which included two of her Galician texts: “Jakob Szela”³ and “Der Kreisphysikus” (“The District Physician”).⁴ The Poles as represented in these short stories emerge as a national group distinct from the Czechs, Jews, and Austrians, accommodated within the Habsburg framework and with their own national imperatives. In this part of my study, I will illustrate Ebner-Eschenbach’s thorough knowledge of Galician political and social situation and historical background.

Both of her short stories refer to the events of 1846 in Galicia—the failed Polish revolt against the Austrian government and the peasants’ uprising against the Polish landowners, the so-called *Jacquerie*. Significantly, each time she portrays the Galician reality of 1846, Ebner-Eschenbach presents the historical events and social issues in a true light using, however, her *licentia poetica*. Although Ingrid Aichinger claims that “Zeitkritik ist . . . im Prosawerk der Ebner nicht primär faßbar in der direkten Aufnahme konkreter geschichtlichen Fakten”⁵ [*Zeitkritik* in Ebner’s prose is . . . not primarily in the direct picture of the concrete historical facts], in both of the stories discussed here, Ebner-

² Carl Steiner, *Of Reason and Love: The Life and Works of Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach* (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1994) 186.

³ Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach. “Jakob Szela.” *Ausgewählte Erzählungen*, vol. 1. (Berlin: Gebrüder Paetel 1910) 1-65. Further references to this text will be given in parentheses in the main text.

⁴ Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach. “Der Kreisphysikus.” *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 1 (München: Nymphenburger Verlag, 1961) 45-136.

⁵ Ingrid Aichinger, “Harmonisierung oder Skepsis? Zum Prosawerk der Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach,” *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur* (16) 1972, 485.

Eschenbach demonstrates her knowledge of both Galician and Polish history as well as the social interactions and problems within the society.

Significantly, neither “Jakob Szela” nor “Der Kreisphysikus” belongs to the canonical repertoire of Ebner’s works, as their mutual main subject (social injustice and human rights) is connected with the question of Poland’s/Galicia’s future within the Habsburg Empire, a topic not widely discussed in the context of her literary production. Therefore, not only germanophone but also Polish literary critics such as Kłańska or Palej turned to these texts to learn about Ebner-Eschenbach’s position on Galicia and, in general, the Habsburg *Vielvölkerstaat*.⁶ Many germanophone scholars emphasize issues other than the Polish question depicted by Ebner—Hans Otto Hoch, for instance, concentrates on the Jewish protagonist and his place in the Christian setting as presented in “Der Kreisphysikus,” and Steiner underscores the social injustice the Galician peasants suffered at the hand of Polish nobility.⁷ In this chapter, then, I will concentrate on Ebner-Eschenbach’s portrayal of Poland and Poles living in Galicia to demonstrate her incredible knowledge of the region and her optimistic vision of Galicia as a multiethnic Polish “imagined community.”

Given Ebner-Eschenbach’s broad background in history and her interest in social issues, it is clear that her political engagement cannot be doubted; in her own words: “Nicht teilnehmen an dem geistigen Fortschreiten seiner Zeit, heißt moralisch im

⁶ Agnieszka Palej, “Galizische Konspiratoren in Marie von Ebner-Eschenbachs Erzählung *Der Kreisphysikus*,” *Literatur und Kritik in der Heine-Zeit*, Helmut Kirchner, Maria Kłańska, eds. (Wien: Boehlau, 1998) 251-260.

⁷ Hans Otto Hoch, *Auf der Suche nach der jüdischen Erzählliteratur. Die Literaturkritik der “Allgemeinen Zeitung des Deutchtums”* (Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 1985) and Carl Steiner, *Of Reason and Love*.

Rückschritt zu sein”⁸ [To not take part in current developments means to be morally backwards]. These two 1883 stories argue for a political vision of Galicia different from Metternich’s.

Der Kreisphysikus

Although the story line of “Der Kreisphysikus,” presenting several years of Galician village life, is told from the perspective of the local physician, Doktor Nathanael Rosenzweig, the narration is set up as not particularly colored by Rosenzweig’s origin. Although a half-Jew, he is in his identity first of all a loyal state employee, then a doctor, and only lastly a Jew. His figure thus represents a certain paradox in the village, yet his position stands in clear, positive relation to others: Rosenzweig is accepted, and even respected, by all groups in the village. For the peasantry, he was the “reasonable Mister Doctor” (“Kreisphysikus” 46); the aristocrats called him an “incomparable physician” (52); local authorities trusted him with both their secret missions and health; and for other Jews he was “Gibor” (the giant, 117). Thus, his figure is not surrounded by anti-Semitic hatred but rather by respect and acceptance. Significantly, in Galicia, where more than ten percent of the population was of Jewish origin, readers of that day would know this, anti-Semitism became a violent force among nationalists and Polish educators, who had seen in Jews “foreigners” and “others.” However, in the preemancipation era, that is, before 1848 when the peasants received their freedom and independence, many

⁸ Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, “Aphorismen,” *Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach*, (München: Winkler, 1956) 900.

sources reflect an attitude of limited trust and interdependency between Christian and Jewish villagers, a relationship that began to erode in the aftermath of emancipation and the onset of peasants nationalism. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Jewish tavern keeper was reportedly a respected figure. . . . The very same villager who looked with suspicion on the lord found a trust in his relations with the Jews.⁹

Most critically for the author's vision of Galicia as part of Austro-Hungary, Rosenzweig's specific position as a professional allowed access to the various social groups represented in the village, thus presenting the village as a microcosm of the whole of rural Galician society. And his vision becomes the perspective of the readers, who are called on to balance his insights against his own multiple identities.

Ebner-Eschenbach thus uses Doctor Rosenzweig to survey Galician society, by not representing him as an outcast. In the house of a rich noblewoman, Polish Countess Aniela, for instance, Rosenzweig meets Polish aristocrats:

Dort hatte sich eine große Anzahl Schloßgäste versammelt, eine Gesellschaft, dem Doktor wohlbekannt und so widerwärtig, als ob sie aus lauter Kurpfuschern bestanden hätte. Anhänger und Anhängerinnen "König" Adam Czartoryskis, Konspiranten gegen die bestehende gute Ordnung, Schwärmer für die Wiedervereinigung der alten polnischen Wirtschaft. Die Frau des Hauses, noch jung, schön, enthusiastisch seit dem Tode ihres Mannes unumschränkte Herrin der großen Güter, die ihn zugebracht hatte, war die Seele der ganzen Partei und ihre mächtige Stütze. Die unterhielt eine lebhaft Korrespondenz mit der Nationalregierung in Paris, empfing und beherbergte deren Emissäre und

⁹ Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasants' National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848-1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2001) 39. See also John Paul Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980). Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach used witnesses' statements and information from newspapers as sources for her short stories. It is clear then that published materials (especially before 1848) did not require that the physician be portrayed negatively – Ebner's choice indicates, however, that at least there was not the complete expectation among the readership and the authors that the Jews be portrayed in a negative condemning way. This choice is very unmarked, showing at least partial tolerance by the audience of a positive representation.

verwendete jährlich große Summen für Revolutionszwecke.¹⁰ (“Kreisphysikus” 66)

A large group of palace guests had gathered there; a society well known by the doctor to be as objectionable as a group of quacks. Supporters of “King” Adam Czartoryski, conspirators against the good current establishment, dreamers waiting to reintroduce the old, Polish economy. The lady of the house, who invited him, still young and beautiful, enthusiastic, absolute ruler of the great estates since the death of her husband, was the soul of the party and its powerful support. She maintained a lively correspondence with the national government in Paris, received and sheltered its emissaries, and spent yearly large sums for revolutionary purposes.

One specific factor seems to determine Rosenzweig’s negative perception of this group—their fanatic devotion to the “Cause,” to the lost Kingdom and Polish past and tradition.

The narrator goes on to explain the doctor’s perspective to the reader:

Dieses fanatische Treiben mißfiel dem Doktor und entstellte ihm das Bild der in jeder Hinsicht, als gute Mutter, als kluge Verwalterin ihres Vermögens und als humane Herrin ihrer Untertanen verehrungswürdigen Frau.

These fanatic activities displeased the doctor and distorted the picture of the lady who was in every respect worthy of respect: as a good mother, as a clever manager of her fortune, and as a humane mistress of her subordinates. (“Kreisphysikus” 66)

Such passages set up for the readers the fundamental problem of the Polish aristocracy: the fact that their interest was drawn away from their immediate surroundings towards vague political schemes. These excerpts, in fact, show Ebner-Eschenbach’s thorough knowledge (or research) of the Polish situation, including her incipient critique of the Polish aristocracy. Using an ironic narrative tone, Ebner-Eschenbach draws a colorful picture of the actual Polish aristocracy in Galicia, as well as of their connection to the

¹⁰ Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, “Der Kreisphysikus,” *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 1. (München: Nymphenburger Verlag 1961) 45-136. All translations from Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach were done by the present author.

émigrés in Paris. Indeed, the historical Czartoryski (1770-1861),¹¹ who became the unquestioned leader of the Great Emigration and received the popular title of “the uncrowned King of Poland,” tried to lead the Polish nation from afar in his Hotel Lambert in Paris, where he presided over independent Polish politics, supporting the reestablishment of the vanished nation.¹² This attempt probably seemed as odd at the time as it did to Ebner-Eschenbach’s non-aristocratic characters: a leader of a country functioning *in absentia*.

In Ebner-Eschenbach’s version of this situation, the political discussion among the Polish nobility in Galicia was almost exclusively concentrated on the fight for independence of the Polish state and on its symbols of nationhood: red and white banners, emissaries, sabers, and national anthems—they were not paying attention to the Galician present. Although an outsider to Polish politics, Rosenzweig witnessed the conspirators’ plans and was confused about their engagement. They, in turn, wanted to include him in their plan for the “awakening of the Polish Reich” (“Kreisphysikus” 66), as Countess Aniela describes it to Rosenzweig:

Der Augenblick, das fremde Joch abzuschütteln, ist gekommen. . . . Sie dürfen es erfahren, weil Sie ein guter Pole und unser Vertrauer sind. Das Zeichen zum Ausbruch der Revolution wird in Lemberg auf dem ersten Balle des Erzherzogs gegeben werden!

The time to shake off the foreign yoke has arrived. . . . You may know this, as you are a good Pole and we trust you. The signal for the outbreak of the revolution will be given in Lemberg at the first ball of the archduke. (“Kreisphysikus” 67)

¹¹ See www.czartoryski.org; Czartoryski became the unquestioned leader of Polonia in Paris after his escape from Kongresówka, where he fought the Russian troops in the 1830 November Uprising and was condemned to death by the Russian officials.

¹² For complete reference see Norman Davies. *God’s Playground: A History of Poland*. (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) 276.

The ironic listener is treated as one of the conspirators and exposed to a secret plan that sounds like a comic opera. However, Rosenzweig's growing knowledge of the aristocrats' moral codex and their understanding of revolution leads him, even as a sympathetic observer, to question their power to carry the mission through: "dieser Plan ist wundersam ausgedacht, aber ausführen werden Sie ihn nicht. . . . Edle Damen und edle Herren, wie Sie, können hassen, können fehden, aber sie verraten nicht, und sie morden nicht." [This plan is marvelously conceived, but you will not carry it out . . . Noble ladies and noble gentlemen like you can hate, can quarrel, but you do not betray or murder] ("Kreisphysikus" 69).

Rosenzweig is thus witness to a series of patriotic but utterly ineffectual manifestations of aristocratic Polishness. Even though he shares a sense of belonging to the same community, he sees that their affection towards their non-existent state verges on becoming a religious cult and, at least in the case of this group of Poles, appears to be stronger than even their Catholic beliefs: "Alles für Polen! Mein zeitliches und ewiges Heil!" [Everything for Poland! My temporal and eternal salvation!] ("Kreisphysikus" 70). Although some of their statements seem empty, others are presented by the narrator in a different light--as strong and moving manifestations of a Polish spirit unifying them vis-à-vis all outsiders, that is, all non-Poles. Rosenzweig sees through them but understands and even comes to sympathize with their goals, even as he rejects their inactive sloganeering.

The next scene underscores this juxtaposition to the readers and shows Rosenzweig's mixed and even conflicted feelings about the nobility, when one of the invited guests of Countess Aniela, "a stranger," joins all the Poles in singing a nationalist song:

Die Klänge des schönen Liedes ergriffen und bewegten auch ihn. *Eine* Empfindung verband ihn mit seinen Brüdern! Sehnsucht, leidenschaftlich heiße Sehnsucht nach dem verlorenen Vaterland. An diesem Leidensborn hat kein Volk so übersatt getrunken, wie das, aus dessen Herzen solch ein Lied geströmt.

The sounds of this beautiful song moved him as well. *One* feeling connected him with his brothers! A longing, a passionate powerful longing for his lost homeland. No other people had drunk so fully from this spring of sorrow as these, from whose hearts such a song flowed. ("Kreisphysikus" 71)

This stranger, the young Edward Dembowski, becomes a key figure in Ebner-Eschenbach's "Kreisphysikus." Ebner-Eschenbach did not introduce the emissary earlier in the story. First, she presented Rosenzweig and his life to prepare the reader to better understand and interpret the evolving relationship between the doctor and Dembowski, and also to underscore Dembowski's vision and the importance and sincerity of his philosophy—the reawakening of a Polish state in which all people are equal, where peasantry has a position in the social structure equal to that of the nobility. By showing the situation through the physician's eyes, then, she can draw a picture of a misguided but more effective patriotism, in contrast with the ridiculous one of the aristocrats.

Significantly, Dembowski is the one Pole who seems to be distant and distinct from all the others in this Galician village—he is the only true individual among them, and the only one capable of independent action. Not knowing his identity, the reader is introduced to Dembowski first through Rosenzweig's speculations and observations. The

Stranger, as the narrator originally describes Dembowski, is also treated differently than the other Poles. Initially, Dembowski takes the position of an observer, rather like an outsider, whose only common interest with the aristocracy is their love and devotion for the Fatherland, their lost Poland. Finally, the reader is convinced that this is a special someone with a mission, one who is perceived by the community as a spiritual leader.

More importantly for the case of Galicia, the appearance of Dembowski (introduced as Cousin Roswadowski) causes a split among the aristocrats and a shift in the story line of “Kreisphysikus” towards representations that focus on Galicia rather than on the cause of a mythic Polish nation in general. That is, the arrival of a “true” Polish patriot turns the story’s focus toward a possible Polish culture here and now rather than residing in a distinct myth.

As the story goes on, it is clear that Dembowski does not fully belong to this loud group of Galicians. Although he himself is an aristocrat, Dembowski represents a different set of values, not completely acceptable to and understood by the others. For example, he explicitly expresses his sense of humanity and his Christian vision of the world, where the other nobles cannot agree with his idea about unifying the whole Polish nation by considering aristocrats and peasantry equal. Despite the fact that the vision of Poland as a free and independent state is included in his missionary message, they do not necessarily see such a state as a prerequisite for Polish freedom:

Die hochgehenden Wogen der Begeisterung, mit der der Sandbote empfangen worden, waren allmählich verebbt. Ein Gemurmeln der Mißbilligung...erhob sich jetzt. Aus der Gruppe, die den Fürsten umdrängte, scholl rauh die Mahnung: “Laß den Pfarrer von Nächstenliebe sprechen, sprich von der Befreiung des

Vaterlandes!“. “Eines, die beiden!“ antwortete der Redner.... Die Lippen des Fürsten kräuselte ein Lächeln. (“Kreisphysikus” 108)

The waves of enthusiasm with which the emissary was welcomed gradually subsided. A muttering of disapproval...arose now. From the group surrounding the prince arose the admonition: “Let the priest talk about brotherly love, talk about the liberation of the homeland!“ “United the two!“ responded the speaker.... The prince’s lips formed a grimacing smile.

To a reader familiar with Polish history, Ebner-Eschenbach's historical allusions are unmistakable. She uses the historical events of 1846 (the Revolution against the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Galicia and the Peasant Uprising against the landowners) to present to readers current circumstances and future possibilities for reestablishing a Polish state.

Thus through Rosenzweig's eyes, the author presents a potential Polish revolution, but not as a vision of an aristocratic revolution against the dominance of a foreign power, in this case the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Instead, she presents Dembowski's desire to incorporate the lower classes into the fight for freedom and independence from all unjust powers, in order to find a new Polish political and social order:

Was seine [Dembowski's] Seele fortan erfüllte, war nicht mehr Mitleid allein mit den Elenden und Armen, es war auch Haß gegen die Starken und Reichen, heißen sie nun die Beherrscher der Teilungsmächte, oder die Inhaber der polnischen Zentralgewalt in Paris und Usurpatoren des Königreiches, das sie wiederherstellen wollten. (“Kreisphysikus” 87)

What filled his soul was no longer simple compassion for the miserable poor but also hatred for the powerful and rich, regardless of whether they were the masters of the Partition Powers or the holders of the central government in Paris and usurpers of the kingdom, which they wanted to re-establish.

Rather than a national vision, this is almost a socialist vision directed against a traditional class-stratified Poland that seeks to blame instead of building.

Through Dembowski, the reader is exposed to a critical analysis of Poland's past, a realization that the battle for national integrity as understood in previous eras is not the only thing at stake in the possible emergence of a new Poland:

Befreiung von der fremden Tyrranei verlangt ihr? Was habt denn ihr jemals ausgeübt an dem bejammernwerten Volke, als Tyrranei? Ihr, der Adel, ihr wart der Staat. Niemals ist in Polen ein anderer Stand zu Wort gekommen, als der eure, und wohin habt ihr das Land gebracht? . . .Eurer Eigennutz hat es ausgebeutet, eure Zwietracht es zerrissen, euer Verrat hat es den Feinden ausgeliefert!
("Kreisphysikus" 108)

You are demanding freedom from foreign tyranny? What have you imposed on your own lamentable people, other than tyranny? You, the nobility, were the State. In Poland, no class, other than your own, was ever given a chance to speak, and where have you led the country? . . . Your self-interest has exploited the land, your discord has torn it apart, and your betrayal has turned it over to the enemies!

In this vision, the lowest class, the peasantry, emerges as a possible dominant force in discussions about the future of a Poland rather than the old aristocracy. Perhaps to underscore that idea, Ebner-Eschenbach chose to end the story by presenting the outcome of the Peasants' Uprising in Galicia, the moment when Dembowski became a true leader for the masses protesting against both the injustice of the aristocratic administration and the Austrian government.

Ebner-Eschenbach is not, however, using the story to write history, since she leaves out significant political details about the Uprising during which more than two thousand Polish noblemen were killed by the peasantry—facts that her Austrian readership would find less than convincing in a political reconstruction. In Ebner-Eschenbach's fiction, Dembowski is the only nobleman who undertook a bold attempt at winning the revolting peasants to the side of the patriotic insurgents, making him a

martyr to a just cause—a Galicia that is democratic, not merely reestablishing the old Polish state. To fulfill what he feels is his historic destiny, this fictional Dembowski organized a large religious procession carrying crosses and church emblems and then marched out of Kraków in the direction of Wieliczka, a nearby salt mine. This procession is attacked by the Austrian Army, and Dembowski dies fighting. After his death, he becomes a legendary hero—many believing that he went into hiding and that he would reemerge at some point to lead the Poles in the fight for independence and human rights, a kind of Barbarossa for the lower classes. Indeed, “Der Kreisphysikus” actually locates Dembowski again, through Rosenzweig, after the Uprising. He is in fact sighted living with the common people, educating them, and searching for the harmony and peace in their lives. By overcoming his “death,” Dembowski becomes Ebner’s typical protagonist “mit seiner fast übertriebenen karitativen Lebensphilosophie, . . . ein Typ des moralisch und ethisch hochstehenden Adeligen” [with his almost exaggerated charitable life philosophy . . . one of the morally and ethically higher standing nobleman], as Edith Toegel concluded.¹³

Ebner-Eschenbach’s narrative asserts its politics clearly: a warning that the lowest class, the peasantry, may be the deciding element in the future of Poland, turned Galicia, but that statement is not necessarily Ebner-Eschenbach’s own. She writes as a member of the German-Austrian nobility in the region, and she has been careful here (unlike in other of her narratives) to omit any important peasant characters from the story. In fact, the totality of the plot suggests that she is actually arguing the contrary and supporting

¹³ Edith Toegel, *Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach: Leben und Werk*, 67.

an enlightened Austrian aristocracy, whom she tries to chastise by contrast with the foolish Polish one. In her story, the positive political statements about the peasantry are presented initially only by Dembowski, then gradually also adopted by Rosenzweig—they are not widespread in Galicia. In the last resort, she postulates that a new kind of aristocratic leadership must be asserted in order to construct a new Polish community that would help the lower classes and avoid a new peasants' uprising. In so doing, she seems to hint that only such a Polish socially unified community that declares a common cause across traditional political lines would be able to justify its claim for independence. The reader is thus bound to find less than a full affirmation of the Polish peasants' cause in her critique of mainly a truly ineffectual upper class. But she does argue that a more coherent future is more likely to be found in Polish/Galician culture rather than in its politics, run from abroad and geared at a vague future.

Ebner-Eschenbach's argument for a unified Galicia in "Kreisphysikus" connects her belief that religion and shared ideals help create a nation. Although she does not provide any characters or events in the story to exemplify any specific religious institutions, the author clearly believes that all religions and people must connect in a true (Judeo-)Christian vision of the world to make a future. To prove this case, she idealized the main historical character, Edward Dembowski, and introduced his counterpart, the title figure of the half-Jew, Rosenzweig, as entering into a contract between religions for the greater good of all. To make her point another way, the reader meets among the Polish aristocrats a group of devoted Catholics, whose beliefs are used, unfortunately, to promote and fight for the Polish cause as they associate Poland and Catholicism with

themselves as good Polish Catholics. For this reason, Rosenzweig remains a stranger among them, treated as a Jew, even when he claims allegiance to the new idea of Poland—they cannot dissociate their religion from their politics.

Significantly, the only character among the politically active who affirms in this “Jew” a Samaritan and a good Christian, is Dembowski, the young philosopher and idealist. Speaking to the nobles gathered in Countess Aniela’s salon, Dembowski contrasts the good deeds done by Rosenzweig to the traditional actions of the Polish:

“So hat ein Jude getan,” wandte der Redner sich an die Gesellschaft, “aus freiem Willen für einen Andersgläubigen, und was haben wir Andersgläubigen jemals aus freiem Willen getan? Leset eure Geschichte und fragt euch selbst, ob ein Jude die Tage herbeiwünschen *kann*, in denen in Polen wieder Polen herrschen?” (“Kreisphysikus” 75)

“Thus did a Jew,” the speaker addressed his audience, “out of his own free will, for those of a different faith, and what have we ever done out of our own free will, we of the other faith? Read your history and ask yourselves whether a Jew *can* wish back into existence the days in which Poles rule Poland again?”

This passage opens a specific question about the legitimacy of Polish history and most likely also about Polish national consciousness, since Jews had generally been excluded from the various visions about the future of the Polish nation. Clearly, Ebner-Eschenbach suggested a different solution in presenting the visionary Dembowski and his “Evangelium der Gleichberechtigung” [Gospel of equal rights] (86). She is not denying the social purpose of religion. The emissary whose mission is to incorporate peasants into the fight for the independence of the Polish state emerges in the story almost as a priest-like figure, and he is perceived by Rosenzweig as an apostle.

Interestingly, this particular passage remains a part of Polish patriotic brochures published around 1843, preparing the nation for a revolution. Moriz Ritter von Ostrow in his *Bauernkrieg von Jahre 1846* describes one such publication, *Von den Lebenwahrheiten des polnischen Volkes*, as “ein Kunstwerk – in Rembrandt’scher Manier!” [a masterpiece – in Rembrandt manner], and he quotes a following passage:

Das Wort des Volkes, welches die Massen mit sich reitzen soll, und das Jedermann zu verkunden vermag, ist einfach und klar. Jedermann kann zum Apostel werden; es ist dazu keine tiefe Gelehrsamkeit erforderlich. . . . Und wer könnte mit verschränkten Armen dastehen, wenn er z. B. den Apostel der Freiheit folgende Worte vortragen hört: “Im Augenblicke ist das ganze alte Polen nach allen seinen Richtungen im blutigen Kampfe mit den Deutschen und Moskowiten, damit wir nicht unter fremder Botmasigkeit stehen und damit in neu aufgelebten Polen Jeder frei und glücklich lebe. Darum sollen von jetzt an alle Bruder unter einander sein, Alle einander gleich, damit alle gemeinschaftlich den Feind angreifen, nicht aber die Edelleute allein. . . . Unabhängigkeit, Gleichheit, erbeigenthümlicher Grund für das Volk!”¹⁴

The word of the people, which should excite the masses and which everyone tries to proclaim, is clear and easy. Everyone could become an apostle; for that no one needs a deep education . . . And who could stand there with spread arms, for instance, when he hears the words of the apostle of freedom: “In this moment, the whole old Poland is in all directions engaged in a bloody fight against the Germans and Muscovites, so that we are not standing under and so that in a newly created Poland everyone is free and leaves happily. Therefore, from now on, all brothers should live together, all equal, so that all can attack the enemy, not only the noblemen . . . Independency, Equality, land for the people!

In “Kreisphysikus” Dembowski’s potential power as a spiritual leader as well as a political one thus changes the weight of the relation between church and a possible Polish state, as best exemplified in the narrative by the episode of the Uprising.

As noted above, this episode starts with a religious procession, with the apostle of political freedom surrounded by priests who carry religious emblems. Regardless of this

¹⁴ Moriz Ritter von Ostrow, *Der Bauernkrieg vom Jahre 1846 in der österreichischen Provinz Galizien*, 50.

manifestation of Catholicism, which most likely supported Dembowski's attempt to involve peasants in his cause, Rosenzweig seems to agree with Dembowski's vision of a socially unified society with equal rights:

Es gibt nur einen Herrn, den König der Himmel und der Welten, und nur ein Menschevolk gleichgeborener Brüder. Der sich Herrschaft anmaßt über seine Brüder, säet und erntet Unheil, die Seele des Knechtenden, wie des Geknechteten verdirbt. (108)

There is only one Lord, the King of heaven and earth, and only one nation of equally born brothers. Whoever usurps power over his brothers sows and reaps calamity, and spoils the souls of those being enslaved, as well as those already slaves.

This scriptural tone emphasizes a commonality of religions rather than their divisive dogmas, a vision just as utopian in its way as Ebner-Eschenbach's political one.

To be sure, in this particular story, the author avoids presenting any specific religious institutions existing in Galicia, preferring to identify her Galicia with religious sentiment rather than an organized religion. In so doing, the readers' attention is focused on her ideal of religion and politics alike, where all people, despite their origins, are unified and equal. This corresponds to Ebner-Eschenbach's vision of Poland's independence, which requires a new Polish society, not only socially unified but also religiously tolerant.

Interestingly, her statement also corresponds to the program presented by the progressive Polish intelligentsia at this time. For instance, in the 1820s, Joachim Lelewel, a respected historian and Polish leader, was speaking of Poles and Jews as "brothers walking hand in hand" towards a common future, and in 1848 in Galicia, Rabbi Dov Beer Meisels of Kraków openly demanded from Galician Jews support for Polish political

demands. Regardless of later opinions (especially in the late nineteenth century) voiced by some Polish leaders¹⁵ against Jews as foes of the national cause, many others postulated the same as the fictional Dembowski's Christian vision of the world: "Anti-Semitism is a great sin—it contradicts the teaching of Christ, because it's cruel, inhuman, and arouses low instincts," as stated by Count Tarnowski in 1893.¹⁶

Ebner-Eschenbach was thus in tune with many regional voices, no matter how utopian they may seem today. She articulates the Polish cause around Galician cultural and social norms, knowing however this would not be achievable in the present political climate.

Peasants' Uprising of 1846 revisited: "Jakob Szela" (1883)

In her story "Der Kreisphysikus" (1883), Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach portrays one critical moment in the life of a small Galician community—the peasants' insurrection of 1846—concentrating on two main characters, Rosenzweig and Dembowski, rather than on the events of the *Jacquerie*. In another story, "Jakob Szela" (1883), she returns to Galicia of 1846 and describes the outbreak of the revolution itself under the legendary leadership of the "Bauernkönig" Szela. Ebner-Eschenbach once more combines the historic events of the planned Polish Uprising against the Austrian regime in Galicia with

¹⁵ Unfortunately, one of the leaders was the Priest Stojałowski, the most popular among the peasantry. His antagonism is described by Simon Dubnov in *History of the Jews*: "Stojałowski was a fanatic of the medieval type, and the more dangerous because he resorted to any and all means of demagoguery to attract the poor masses. The peasants regarded him as their defender against the despotism of the magnate-landowners. But the cunning priest followed the customary strategy of the Christian Socialists, and he steered the discontent of the people against the Jews."

¹⁶ Cited in Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of the Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848-1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP) 115.

the legend of Jakob Szela, a loyal servant to the Austrian Empire. As in “Kreisphysikus,” Ebner-Eschenbach presents her idea of what could be an ideal multiethnic state, but the notion of the Habsburg Empire as a unifying and harmonic *Vielvölkerstaat* does not seem to be fulfilled when this event is described from inside the natural Polish communities.

While in “Kreisphysikus” she left out any important peasant characters, in “Jakob Szela” Ebner-Eschenbach creates a fuller picture of the peasants and their lives under the Austrian government and the direct but often questionable protection of the Polish nobility. Ebner-Eschenbach’s story line also presents a group of noble Poles who are divided into two camps: the Habsburg loyalists and the true Polish patriots of the sort we have already met in “Kreisphysikus.” Thus, she focuses on the sharp contrasts between the peasants and the Polish upper classes as main motives within the story and as the main reason for the failure of the fight for Polish independence.

In 1846, as we have seen, the Poles had planned a national revolution, a fight for a sovereign and independent Polish state. The Uprising, thought out by a group of young, educated nobles, raised an idealistic hope of incorporating the lower classes into the fight for freedom and independence from all the unjust powers. The idea, however, of unifying the entire Polish nation and overcoming traditional class divisions was more vision than reality, since the peasants, oppressed and misused, were full of hatred and ready for revenge against the landowners (“Rache für mehr als sechshundertjährige Bedrückung,”

17). As Ebner-Eschenbach describes the situation:

So schlecht es denen [den Bauern] jedoch erging, von ihren Großeltern konnten sie hören, daß die jetzige Zeit Gold war im Vergleich zur früheren, welche die Metapher von dem an Pflug gespannten Bauer zur buchstäblichen Wahrheit

gemacht hatte, und in welcher es den Edelmann keinen Kreuzer kostete, wenn er einen seiner Untertanen – und nur fünfzehn polnische Gulden, wenn er den seines Nachbarn erschlug. (“Jakob Szela” 6)

They [the peasants] fared badly, yet they could hear from their grandparents that the here and now was golden compared to the earlier times, which made the metaphor of the peasant tied to the plow a literal reality; compared to times when the nobleman did not have to pay a kreutzer if he beat his own subject to death, and only fifteen Polish guilder if he beat his neighbor’s subject to death.

In the story line, Ebner-Eschenbach follows the main character, the peasant Jakob Szela, presenting him as a true servant of the Empire, devoted to the *Kaiser*. Szela takes over the leadership of the peasants, who follow him in the fight for their freedom against Polish landowners. Ebner-Eschenbach’s account is historically accurate. Scholarly works confirm that the Empire used the poorest Galicians to prevent the Polish revolution and reestablishing of a Polish state.¹⁷

In this story, Jakob Szela leads the masses to a brutal and bloody massacre, but they kill only those aristocrats who manifest their devotion to Poland and to the lost kingdom. Therefore, as Ebner-Eschenbach sees it, the planned Polish revolution eventually degenerated into the peasants’ revenge against the aristocratic Poles whose fathers had never acknowledged the peasants’ human rights.

In the story as in history, then, the peasants do not identify themselves as part of the Polish nation, but as a different political force. They call themselves “Austriaci”¹⁸ and true servants of the *Kaiser*—as Szela states: “Der Feind des Kaisers ist auch mein Feind”

¹⁷ See, for instance, Adam Zamoyski, *The Polish Way: A Thousand-Year History of the Poles and Their Culture* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1994).

¹⁸ Interestingly, already in the naming the reader has to deal with an curious code switching—the peasants not being Polish, call themselves “Austriaci,” which points to their connection to the Polish language as the word means “Austrians” in the Polish language.

(11) [The enemy of my Emperor is also my enemy]. Furthermore, the peasants do not see the Austrians as their immediate foes. Instead, the oppression and serfdom they experienced under the Polish landowners created a gap not to be bridged with the ideas of future personal and the nation's freedom:

Er [one of the Polish nobles] begrüßte sie als Bürger eines neuen Reiches, in dem es keine Robot, kein Salz- und Tabaksmonopol geben werde, und forderte sie auf, unter der Führung des jungen Grafen nach Tarnow zu ziehen, um dort die österreichische Obrigkeit abzutun und eine polnische einzusetzen. Eine Rede, welche die Schlachzizen zu dem stets erneuten Rufe: "Vivat Polonia!" begeisterte, war mit vielen schönen Worten von Freiheit und Vaterslandliebe verziert, und er trug sie mit Feuer vor. Aber sie zündete doch nur bei denen, die ohnehin schon brannten; auf die Bauer machte sie keinen anderen Eindruck als den der Überraschung. (25)

He [one of the Polish nobles] greeted them as citizens of a new state, where there would be no monopoly of *robot* [forced labor], salt or tobacco, and requested that, under the leadership of the young count, they move to Tarnów to depose the Austrian government and establish a Polish one there. This speech, which inspired the Polish noblemen to shout "Vivat Polonia!," was embellished with many beautiful words about freedom and love of country, and he [the speaker] carried on with fire. But the fire was catching only in those who were already burning; it made no other impression on the peasants than surprise.

Once more, Ebner-Eschenbach presents the utopian vision of a possible future of the Polish state as postulated by the aristocracy and gentry and shows a clear contrast of this idea with an equal myth of Austrian justice that at least looks forward and the reality.

What the aristocrats achieved was utterly ineffectual; they offered manifestations of Polishness without any meaning for the peasants, who preferred legal rights over vague patriotism. However, the Polish aristocrats seemed untrustworthy to the peasants:

Schloß Gumnisk zu einem Vereinigungspunkte für Anhänger, Agenten und Emissäre der Propaganda aus allen Ecken und Enden Westgaliziens machte. ... Die jüngeren Grafen ... sangen: "Jeszcze Polska", und freuten sich in ihrer kindlichen Weise auf den baldigen Ausbruch der Revolution. (16)

The Guminisk palace became one of the meeting places for the supporters, agents, and emissaries of propaganda from all corners of West Galicia... The younger counts sang “Jeszcze Polska,”¹⁹ and in their childish way were excited about the coming outbreak of the revolution.

From these peasants’ point of view, even those aristocrats who believed in a new, more liberal Poland, were “children,” who simply did not understand the force of history.

In fact, the revolutionary plan offered by these vague aristocrats shocks the peasants, as they are expected to be the main force in the many fights and battles.

Kaisertreu and afraid of the coming future, they turn away from this version of Polish dominance to prepare and plan their own revenge against the Polish Panowies [Lords/Sirs] instead:

Die Edelleute, erzählte man sich, wollen ihre Bauern zum Kampf gegen die Regierung aufstacheln und werden von den Bauern erschlagen, und ihre Häuser, ihre Kastelle werden ausgeplündert und in Brand gesteckt. (19)

The noblemen, it was said, want to spur their peasants to fight against the government, but they are slayed by the peasants, and their houses and castles plundered and burned.

In this particular story, however, Ebner-Eschenbach depicts a more complex behavior of the Poles than in “Der Kreisphysikus.” Unlike in the earlier story, where all Poles were portrayed as united in the notion of an independent Polish state, even landowners in “Jakob Szela” are divided into two groups, one highly patriotic and devoted to the Polish Cause, the other seeking its wealth through cooperation with the Empire. In so doing, she shows how easy it was for the Habsburgs to win what clearly was a propaganda war.

¹⁹ Unofficial title and first line of the Polish patriotic song, which became the national anthem.

Austro-Hungary alone offered a vision of an Empire that unites in peace all nations and social classes—but a vision that could itself be a myth.

Despite her clear-sighted assessment of a certain Polish aristocratic class, Ebner-Eschenbach's story is not a sharp critique of the Polish aristocrats and their blind devotion to the Polish state. When she presents the outcome of the peasants' *Jacquerie*, Eschenbach's message lies far from judging the upper class Poles and their dreams of independence. Neither does she judge the peasants and their frustration. Interestingly, Ebner-Eschenbach includes one more character to the story to emphasize the Empire's propaganda success. Never visible, the Emperor nonetheless plays a significant role for the analysis of "Jakob Szela." Maria Kłańska in *Problemfeld Galizien in deutschsprachiger Prosa 1846-1914*, suggests that "die Autorin [Ebner-Eschenbach] faßt seine [Szela's] Verbannung als eine grelle Undankbarkeit der österreichischen Regierung auf."²⁰

Kłańska, however, does not pursue the importance of including the Emperor in the story line of "Jakob Szela." With this inclusion, Ebner-Eschenbach begins to criticize not only the peasants for their brutal revenge and the blindness of the Polish aristocracy but also the highest figure in the Habsburg Monarchy, the Emperor, who allows the peasants to be used that way. Significantly, the Austrian female aristocratic writer casts the *Kaiser* himself as a threat to the harmonious coexistence of people in Galicia. Because of that carefully tended Habsburg publicity, that Emperor shares the peasants' responsibility for the massacre of the Poles as well as for keeping the lowest class in their

²⁰ Kłańska, *Galizien*, 54.

place. As the story ends, the supposedly benevolent *Kaiser* does not improve their circumstances as promised before the Uprising. In the last scenes of the story, Szela, forgotten by the *Kaiser*, is banned and must move to Bukovina, leaving his whole household and goods. This is the ultimate betrayal of the Empire, which confirms Ebner-Eschenbach's vision of the region's future as a Habsburg territory. She pleads for the notion of a multiethnic state under Habsburg rule in which all the class differences and divisions would end in harmony. Yet she is well aware of the ethnic politics that allowed the central administration to capitalize on the local histories they purportedly were trying to support.

In this portrayal, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach once more displays considerable acumen about Galicia and the main events shaping the region's history within the Habsburg context. In "Jakob Szela," she depicts the main forces coexisting in Galicia and how the images of history of the proper social classes and representations of political fractions and of Polish and Austrian nations around the critical year of 1846.

Ebner-Eschenbach's historical references are unmistakable. The events of 1846—the failure of the Kraków Uprising against the Austrian authorities and the peasants' revolution against the Polish landowners—had indeed caused a crisis among the Polish patriots and evoked a deep hatred among intellectuals towards everything Austrian and connected to the Habsburg Empire. This year was particularly critical for the region of Kraków, the center of Polish culture and history, as Kraków was incorporated into Austria, and as the political chaos led to a future suppression of one vision of Polish culture. As one intellectual expressed it:

Nie, nie mogło nas dotknąć okropniejsze nieszczęście! Kraków padł w ręce przebrzydłych Austriaków! O, lepiej by nam było, gdyby ów smok siedmiogłowy, który legł pod mieczem Kraka przed tysiącem lat, zmartwychpowstał i pożerał nas żywcem; lepiej by nam było, gdyby zapadło się miasto starożytne, ostawiwszy po sobie wiekie romantyczne jezioro.²¹

No, no, we couldn't face a bigger disaster! Kraków fell into the hands of disgusted Austrians! Oh, it would be better for us, if the dragon with seven heads, which died from Krak's sword a thousand years ago, would be resurrected and eat us alive; it would be better for us, if this ancient city would sink into the ground, to be covered by a huge romantic lake.

The class conflicts that Ebner-Eschenbach traces in her stories explain why Galicia gradually ceased to add a new tone to a vision of a multiethnic Poland—why the optimism of someone like Jan Lam (whose views will be presented in the next chapter of this study) was lost to history. Indeed, since the incorporation of Kraków into Austria, both the city and the whole region of Galicia received hard and punishing treatment in the form of increased taxes and prices, which choked commerce and resulted in poverty.

Still, although Polish patriots accused the Austrian government of causing the peasants' uprising, they never turned away from the *Kaiser*.²² Instead, they clearly presented their stand on the Austrian government in 1848 as a loyal opposition: criticizing Metternich's absolutist *regime*, as exemplified in *List szlachcica polskiego o rzezi galicyjskiej do Księcia Metternicha* by Aleksander Wielopolski, which was originally published in French under the title *Lettre d'un gentilhomme polonais sur les massacres de Galicie adressee au Prince Metternich* [Letter of a Polish noblemen about

²¹ B. Trentowski, cited in Krzysztof Karol Daszyk, "Zanim Franciszek Józef stał się naszym dobrym cesarzem" [Before Francis Joseph Became Our Good Emperor], *Galicja i jej dziedzictwo* (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1999), 123.

²² The nobles' plea "We stand beside Thee" from 1867 reflects their support of the *Kaiser*, which was ultimately rewarded by the *Ausgleich*.

the Galician massacre addressed to Prince Metternich] on 15 April 1846.²³ In this letter, Wielopolski presented an almost idyllic picture of rural Polish Commonwealth from before the partition where lords and peasants follow laws of Christian morality, and then, he accused the Austrian government, especially Metternich leaving out the *Kaiser*, of destroying the peaceful relationship between these two social classes.

Interestingly, views similar to Wielopolski's are presented by Ebner-Eschenbach in her story. Her Kaiser is initially depicted as representing justice and high authority, yet is later criticized as being ungrateful and for punishing those who trusted him and his judgments. It is only Ebner-Eschenbach who has the courage to openly critique the benevolent Kaiser. And although she still admits the great values that the monarch possesses, she ignores the Austrian propaganda, which used Christian iconography to propagate the vision of Kaiser as a patron saint.

Mnogie ludy monarchii austrowęgierskiej, jakkolwiek różnią się między sobą strojem, zwyczajami, językiem, a w części nawet i wyznaniem religijnym, to jednak jednoczą je razem pod opiekuńczym berłem wspaniałomyślnego monarchy jednakowe prawa i jednakowe swobody, które zapewniają każdemu wolność zachowywania swoich zwyczajów narodowych, używania i kształcenia swojego języka narodowego i wyznawanie jawne swojej religii.²⁴

Many nations of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, although they differ from each other in clothes, habits, language, and partially even religion, are all united under the tutelary scepter of a magnanimous monarch in equal laws and liberties, which give everybody freedom to preserve national customs, usage and education in a national language and open affirmation of faith.

²³ [Wielopolski, A.], "List szlachcica polskiego o rzezi galicyjskiej do Księcia Metternicha," cited in: Kieniewicz, ed., *Rewolucja Polska 1846 roku. Wybor źródeł* (Wrocław: UAM 1950), 213. In this study, I also used the German version of *Lettre* entitled *Briefe eines polnischen Edelmannes an einen deutschen Publicisten über die jüngsten Ereignisse in Polen und die hauptsächlich bisher nur vom deutschen Standpunkte betrachtete polnische Frage* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1846).

²⁴ *Trzecia książka do czytania dla szkół ludowych*, 1881.

In a similar vein, already after the fall of the Monarchy, Joseph Roth (1894-1939) resurrects this Kaiser, the Giver of justice and blessings,²⁵ in such texts as *Büste des Kaisers*, *Kapuzinergruft*. And, remembering that in the Habsburg Monarchy, not progress but well being, not circular but linear time were of highest value, contemporary readers and people still being affected by the nineteenth century Austrianess can explain the phenomenon of the new found sentiment and longing for the “gute alte Zeiten” of the Donaumonarchie.

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach was not alone in her willingness to consider the Galician question. A Polish writer, Jan Lam, also took up the cause, as I shall discuss in the following chapter.

²⁵ Joseph Roth, “Die Büste des Kaisers,” *Joseph Roth Werke: Romane und Erzählungen* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch) 655-676.

Chapter 5

Jan Lam and Galician society

In this part of my study, I will present texts by Polish author, Jan Lam (1838-1886),¹ who in his literary work not only acknowledges the existence of a distinct Polish “imagined community” in Galicia but also, as a Pole living in Galicia, exposes and criticizes a Russian affiliated option for the future of a Polish nation without an independent state, and even a Panslavic compromise, which would have unified the Poles with the Ruthenian population of Galicia. He is resolutely in favor of a Galicia that is a part of Western Europe.

To make the case for his preference, I will concentrate on Lam’s opinions about the possible creation of an autonomous Polish Galicia within the Habsburg Empire, as in

¹ Although extremely popular in the nineteenth century (especially in Galicia), Jan Lam lost his place in the Polish literary canon during the twentieth century. There are no reference books exclusively on Jan Lam; however, his name is mentioned in Polish literature histories, for instance in Miłosz’ *The History of Polish Literature*.

his novel *Wielki Świat Capowic* [The High Society of Tsapowice] (1869).² In the subsequent part of this chapter, after introducing the history of the Russian partition and the events of the Polish Uprising of 1863 in Kongresówka (the Russian part of Poland) and Galicia that form the background of Lam's literary work, I will argue that in two other of his texts, *Pan Komisarz Wojenny* [The Commissar of War] (1863) and *Koroniarcz w Galicji* [Crown Pole in Galicia]³ (1868-69), Lam clearly expresses his incipient critique of Russia and its despotic system.

Specifically, he describes the Russophile tendencies among the Galician Ruthenians, which are already presented in the Lam text considered first. The two later texts are also set in Galicia, among Galicians, which once more underscores Lam's affirmation of the Polish imagined community and his views on the future of a Polish state with Galicia as its historical core. The historical background to his argument is critical to the interpretation of Lam's texts and their possible meanings for his nineteenth century audience. Yet European literary historians in the twentieth century, especially Eastern European scholars, have largely overlooked this particular version of the Poles and their fight for an independent nation-state in the nineteenth century, especially because of communism and the "requirements" of setting the East Bloc apart from Europe. Therefore, my presentation of the January Uprising is my personal attempt to interpret Lam's work objectively, in light of period norms, not subsequent eras. As we

² Jan Lam, "Wielki Świat Capowic," *Dzieła Literackie* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1956) 47-161. Further references to this text will be given in parentheses in the main text.

³ This title is rather difficult to translate into English. *Koroniarcz* was the colloquial name for all the Poles living in the Russian partition, known as *Kongresówka* or the *Korona* [Crown Poland].

will see, ethnic Poles, Ruthenians, and Russians were arguing about Galicia versus Ukraine as a political entity.

Lam in the Galician Public Eye

Jan Lam, one of the most famous and controversial of Lwów's⁴ journalists and writers of his age, addresses a number of the same social and political issues regarding Galicia and the Polish community in Galicia that we have already seen in the works by Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach. His novels, feuilletons, and chronicles, generally written in a satirical style, describe the socio-political, cultural and daily life of the Austrian provinces of Galicia and Lodomeria.⁵

Although himself a descendant of a German family and son of an Austrian bureaucrat, Lam casts himself in his writings and in biographical works as a truly motivated Polish patriot, defending his origins and his beliefs:

Niemieccy przodkowie moi nie byli ani brandenburskimi knechtami, ani posiepakami pomorskimi i nazywali się sami z dumą: *edele, franke liude*. Urodzony jednakowoż w Polsce, między Polakami, musiałbym chyba zostać renegatem, gdybym chciał moją narodowość stosować do mojej genealogii.⁶

⁴ Throughout my text, I decided to use the name "Lwów" for the capital of Galicia and Lodomeria, although the official name in this time period was German *Lemberg*, and the current official name is *Lviv*. My decision is justified by my choice of analyzed texts and its author, Jan Lam, who refers to that city as Lwów. That would also support my argument that Galicia was the core of Polishness and the Polish imagined community during the time of Partitions.

⁵ There is no single Lam biography or secondary source dealing exclusively with his works. The best discussions of Lam's texts were published during his life time in major Polish newspapers (in both Galicia and Kongresówka) and after his death in 1886 two Polish researchers pursued research on his works: Julian Krzyżanowski before WWII, and later Stanisław Frybes in the 1950s.

⁶ Stanisław Frybes, "Wstęp" in Jan Lam, *Dzieła Literackie Jana Lama* (Warszawa: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1956) 13. Unfortunately, only Lam's *Wielki Świat Capowic* was translated into German under the title *Große Welt Tsapowitz*. All other of his texts exist only in Polish and have never been translated into English.

My German descendants were neither underlings of Brandenburg nor Pomeranian assassins, and they proudly called themselves: *edele, franke liude*. I was born in Poland, among Poles, and I would probably become a renegade, should my nationality depend on genealogy.

Unfortunately, today, Lam's prose and his importance as a spokesperson for Polish identity has been largely forgotten by historians and literary scholars. Already in 1938, Julian Krzyżanowski, one of the most respected Polish literary critics, wrote in the preface to the jubilee edition of Lam's works:

. . . twórczość Lama należy do dziedziny zjawisk literackich w Polsce dzisiejszej niedocenionych, bo po prostu nieznanach, co tym bardziej dziwić musi, że ten brak zainteresowania dla dzieł jednego z naszych najlepszych humorystów pozostaje w rażącej dysproporcji z popularnością, której twórca "Wielkiego Świata Capowic" niegdyś zażywał, a jedynym śladem są dzisiaj szablonowe na ogół uwagi o nim na kartach naszych zarysów historii literatury. (V)⁷

. . . Lam's production belongs to the domain of literary phenomena which is in contemporary Poland underestimated simply because it is unknown. One should wonder that this lack of interest for works of our best humorist is in huge disproportion to the popularity that the author of *Wielki Świat Capowic* once had, and the only traces of him nowadays are repeated remarks on pages of our literary histories.

Not only is Lam's literary production forgotten, but the only sources for his bibliographical data are still the necrologies published in all major Polish-language newspapers immediately following his death in 1886. Specifically, the most significant text written by Lam's brother, Henryk, appeared in *Gazeta Lwowska* on 3 August 1886 (Nr 175).⁸

⁷ Julian Krzyżanowski, "Jan Lam," in Jan Lam, *Pisma Jana Lama* (Kraków: Księgarnia Wydawnicza Trzaski, Everta i Michalskiego, 1938) V.

⁸ Julian Krzyżanowski, "Jan Lam": VI-XI. Krzyżanowski explains that originally this article was signed with initials H.L., the full name, however, is revealed in a re-print of this text in *Dziennik Polski* in 1886.

Lam's most valuable asset, emphasized in all obituaries, is his humor and the use of satire. Not surprisingly, that satire is particularly situated in Galicia of his lifetime. This satire was by no means lacking in literary merit. Although satirical elements are included in canonical works by nineteenth century authors, for instance by Kraszewski, Balzac or Dickens, Lam is probably the only Polish language author in whose works satires play a more significant role than does a straightforward narration of events and characters. Usually, Lam uses an auctorial narration in his texts, which he enriches by adding many digressions that enhance his texts' cross-references to his literary predecessors such as Smollet, Stern or Fielding. Not only do specific elements such as the type of narration or humor connect the author to his literary musters; Lam himself also acknowledged his close connections to these literary traditions in many allusions in his novels. His text *Wedrówki Pana Macieja* [The Excursions of Mister Maciej] (1878), for instance, mixes Lam's own prose and a direct translation of Smollet's *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (Frybes, LXI)⁹:

Proszę sobie tedy wyobrazić moje zdziwienie, gdy onegdaj wpada mi przypadkiem do rąk książka, ozdobiona na tytułowej swojej karcie oczywistym fałszem, jakoby drukowana była w Londynie, w r. 1771, a więc sto siedem lat temu. . . . Ale z przykrością zmuszony jestem skonstatować, że w tej liczbie znajduje się także prawie dosłowny przekład powyższych czterech arkuszy mojej pracy literackiej i to prawdziwy przekład, a nie przeróbka, bo nie można przecież przeróbką nazwać tego, że ktoś nazwiska polskie i litewskie przetłumaczy na angielskie czy szkockie!

Please just imagine my surprise when at once I came across a book decorated on the front page with an obvious forgery stating that it had been printed in London in 1771, one hundred and seven years ago. . . . But I had to admit sadly that in the

⁹ Stanisław Frybes, "Wstęp," in Jan Lam, *Pan Komisarz Wojenny, Koroniarz w Galicji* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1960) LXI.

number [of such books] is also almost literal translation of four sheets of my literary work and it is a true translation, not an adaptation. You cannot call something an adaptation when someone would merely translate Polish and Lithuanian into English and Scottish last names.

Widely read as perhaps most evident in the popular press's response to sharp criticism and polemical debates, Lam was an important influence on his contemporaries. In 1956, Stanisław Frybes,¹⁰ a literary critic evaluating the significance of Lam's prose, seeks an explanation for Lam's reception in a negative bias from the critics close to a group of Polish contemporaneous historians and publicists called the *Stańczycy* [The Stańczyk Group].¹¹ Extremely conservative in their political views, subsequent to Lam's death, *Stańczycy* succeeded in actively suppressing the prints of his works until the 1920s. Stanisław Koźmian (1811-1885), a co-author of *Teka Stańczyka* and the director of Kraków's theater, summarized the impact of Lam's writings as follows:

Ojcem tej szkoły [satyrycznej] jest Leszek Borkowski, autor głośniejszego kiedyś *Parafiańszczyzny*, najwybitniejszym jej uczniem, dziś kapłanem jest Jan Lam, słynny autor *Kronik* w "Dzienniku Polskim". Lam w ostatnich kilkunastu latach życia galicyjskiego był niewątpliwie najdowcipniejszym i najpłodniejszym humorystą. (...) Były w Lamie żywioły prawdziwego i niepospolitego humorysty; lecz jak tyłu innych i jego nie umiano tutaj należycie zużytkować. Z pociągu i wrodzonego dowcipu, z jakiegoś nieokreślonego poczucia umysłowego raczej niż z wychowania i wykształcenia chętniej byłby niezawodnie Lam poszedł wprost w przeciwnym kierunku jak tym, którym idąc, rzucał się na wszystko, co dodatnie i mające w tutejszym społeczeństwie wartość. (...) Najbezwzględniejszy brak wszelkiej wiary we wszystko znacznie osłabia doniosłość i obniża poziom jego satyry. Cynizm nie zawsze dobrego smaku i pewien kawiarniany zapach

¹⁰ Although Frybes claims in 1956 that Lam's prose is well known to a Polish reader (which is definitely not the case), the opposite can be said about the knowledge of Lam's texts for the later post-WWII generation. The reason Lam is forgotten in the Polish literary history today could be his anti-Russian and nationalistic opinion, which was obviously banned in communist Poland.

¹¹ *Stańczycy* was a group of conservative politicians and historians, which came to life after the January Uprising of 1863. This organization postulated a complete Polish dependency on the Habsburg Empire and, with time, changed their goal to a so-called tri-loyalist postulate that is to collaboration with all three of the partition Powers: Russia, Prussia, and Austria. In my further research, I will examine Lam's bias towards this political option as well as the group's influence on Galician society, especially aristocracy and gentry.

przygłuszają niezły zakrój literacki. Człowiek obdarzony takimi zdolnościami i wciąż piórem czynny musiał wywrzeć wpływ na społeczeństwo, które wyjątkowo czytało go z chciwością, i musiał stworzyć cały zastęp niepocieszonych naśladowców; humorystyczny paszkwil, który niemałe ma tu znaczenie, jemu zawdzięcza: znaczenie zgubne, bo pozbawione wszelkiej zacności.¹²

The father of this [satirical] school is Leszek Borkowski, the author of the once famous *Parafianszczyzna*. Its outstanding student, however, and nowadays its high priest, is Jan Lam, the well-known author of the *Chronicles* appearing in "Dziennik Polski." In the last decades of Galician life, Lam was without a doubt our funniest and most fertile humorist. In Lam were the passions of a true, unusual satirist and humorist; but like many others, he could not be used properly. Starting from passion and a natural sense of humor, from an undefined mind rather than education and up bringing, Lam would most likely have developed in an opposite direction to this starting point. He attacked everything that is positive and valuable in this society. ... His most cruel lack of belief in everything lowers the importance and meaning of his satire. Cynicism of not always good taste and a certain café-like odor ultimately stifles a not-insignificant literary talent. A man given such talents, still active with his pen, had to have an influence on the society, which read him exceptionally eagerly, and he also had to create an entire troop of inconsolable imitators. Nonetheless, libelous humor, quite significant at the time, owes him a debt of gratitude for the damning importance he brought to it --damning because it lacks all honesty.

In other words, Koźmian sees Lam's literary and popular role as broad and significant for a cross-section of Polish society.

Despite the *Stańcacy's* criticism, Lam's novels and feuilletons found a large readership, mainly among Galicians, although historical sources such as newspapers suggest that his popularity reached *Kongresówka*, the Russian part of Poland. Despite Lam's Galician focus, his work influenced other Polish writers of the era such as Bolesław Prus (1845-1912), who is known as one of the foremost Polish authors to this day. Prus, who spent his life in Warsaw under the Russian occupation, knew Lam's works well and praised his style and humor.

¹² Stanisław Koźmian, *Pisma polityczne* (Kraków: Czas, 1903) 149-151.

To emphasize once again the impact and importance of Lam, let us recall words of Lam's contemporary critic, Józef Treściak, who wrote that with Lam's death went quiet "the voice, to which one had become accustomed, which had become a kind of tribunal for all important issues and which, besides a few paradoxical opinions, was characterized by an implacable logic, fearless boldness, and matchless sense of humor" [głos, do którego się przyzwyczajono, który był w swoim rodzaju trybunałem, odzywał się we wszystkich ważniejszych sprawach i który, pominąwszy nieliczne paradoksalne poglądy, odznaczał się nieubłaganą logiką, nieustraszoną śmiałością i niezrównanym humorem].¹³

This political boldness is, in fact, straight forwarding recognizable from Lam's work.

Panna Emilia czyli Wielki Świat Capowic (1869)

One of the first great political novels in Polish, *Panna Emilia czyli Wielki Świat Capowic* (*Miss Emilia or The High Society of Tsapowice*, 1869),¹⁴ presents Lam's vision of Galicia and its society, and reveals how Lam used that view for political aims within the extended environment of Polish politics. The events of the novel occur in Tsapowice, a fictitious Galician town, in 1866, the year of the compromise between Austria and Hungary, when Agenor Gołuchowski became governor and started the campaign for Polish administration of the district. In ways sometimes as utopian as Ebner-

¹³ Józef Treściak, *Szkice literackie I* (Kraków: 1896) 261.

¹⁴ *Wielki Świat Capowic* was initially published under the title *Panna Emilia czyli Wielki Świat Capowic* in 1869.

Eschenbach's fictional Dembowski, Lam looks for a new Polish national culture in his own way, arguing for Galician Polish life in full acknowledgement of its political facts.

This particular novel was seen by many critics as Lam's highest achievement, and it indeed is. In 1905, Lam's contemporary writer, Stanisław Tarnowski, wrote:

Między nowszymi powieściami polskimi mało z pewnością tak udanych, a w rodzaju tak wesołym i humorystycznym ani jednej, jak ta *Panna Emilia*. Kto zna świat małych powiatowych miasteczek, kto pamięta dawne galicyjskie becyrki i dawnych urzędników administracyjnych, policyjnych i wszystkich innych, ten czyta małą tę książeczkę ze łzami – nie rozczulenia, ale śmiechu.¹⁵

Among newer Polish novels there are few so successful and none so humorous and funny as this *Panna Emilia*. Those who know the world of small district towns, who remember old Galician Bezirk and old administrative officials, police and all the others, will read this book with tears in their eyes – not being moved but laughing.

To supplement the narrative's main plot, Lam included large fragments of text that digress, in pamphlet form, to underscore how the general political situation has an effect on the individuals. These digressions encompass the Galician political situation, press polemics, and cultural life, and they build a consistent background for the narration. Because of these interpolations, Lam's attitudes about the political issues presented and discussed in the novel are clear. To draw his readers into the issues and his interpretation of them, the author uses the plural form of address to create the illusion of a community sharing origins and nationality: "Jesteśmy poczciwym narodem, zawsze prawie zadowolonym" [We are a nation of good-hearted people, almost always happy] (61). This may seem simply ironic at first, but he is appealing to a utopian future rather than a nebulous past, with a distinct perhaps purpose to his narrative.

¹⁵ Stanisław Tarnowski, *O literaturze polskiej XIX wieku* (Warszawa: PWN, 1977) 664-665.

Most importantly, the novel starts with an acknowledgement of the suppressed Polish nation as an amorphous entity, not necessarily a political one. Thus, Lam's protagonist is chosen carefully: a *k-k Beamter* (imperial-royal civil servant), Mister Precliczek, is the best example of a bureaucrat of the Habsburg Monarchy. While his job may be praiseworthy, Precliczek is nonetheless sharply criticized by the author for his loss of national identity and blind loyalty to his office:

Pan Precliczek, ..., twierdzi o sobie, że jest *ein biederer Deutsche*. Co do rzeczownika zgadzał się z nim cały powiat, co do przymiotnika zaś niektórzy byli innego zdania. Zresztą, pan Precliczek nie potrzebował bynajmniej legitymować się, do jakiej narodowości należy, bo wiadomo było powszechnie, że mówi tylko po niemiecku i trochę po czesku – tyle mianowicie, ile potrzeba zwykłemu śmiertelnikowi, ażeby nigdy nie mógł nauczyć się po polsku. (*Wielki Świat Capowic*, 57)¹⁶

Mr. Precliczek ... claims about himself that he is *ein biederer Deutsche*. The whole district agreed with him regarding the noun; regarding the adjective some had a different opinion. Besides, Mr. Precliczek did not need to prove his nationality; it was generally known that he spoke only German, and some Czech—only so much as a common mortal would need in order to never learn Polish.

Pan Precliczek był właściwie Czechem, ale Czech tego rodzaju jest zwykle jeszcze czystszy Niemcem niż każdy potomek Hermana w prostej linii. (77)

Mr. Precliczek was actually a Czech, but a Czech who is purer German than every immediate descendant of Hermann.

Initially *ein bieder Deutsche* [a self-satisfied German], Precliczek will gradually change his identity and attitude towards his situation and career. Dealing with another state employee, Johann von Safaranowycz, whose position and affection towards Precliczek's daughter were more than welcomed, Precliczek states in German: "denn ich bin

¹⁶ Jan Lam, "Wielki Świat Capowic," *Dzieła Literackie* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1956) 47-161. Further references to this text will be given in parentheses in the main text.

eigentlich ein Ruthene. . . Ich schwärme für die ruthenische Sprache und Literatur“

[because I'm actually Ruthenian. . . I adore the Ruthenian language and literature] (91).

After the nomination of a Pole, Agenor Gołuchowski, to the governorship of Galicia,

Precliczek underscores his perhaps-newfound devotion to Poland: “denn ich bin

eigentlich auch ein Pole!” [because I am actually also a Pole] (152), later to Galicia: “ich

bin eigentlich ein Galizianer” [I am actually a Galician] (157), until finally he comes to

the realization that he is “eigentlich ein Böhme, Vaclav Preclíček, aus Jung-Bunclau;

zivili Slovane!” [actually Bohemian, Vaclaw Preclíček, from Jung-Bunclau; zivili

Slovane] (160).

Lam's unmistakable and humorous portrayal of Precliczek is probably the best example of his witty literary style, careful observation, and political awareness:

Jest Achill w Iliadzie, jest Gotfred w Jerozolimie Tassa, ale w Pannie Emilii jest Pan Precliczek! Taki wielki, ze swoją imponirką na głowie, z aktami pod pachą i ze swoimi *Sauren im Magen*, że na grobie dawnej biurokracji stoi jak posąg Schlendrianu, hemoroidów i drobiazgowego a niedołęznego wietrzenia der Ubelgesinnten. A jak bohaterska Grecja musiała się skończyć, nim się zaczęły rhapsody Homera, tak musiało zniknąć rycerstwo w Europie, zanim w poezji pojawił się Gotfred i Rinaldo, tak epoka Bacha musiała “im Leben untergeh'n”, zanim mogła “unsterblich im Gesang leben”, wcielona w postać Pana Precliczka.¹⁷

There is Achilles in Iliad, Gotfred in Tasso's Jerusalem, and in Panna Emilia there is Mr. Precliczek! [He is] so huge, with the hat on his head, with documents under his arm, and with his *Sauren im Magen* [sour stomach], that he is standing on the grave of the old bureaucracy like the monument of *Schlandrian*, of hemorrhoids, and of the pedantic and yet inefficient scenting of the *Ubergesinnten*. And like the heroic Greece had to end before Homer's rhapsodies started, so the European knighthood had to disappear before Gotfred and Rinaldo appeared in poetry, so the era of Bach had to *im Leben untergeh'n* before it could *unsterblich im Gesang leben* through the creation of the figure of Mr. Precliczek.

¹⁷ Tarnowski, *Historia literatury polskiej XIX wieku*, 665.

The issue of nationality as a mutable and multiple construct is central to all of Lam's writings. According to him, national identity requires a certain pattern of behavior, a set of beliefs and values rather than a genealogy or ethnicity. In consequence, all of the novel's characters are described in these terms, as the potential intelligentsia of a nation, devoted to that vision of Polish culture and its non-existing state rather than to an ethnic identity in the narrow sense.

Thus the paradoxical appearance of the Precliczek family's politics is meant to model the era's issues for the Polish literate class, especially since the reader understands what that family may not: that in 1866, the entire political climate of Austria was changing, just as the "*k-k*" *Beamtentum* would legally become the "*k.u.k.*" bureaucracy split between Austria and Hungary, putting the Slavic cause in a different light. Thus Lam casts the family's father as a person whose identity is determined by his position within the state and its politics, rather than by nationality and origin. But Lam is not that naïve. That family has a second inheritance, which cannot be denied: the mother and the daughter are Polish, devotees of Polish history, literature and language:

Żaden Haserle nie był z Bolesławem Chrobrym przy wzięciu Kijowa, żaden nie zginął pod Warna, żaden nie zrywał sejmów, żaden nie służył za podstarościego u Radziwiłłów, Lubomirskich albo Rzewuskich.... Jest to tedy fakt, co do przyczyn nie wyjaśniony, ale zawsze fakt, że pani Precliczkowa, z domu Haserle, nazywała swojego męża "Szwabem", że umiała i rozmawiała zawsze tylko po polsku i po polsku wychowała swoją córkę. (58)

No one of Haserle was ever with Boleslaw Chrobry at the conquest of Kiev, none died at Varna, none broke the sejms [parliaments], and none served as a podstarosci [a Polish provincial office] by Radziwill, Lubomirski, or Rzewuski.... It is therefore a fact, without any explanation, but still a fact, that

Mrs. Precliczek née Haserle called her husband “you Swab,” and that she could speak only in Polish and raised her daughter the Polish way.

That Precliczek had access to such multiple identities, therefore, is cast as a mixed blessing for those more interested in a Polish heritage that does not have a political fiat, nor perhaps even a clear social one.

But here again, Lam stresses community rather than politics. Language, without doubt, plays the most privileged role in an individual’s process of belonging to and developing Polish identity. Lam’s book emphasizes the importance of the Polish language, its strength and dominance in Galician society. Through language every person expresses the most important facets of his or her political ideology. However, even these pages have an ironic undertone that points to the special situation of Galician multilingualism as a functional part of everyday lives:

Pan Capowicki, pan Papinkowski, pan Bykowski i wielu innych panów –ickich i –owskich każą zawsze swoim adwokatom do władz i sądów pisywać po niemiecku. Zadaje im się, że tak jak z Panem Bogiem najlepiej się człowiek rozmówi po łacinie, tak z urzędem i sądem najlepiej jest rozprawiać się po niemiecku. Wiele wody upłynie, nim się nauczymy żądać sprawiedliwości po polsku. Niektórzy Polacy galicyjscy dojdą do tej doskonałości dopiero wtedy, gdy Rada Państwa uchwali, a Najjaśniejszy Pan zatwierdzi ustawę, mocą której nakazany będzie każdemu surowo używanie tego języka, który najlepiej umie i rozumie. (135)

Mr. Capowicki, Mr. Papinkowski, Mr. Bykowski, and many other Misters–icki and –owski let their attorneys write to authorities and courts in German. They think that, just as people can communicate with Lord God best in Latin, it’s better to talk with offices and courts in German. It will be a long time until we learn to demand justice in Polish. Some Galician Poles will master this only when the *Staatsrat* will decree and his Highness will confirm a law, based on which every one will be sternly ordered to use this language he knows and understands best.

Therefore, the practical distinctions between the usage of the Polish and German languages seem to be clearly political. Whereas Polish is definitely a language spoken at home, the language of the community, German was associated with the Empire and with the foreign administration in Galicia. Like Ebner-Eschenbach, then, Lam represents the Polish language as a distinguishing element that separates his culture from the others living in Galicia. However, where she points to a kind of stable bilingualism in this situation, celebrating the traditions for each group in Galicia, Lam reveals the consequences of the Poles' celebration of and devotion to symbols of Polishness: portrayals of famous Polish heroes such as Kościuszko, books by Mickiewicz, Słowacki or Pol (as Preclicek stated "diese verfl... polnischen Bücher sind's an Allem schuld" [these damn Polish books are to blame for everything] (123), Polish songs, and even traditional clothes will always lead to destabilize the utopia of multiculturalism pictured by Ebner-Eschenbach.

Following his split fictional family thus allows Lam to take an ironic position vis-à-vis the purportedly Polish value system, but also to suggest that the insider's view, the view of a "typical" Pole, is one with German roots. His perspective displays for the reader the paradoxes of Polish mentality:

W Polsce mianowicie zachodzić może nieraz kolizja uczuć i obowiązków nader niebezpieczna dla świętej czci, którą powinniśmy mieć dla związków rodzinnych. Wprawdzie znakomity krytyk i panegirzysta dzieł Zygmunta Krasińskiego nazwał "rozkładczą doktryną" to powszechne u nas przekonanie, iż obowiązki względem ojczyzny idą przed obowiązkami rodzinnymi. ... "Rozkładczą" byłaby doktryna stawiająca rodzinę ponad ogół, ponad świętszy od związków krwi związek ducha i jego najszlachetniejszych dążeń. Dlatego też od żadnego polskiego dziecka nie można spodziewać się bezwzględnego uszanowania i

posłuszeństwa dla rodziców, których wyobrażenia zostają w zbyt jaskrawej sprzeczności z naszymi dogmatami narodowymi. (124)

In Poland, namely, sometimes there can occur a certain collision between feelings and duties, dangerous for the holy reverence, which we should hold for family relations. Although an author of panegyrics and a brilliant critic of works by Zygmunt Krasiński called this a “doctrine of decomposition/disintegration,” the conviction that one's duties towards the fatherland come before those towards the family is for us very common. Such a “degenerate doctrine” actually privileges the family, not setting the whole above the holy connection, stronger than blood, between the spirit and its noble endeavor. Therefore, no Polish child can be expected to absolutely respect and obey its parents, whose ideas contrast too sharply with our national dogma.

Lam's ironic tone draws a fine line between personal and national politics. He is not simply criticizing patriotism and devotion to Poland as a cultural community, nor to Poland's possible political independence (which must have seemed thinkable in an era of devolution). Instead, Lam focuses on the Polish progressive middle class to bring to light the many discrepancies that would necessarily arise among new adherents of the Polish nation—be that nation a community with a coherent cultural tradition, or a nation-state with political rights.

In this particular context, Lam's critique vis-à-vis the Polish aristocracy is clear, and parallel to but not identical with Ebner-Eschenbach's. Although still Polish and manifesting their Polishness, the nobility as presented by Lam is clearly anxious about its social position within the Empire, not necessarily as part of the Galician community. Its points of interest are without doubt Vienna and Austria; Galicia thus is in its view too local to play any role in the structure of the Empire. The following passage reflects the aristocrats' attachment to the Kaiser:

Panowie! W miastach objawiają uczucia publicznymi demonstracjami, fakelcugami i adresami, ale my, szlachta, choć nie robimy demonstracji, tym mocniejsze w głębi serca żywimy przywiązanie do tronu i do monarchii. Dlatego też tutaj, w prywatnym, domowym, rodzinnym kółku, gdzie wszystko mówi się i robi się od serca, po staropolsku, a nie dla oka ludzkiego, wznoszę toast: Niech żyje nasz Najjaśniejszy, Najmiłościwszy Pan, niech żyje nasz cesarz i król, Franciszek Józef Pierwszy! (115)

Gentlemen! In cities, all feelings are shown in public demonstrations, addresses, and torch parades, but we, the nobility/gentry, not demonstrating, feel a deeper attachment to the throne and the monarchy. Therefore, here, in a private family and domestic circle, where everything is spoken and done heartily, in an old-Polish way, and not for the human eye, I propose a toast: Long live our most bright and gracious Lord, long live our Emperor and King, Franz Joseph I!

In contrast to the middle class, which in the text is known as the Polish *Umsturzpartei* (subversive party), the nobles do not see a possible new solution for Poland in the federation of nations within the Habsburg Empire where Poland/Galicia would receive equal political rights, as had happened in the case of Hungary. Instead, they underscore the role of the central government and of a centralized political and administrative system to which they would be subjected. The creation of a federation of states with Galicia/Poland as one of these entities was apparently not a desirable goal for the nobility, nor was it the goal of progressive Poles, as it had been for Hungarians and remained for many of the larger Slavic groups in the Empire. For the federalists, however, the declaration of unconditional loyalty to the Emperor of 1866 proclaimed by a large group of Polish conservatives, became a betrayal not only of the federalist idea but also of all the claims for Poland's independence.

The Historical Setting

This story is anything but fictional. In his text, Lam stands on the side of modern middle-class Poles of an era which has seen the necessity of re-establishing a Polish state based on equal political rights. In *Wielki Świat Capowic*, this option is represented by Karol Schreyer, a young patriotic Pole who previously took part in the Polish Uprising of 1863¹⁸ against Russia, “państwo ościenne, a z monarchią Jego Cesarsko Królewskiej Apostolskiej Mości tak zaprzyjaznionemu mocarstwu” [a neighboring state, and so friendly with the monarchy of the *Kaiser Königliche Apostolische Majestät*], as it described Mr. Precliczek against his political background.

Schreyer is an interesting figure in Lam’s set of characters. Schreyer, for Precliczek “a verfluchter Pole” [a damn Pole] (138), seems to find his optimal position in an administrative office governed by the Austrians—a Polish (anti-Russian) patriot who can be pro-Habsburg. In fact, he is a loyal bureaucrat, knowledgeable and responsible, thorough and respectable, even worthy of marrying Mr. Precliczek’s daughter, Milcia. Schreyer is thus for Lam an ideal example of a successful political future, a model of how Poles could exist in an autonomous community, preserving their tradition and cultural roots, and yet functioning within the Empire and worthy of becoming one of its people of culture. Not surprisingly, this narrative ends with an arrival of a “new era” (160), in which Schreyer is managing a stable life together with his family, far from the previous romantic enchantments of radical politics, working quietly as a district judge. This future

¹⁸ Significantly, the history of the Uprising is dominant in Lam’s writing. In a later part of this dissertation, I will argue that Lam represents the anti-Russian option in Polish/Galician politics and culture.

is made through assimilation to a Galician political ideal, without loss of ethnic cultural identity.

Still, this position does not represent unthinking fidelity to the Empire. To confirm the changes happening in political life in 1866 Galicia, as the outcome of the “new era,” Lam uses again the figure of Precliczek and his blind servility to the central administration:

Gdyby Pan Precliczk czytywał był co więcej oprócz rozporządzeń wydawanych przez prezydium c.k. namiestnictwa i urzędowej, naówczas jeszcze wychodzącej “Lemberger Zeitung”, byłby może wiedział, że Umsturzpartei robiła właśnie plany odbudowania Polski za pomocą przemienienia Polski w federację słowiańską.” (115)

Had Mr. Precliczek read something more than simply the decrees ordered by the *k.u.k.* board and the “Lemberger Zeitung,” which was still published at this time, he would have known that the *Umsturzpartei* was planning to re-establish Poland by turning it into a Slav federation.

This particular passage clearly shows Lam’s opinion of a Polish political future that takes an excessively rigid view of Polish culture apart from Central Europe. As he sees it, the Ruthenians are excluded from participating in these Polish efforts to create Galicia as an autonomous political entity. Following Lam, I will use the term “Ruthenians” to refer to the later Ukrainians. According to John-Paul Himka, using this name is historically accurate although “old-fashioned”: “The main reason . . . for retaining the old nomenclature is that it is neutral with regard to the two competing paradigms of national identity, which divided the Ruthenians in the late nineteenth century, the all-Russian and

the Ukrainian.”¹⁹ Lam text uses “Ruthenians” to mark out a specific element in the politics he explains.

The long (but not past or old fashioned) history of conflict between the Poles and the Ruthenians was in fact one of the contemporaneous tensions influencing Lam’s opinion concerning the possibility of expanding cooperation between the two nations in Galicia. Before World War I, the Ukrainians²⁰ wanted to incorporate Galicia into a projected “Western Ukraine,” while the Poles saw Galicia as part of Eastern Małopolska.²¹ Lam saw neither side as a desirable situation, since he was not arguing for a single ethnically defined nation. Thus it is useful to remember that his Ukrainian-Galician Poles are not those “Ruthenians” who want to join the East, but rather Western Galicians.

In his treatment, Lam thus explicitly discredits one of the main visions for Poland’s political future that emerged after the final Partition of *Rzeczpospolita* in 1795: that is, a Russian-controlled solution with Ukraine affiliated with the Polish lands. The Ruthenians are specifically represented in *Wielki Świat Capowic* as East Slavic, thus not part of a Western nation, as a Galician Polish, confederated Habsburg, culture would be. Lam underscores these Ruthenians’ close connection to Russia, and their efforts to incorporate Ruthenia (the Eastern part of Galicia) into what he sees as a centralized and

¹⁹ J. P. Himka, *Religion and Nationality in Western Ukraine: The Greek Catholic Church and the Ruthenian National Movement in Galicia, 1867-1900* (London/Ithaca: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1999) 8.

²⁰ Here officially Ukrainians, after 1848—the national revolutionary awakening of the Ukrainian nation.

²¹ See, for instance, Himka, *Religion and Nationality in Western Ukraine*; Iaroslav Isaievych “Galicia and Problems of National Identity,” *The Habsburg Legacy. National Identity in Historical Perspective*, eds. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms (Edinburgh UP: 1994) 37-45.

despotic system of Russian administration. When his characters get together, they discuss these policies:

Uczta podobna u tak znakomitego *prowodira, borytela, pokrowytela* itd. musiała mieć koniecznie cechę polityczną. Mówiono bardzo wiele o potędze północnego sąsiada c.k. dziś już austriacko-węgierskiej monarchii i o *podwyhach narodnocy wsierusskoj* w Hałyczni.(81)

A feast by such an excellent *a leader, borytel, a defender*, etc., definitely had to have a political character. Discussed were the great power of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, nowadays already *k.u.k.*, and its northern neighbor and the *podwyhy narodnocy wsierusskoy* in Hałycznia.

This pro-Russian alliance among Ruthenians was caused, according to Iaroslav Isaievych, politically—ironically by the Habsburgs themselves:

Among Ukrainians [my Ruthenians], the first to gain were so-called Russophiles. Their initial success was largely due to Ukrainians' feelings of betrayal after the Austrians permitted those who conspired against the Emperor [Poles who wanted an independent nation-state] to rule over those who had remained loyal [the Ruthenians as mainly peasants who did not want to rebel against the Empire – AN].²²

Thus Lam has built a pro-Slavic nationalist viewpoint into the text, using it to identify the Habsburg administration where the tensions lie within the Polish communities. He wants to define Galicians over and against separatists Ruthenians, in order to preserve a Polish-European culture.

In Lam's narrative, the Ruthenians are represented mainly by two figures: a *k.u.k.* employee, Johann von Safaranowycz, and his uncle, a Greek-catholic priest, Nabu-chowycz. Stressing Lam's point, this identity is cultural rather than ethnic, while nonetheless adding to the political analysis, neither one of them was actually a true

²² Iaroslav Isayevych, "Galicia and Problems of National Identity," 39.

descendant of a Ruthenian family: “owe *von* oznaczało, że rodzina Safaranowiczow która aż do roku 1848 była polską szlachtą unickiego obrządku, przyjęła w nowszych czasach narodowość austriacką” [“this *von* meant that until 1848, the Safaranowicz family were gentry in the Uniate Church, who in later times received Austrian nationality”]. That year 1848 had brought not only strong patriotic Polish demonstrations but also awakened Ruthenian nationalist movements. It brought the kind of acknowledgement of a Polish contribution to Galician culture, which would get official acknowledgement in a family’s title. But it also began to alienate other, less forward-looking Poles in Galicia. Thus, in Lam’s narrative, instead of embracing his Ruthenian roots, Safaranowycz first decides to become Austrian and only later transforms himself into a Ruthenian patriot whose lack of knowledge about his own culture and language is more than obvious. Lam thus portrays the Ruthenians’ claims to national status as less convincing than that of other Galician Poles.

The bias of Lam’s treatment of the Ruthenians is clear also in the heavy irony with which he rejects their claim of being discriminated against and oppressed by the Poles:

Ksiądz Nabuchowycz ...obiecował uczynić *mein Möglichstes* w sprawie suplik małostawickich, “*nachdem ohnehin diese Vorgänge nichts Anderes sind, als der Aufschrei der seit Jahrhunderten geknechteten, von der Polen unterjochten, von der k.k. Regierung verlassenen, armen, unterdrückten ruthenischen Nationalität.*” ...Die geknechte Nationalität, pojmując w sposób historyczny sens tej mowy, ubiła leśniczego i raniła śmiertelnie gajowego; w Głębochyskach wpadła do karczmy, wybiła Motia i Motiową i bachory i wypila wielki zapas wódki nie tylko bezpłatnie, ale unosząc jeszcze z sobą gotówkę Motia.(96)

The Priest Nabuchowycz promised to do everything possible in the case of the supplicants of Malostaw, “after those events are anyway nothing else but a cry of the Ruthenian nationality, enslaved for centuries, subjugated by the Poles, forgotten by the *k.u.k.* government, poor, and oppressed Ruthenian nationality.”

This enslaved nationality, understanding in a historical way the meaning of this speech, killed the forester and fatally wounded a gamekeeper; in Głębochyska it fell into a tavern, beat up Motio and Motio's wife and their brats, and drank dry a huge reserve of vodka, not only for free, but also taking all the Motio's cash.

While Lam avoids an open critique of the Orthodox or the Uniate Churches, he underscores the general danger of Ruthenian/Ukrainian politics and influence on the Polish cultural cause and for the future of the Polish state within an Austrian Galicia (or apart from it). The Orthodox Church is seen in the novel as a tool in the hands of Ukrainian nationalists trying to connect Ruthenia to Russia, based on fictitious notion of common traditions and religion that ignore hereditary ties. Lam agrees that religion in general is a force in the regions of Polish culture, but prefers to ignore its institutions as viable tools for building a political or cultural consciousness in this cause.

Significantly, Lam does not provide any characters in *Wielki Świat Capowic* who are Catholic priests (which would, by necessity, be a pro-Habsburg force), although a Ruthenian priest, Nabuchowycz, plays a special role in the development of the story line. As the relative of Johann von Szafaranowycz, he has the power to influence his nephew's behavior and political carrier, but not his spiritual life and personal beliefs. Therefore, the reader is led to focus not on the spiritual role of the Ruthenian Church but rather on its political one, which Lam is criticizing. Once more, Lam turns away from a vision of Poland whose culture could be incorporated into Russia, as he rejects the chance to debate the merits of theology in this natural argument. Nabuchowicz, the "holy man," is no more moral than his aristocratic nephew.

While Lam's image of Ruthenians and their political and cultural future remains negative, if one considers the history of the period, one can find that Lam has anticipated history. The first Ruthenian/Ukrainian patriots in the early nineteenth century had actually combined their forces together with the Poles in a common fight for independence for 2 million Ruthenians living in Galicia. In 1848 and its aftermath, however, Ruthenians began a process of legitimating their own claims for a separate nationhood (apart from the Poles and then Galician-European culture) and prove that they are able to exist independently. These claims were based on newly written history books and works by younger generation of Ruthenian/Ukrainian historians arguing for national independence of Eastern Galicia.²³ For many Polish political activists, Ukrainian nationalism in Galicia was usually blamed on the Austrian authorities and their policy of *divide et impera*.²⁴

However, the Ruthenian nation did not unite all segments of its society in its efforts and so split into two camps: one Russophile and the other progressive (nationalistic separatists). Significantly, neither one of these groups sought cooperation and closer relationships with ethnic Poles. While the Russophiles (Panslavists) saw the only solution for their future in an existence as a part of the Russian Empire (the priest), a more progressive group tried to cut off all ties that connected them to either Russians or Poles, publishing texts manifesting a new-born nationalism (Szafaranowycz). For

²³ See for instance Himka and his student, the young generation scholar Andrey Zaranyuk (University of Alberta, Canada).

²⁴ Stanislaw Eile, *Literature and Nationalism in Partitioned Poland* (NY: St. Martin's P: 2000) 12.

instance, in 1885, one of Ukrainian newspapers, *Bat'kivshchyna* [Motherhood],²⁵

published a legend to reinforce possible Russo-Polish-Ukrainian relations:

There were three brothers, Kazimierz [representing the Poles], Danylo [Ukrainians], and Vania [Russians]. At first Danylo was better off than his two brothers, but a gang of bandits [Mongols] plundered his household. Before he could recover, his brother Kazimierz had taken over his farm, and Danylo found himself forced to work for both Kazimierz and himself. At first, it was bearable, but after a while Kazimierz started abusing Danylo. Danylo springs up and accepts Vania's help. However, it appears that Vania is not much better than Kazimierz. Vania also oppresses Danylo, and plotting together with Rudolf and Friedrich [Austrian Empire and Prussia], divides Kazimierz's household. Kazimierz's son, Stanislaw, behaves even worse while managing what used to be his father's estate. One of Danylo's sons, Nykola, joins Stanislaw as a servant, and another one, Ivan, joins Vania's son, Alexander. Only Danylo's middle son is left and did not care that his brothers ridiculed him, pointing at the liveries of their lords and his peasant jacket and calling him *khlop* and *khakhol*.²⁶

Such publications propose, as Himka points out, that inter-ethnic battles among potential Ruthenians were anything but old fashioned.²⁷

An additional element that caused the split between the Ruthenians and the Poles in the aftermath of the Spring of Nations was the fact that the Ukrainian national movement, consisting mainly of clergymen and uneducated peasants, manifested open loyalty to the Austrian Empire. In contrast, at this time, many revolutionary factions among Poles still argued for the restoration of Poland in its historical boundaries.

Yet, despite initial cooperation between the Poles and the Ruthenians, Lam does not see this option as not worth pursuing in the case of Polish Galicians as Poland will

²⁵ *Bat'kivshchyna* was a Ukrainophile national populist newspaper for the peasantry, published in Lwów, postulating that Ruthenians, in light of linguistic, historical, and ethnographic research, are the same as Little Russians or Ukrainians from the Russian Empire.

²⁶ "Kazka o trekh bratiakh," *Batkivshchyna*, 1885, #47.

²⁷ John-Paul Himka, *Religion and Nationality in Western Ukraine* (London: McGill-Queen's UP, 1999).

not be restored. In his vision, incorporating Galicia into greater Ukraine would have meant for many Poles a complete abolishing of all the rights and privileges they had under Habsburg Rule, including religion, speech and law. As he saw it, the Russophile tendencies among Galician Ruthenians were, without a doubt, a source of Polish-Ukrainian conflict well into the twentieth century.

Historically, by the 1890s, there was another attempt to cross the bridge between the Poles and the Ukrainians and create some understanding between these nations in Galicia—the so-called “new era.”²⁸ The partners in this attempt were the conservative Polish politicians, Stańczycy, and on the other side, the populist Ruthenians. Their cause was inaugurated into the Galician diet on 27 November 1890, but unfortunately lasted only four years. Ivan L. Rudnytsky notes regarding the failure of the compromise:

No precise terms had ... been agreed upon. Thus the attempt at compromise was, from the very first, vitiated by a basic misunderstanding. The Poles were willing to make a certain minor concessions to the Ukrainians in the field of education and linguistic rights ... But when the *narodovtsi* [national populists] had expected was a change in the political system, and this was not forthcoming.²⁹

Conclusion

By the 1890s, the question of Polish-Galician culture had been divorced from a political vision of nationhood, and hence from the concerns of Panslavism. Lam's opinion about a possible Polish coalition with the Ruthenians as part of a Panslavic compromise will be representative of his stance on a Russian connection for a future

²⁸ John-Paul Himka, *Religion and Nationality in Western Ukraine*, 137.

²⁹ Rudnytsky, “The Ukrainians in Galicia,” *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia*, eds., Markovits and Sysyn (Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Institute, 1982) 58.

Polish nation. Yet as this brief analysis of Lam's 1869 novel demonstrates, Lam's untold fiction did indeed parallel the *Realpolitik* of this time.

In the next chapters of this study, I will turn again to the level of the *Realpolitik* to show how a historic figure, Aleksander Wielopolski, argued for a Polish-Russian axis. In other of his fiction, Lam not only criticized the Ruthenian Russophiles, but he also devoted two of his texts to the second Polish Uprising of 1863 against Russia (taking place in the Kongresówka) in the context of its necessity and importance for the entire Polish nation. Let us now turn to flesh out that historical discussion.

PART III

Poland and Russia

The Situation in Kongresówka

Chapter 6

Galicia and Kongresówka in the Time of the January Uprising of 1863. Wielopolski's *Realpolitik*

Kongresówka: the Russian Partition. Historical Background

To see the degree to which Lam's fiction was designed to engage the political system, I will concentrate in this section on the second great political discussion of the era concerning Polish options in the nineteenth century— a possible Russian solution, which ultimately would have meant incorporating Poles into the system of Russian Empire and establishing a Polish nation around Russian (Pan-Slavic) values. As I will argue in this chapter, for the majority of Poles, this option was represented on the level of the *Realpolitik* of Aleksander Wielopolski (1803-1877); yet on the basis of many factors—of political, cultural and every day life, including: religion, customs, language, and the Polish past—Wielopolski's solution was not acceptable. Given the seriousness of this choice, it is no wonder that many literary texts contain representations of a prevailing

Polish bias against a political option that would connect them in any way with the Russian Empire.

To make this case, I will again concentrate on texts by the Galician, Jan Lam, whose works, as we already have seen, reflect the range of different political options for the future of the Polish state, including cooperation with the Habsburg Empire and an unlikely (and to Lam, undesirable) Polish dependency on Russia. Therefore, first, I will present the historical background of Polish-Russian relationship after the Partitions and the *Realpolitik* of Count Wielopolski who supported the Russian axis for the future of the Polish nation. Later, I will discuss echoes of historical events of 1863, the Polish Uprising in Kongresówka, and its meaning for the Poles as reflected in literary work by Jan Lam.

Most definitely, Russia's "Polish problem" was more complicated than that of the other two Powers, Prussia and the Habsburg Monarchy. In the case of the Polish lands, Russia was forced to consider two basic solutions to its future relationship with Poles and Ukrainians alike. One was to incorporate all of them into the Empire outright; the other was to leave them as a semi-autonomous unit in some kind of federation, remaining loyal to the Tsar (essentially a mirror image of a Galicia loyal to the Habsburg Empire). Although the Congress Kingdom of Poland (the Polish lands ceded to Russia as a result of the three Partitions of Poland) contained the largest single concentration of Poles of any state in Europe and was for a moment in time the focus of Polish cultural life, the Tsar at this time, Alexander I (1777-1825) as King of Poland, reserved the strongest

executive powers for himself.¹ Polish “autonomy” was thus in many ways a fiction from the start.

The first session of Polish *Sejm* in 1818 was opened by Alexander in person and it proceeded smoothly. Serious opposition to Russian oversight began in the 1820s, when some Polish political groups began to develop throughout country, primarily in secret organizations such as Freemasonry. In 1815, Masonry in the Congress Kingdom had thirty-two lodges, which were largely of a progressive and patriotic disposition. In 1819, Major Walerian Łukasiński founded the *Wolnomularstwo Narodowe* (National Freemasonry), whose activities were banned by the Tsar in 1821, and which subsequently developed into a conspiratorial National Patriotic Society. A year later, Łukasiński was arrested, but there appeared a rash of student revolutionary clubs with their own philosophy, heroes, and publications (a phenomena of the 1820s and 30s, as it was in Germany as well). Some of these clubs not only included Poles, but also Russians and Lithuanians. One of them was the *Towarzystwo Zjednoczonych Słowian* (The Society of United Slavs), which kept contact with the Russians Societies and with the Association of the Lithuanian Corps.

During the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855), the Tsar's policy crystallized into an idea called Official Nationality.² In their relations to the Poles, all Tsars had had the same goals of assimilation and integration, and so Nicholas’ policy was designed to turn the

¹ The Tsar was to nominate all officials, to appoint the Administrative Council, to act as the Supreme Court for legal appeals, and to control the civilian police through the Ministry of Interior in St. Petersburg, he also had the right to veto and to amend legislation.

² In general, Russian political attitudes centered on three principles: *Pravoslaviye* (Orthodoxy), *Samoderzhaviye* (Autocracy), and *Narodnost* (Nationality).

Poles into good Christians (Orthodox), loyal subjects, and good Russians. The principle of Orthodoxy supported by the state was derived from the special position given to Orthodox Christianity in the Russian political system. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when large non-Russian and non-Orthodox communities arrived in Russia, the Church had been consciously turned into a department of state. From 1721, when the old Patriarchate was abolished, the Most Holy Synod, the supreme organ of the Church, was directly subordinated to the Tsar. Thereafter, other religions were not tolerated and not treated equally. In case of the Roman-Catholic Church, for example, papal bulls could not be published in Russia without the assent of St. Petersburg. Thus, for Russia, Orthodoxy as a state ideology needs to be distinguished from the practices and principles of the Orthodox Church in general.

From another perspective, the Russian autocracy that led the state was also a historical relic: the direct descendant of the patriarchal despotism known since Peter the Great and his Enlightened Absolutism. As far as the Polish provinces were concerned, the strengthening of this autocracy brought several major changes to their own tradition of political life: it abolished traditional democratic institutions; it introduced a centralized administration³; it reformed officialdom, whose members were appointed by the central power, not elected; and it sought to transform the relationship between the state and the individual. Therefore, by 1831, a group of radical Poles decided to launch a revolution, called by many historians the Polish-Russian war. Its goal was to restore these freedoms

³ The *Województwa* were replaced by a network of gubernias, where the Governor acted as the tool of government policy.

that were part of Polish heritage, but not Tsarist. The events, so tragic and drastic, had a tremendous impact on the Tsar's Polish policy and on the future of Polish-Russian relations, including the subsequent negative perception of Russian by the Poles in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. That drama of 1831 found its echo in literary texts beyond Polish culture, as well: for instance, in texts by Theodor Fontane (1819-1898), whose *Zum Kampf, An der Elster*, and *Unterm Birnbaum* present the bloody sacrifice of Poles fighting for their independence, as we have seen in the first part of this study.

For many Poles in the 1830s and beyond, Nicholas I proved himself an autocrat in the tradition of his ancestors when he started to investigate all Polish secret clubs and established a network of agents with his newly formed Third Department, designed to sniff out any suspicious connections between the Poles and the Russian Decembrists and national movements. This particular situation continued through the reign of the next Tsar, Alexander II (1818-1881). Alexander was not a liberal and thus was opposed to any national movements that would reduce Russia's control over the Slavs. Although the Tsar started an era of thaw that was welcomed by many Poles, he also, during his first visit to Warsaw, made the point of warning against exaggerated expectations. Nonetheless, over a period of five years, he granted amnesty to Poles exiled to Siberia in 1831 and reopened Polish schools, for instance the Medical School. Instead of relieving tensions, however, these reforms had changed again the Polish political scene and awakened anew dreams of independence and freedom for the Polish nation.

To contain these new developments and restore order, as he preferred it in Kongresówka, Alexander II looked for advice from the Polish Count Aleksander

Wielopolski (1803-1877), who became one of the key figures in Polish history and the object of many debates and discussions lasting into modern days.⁴ Although Wielopolski is not directly mentioned in the literary texts discussed here, his impact on the *Realpolitik* of this era and also his role in the outbreak and outcome of the January Uprising was tremendous; the history closely tied to this figure is essential for an analysis of Lam's works,. He became the archetype of any Russophile Pole of the era.

Without a doubt, Wielopolski's political vision caused a split among patriotic Poles, who were left to follow either the path created by the Count, i.e., a cooperation with Russia and creation of a Polish state within a Slavic federation, or to oppose him and continue the romantic vision of a revolution, which ultimately would be tantamount to political suicide. Either path would solve Russia's "Polish problem." This particular controversy over the impact of Wielopolski's policy continues up to the present day, when politicians and historians are still trying to determine the impact of his work on Polish history and modern politics.⁵

Wielopolski explained his proposal to create a federacy of Slavic nations in this way:

Połączyć się winniśmy ze wszystkimi Słowianami, bo wspólnie uciśnieni i wynaradawiani. . . i interesem jesteśmy z nimi związani. Tylko w tem połączeniu możemy znieść antagonizm narodowości, w którym dotąd jedynie burokracja niemiecka jednych przeciw drugim uzbrajała. Tam znajdziemy elementa

⁴ Even in recent discussions regarding Polish policy and recent history, Wielopolski is often (mis-)used as an example of a traitor or as a wise politician with the benefit of the Polish nation in mind. See, for instance, Paweł Wroński, "Cień margrabiego," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (May 2002) 20; Józef Fedman, *Bismarck a Polska* (Kraków: Czytelnik, 1947) 129-152; or Skałakowski, *Aleksander Wielopolski w świetle archiwów rodzinnych* (Poznań: PTPN, 1947).

⁵ After WWI, some Polish politicians referred to Wielopolski in their speeches and political proposals, for instance Dmowski or Pilsudski.

organiczne, których nam potrzeba: w myśli połączenia z domem rakuskim zawiązek sojuszu z ludem naszym.”⁶

We should connect with all Slavs, as we all are oppressed and our nationalities are in danger. . . and we are bound through a common interest. Only in this union, we can stand against this antagonism towards our nationalities, an antagonism in which the German bureaucracy tried to force us to be against each other. There we can find organic elements we need: in the name of a union with the Rakusz house and a union with our own folk.

Best known for his most likely apocryphal phrase: “You can’t do much *with* the Poles, but with luck you might do something *for* them,”⁷ Wielopolski exemplified a paradox that was very characteristic of Polish history of the nineteenth century. Very confident in diplomatic and political spheres, he proposed and stood behind this Russian vision for the future of the Polish nation.

Proving himself an active politician, Wielopolski quickly found the Tsars approval and in 1861, after proposing the formation of commissions to inquire into Land and Reform and Jewish Emancipation, he was appointed Commissioner for Education and Religious Cults and, in the same year, he was nominated as the Commissioner of Justice. Eventually, he became the man who held the most power to influence the Kingdom’s affairs. Yet from the beginning, Wielopolski considered only one of the Tsar’s conditions: that discipline among Poles in Kongresówka should be restored. The head of the Russian government in Warsaw, Prince Gorchakov, was impressed by the Count’s energy and will power. Having the choice between bombing Warsaw and

⁶ Skałakowski, *Aleksander Wielopolski w świetle archiwów rodzinnych*, 131.

⁷ “Dla Polaków można coś zrobić, z Polakami nigdy”—apparently the most famous quote by Wielopolski, which he actually might never have said, became a legend surrounding the figure of the Count. The sentence is probably cited in every publication mentioning Wielopolski, starting with all the history books (for instance, Davies) and continuing with very current articles like “Cień margrabiego” [The Shadow of the Count] published in 2002 in the most popular daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* (May 2002).

negotiating according to Wielopolski's suggestions, Gorchakov decided to follow Wielopolski's advice and introduced proposed reforms in Kongresówka to try to placate the Poles.

One more reason why Wielopolski won the Tsar's trust is suggested by his *List szlachcica polskiego o rzezi galicyjskiej do Księcia Metternicha* [Letter from a Polish nobleman to Prince Metternich about the Galician massacre],⁸ a letter addressed to the Austrian government published in Paris after the tragic events of 1846 in Galicia, the peasants' uprising against the Polish landowners supported by the Austrian officials. That letter had made Wielopolski credible to the Poles in Galicia to an unprecedented degree. Without a doubt, it was the voice of a Polish patriot, a man shocked by the result of a political game and Austrian involvement in the Jacquerie. In the previous section of this study (on Ebner-Eschenbach), I discussed briefly this publication and the effects of the uprising in 1846 for Galicia. In this particular context, however, Wielopolski's letter could be read in a different light. Already in 1846, Wielopolski wrote: "Zapewne rząd rosyjski jest srogi dla szlachty polskiej, ale Romanow jest zbyt dobrym szlachcicem, by dać zatłuc sobie podobnych nawet wśród swoich nieprzyjaciół"⁹ [Certainly, the Russian government is rigorous towards the Polish gentry, but Romanov is too good of a nobleman to permit the murder of those who are his peers, even if they are among his

⁸ Wielopolski's letter was initially published anonymously in French in Brussels, and then translated into Polish and German and distributed widely. I used the German version entitled: *Briefe eines polnischen Edelmannes an einen deutschen Publicisten über die jüngsten Ereignisse in Polen* (Hamburg: Hofmann und Campe, 1846).

⁹ In German: "Gewiß, die russische Regierung ist streng gegen den polnischen Adel, aber ein Romanoff ist zu sehr Edelmann, um seines Gleichen, selbst wenn sie seine Feinde sind, zu vernichten; er ist zu gewissenhaft, um sie aus Vorsichtsmaßregeln zu vertilgen, und zu sehr Ehrenmann, um seine Opfer zu beleidigen" (255).

enemies]. In his *Letter*, Wielopolski accuses the Austrian government of corrupting the peasantry and thus destroying the friendly and peaceful order of rural Western Slavs and suggests that the Polish gentry should rather turn to Russia for protection, since the Russians “have dethroned our king, our institutions, our liberties, but have left the social order intact.”¹⁰ As he concludes: “the Polish nobility will undoubtedly prefer to march with Russia at the head of young, vigorous Slavic civilization with an auspicious future, than to crawl along jostled, scorned, hated, injured, in the trail of . . . decrepit, bickering, and presumptuous [Austria].”¹¹ As Skałkowski suspects, Wielopolski was impressed by the following story:

W czasie wypadkow galicyjskich cesarz Mikołaj zjechał do wioski Michałowic pod Krakowem na spotkanie żony wracającej z Włoch. Przy tej okazji kazał zwołać z wiosek okolicznych naszych wieśniaków. Było ich kilka tysięcy. Mikołaj wyszedłszy do nich, głosem donośnym po polsku krzyknął, aby żaden z nich nie ważył się pod najsroźszymi karami podnosić rękę na szlachtę. Ze jeżeli bunt wybuchnie, jest od tego wojsko, aby go stłumiło, że z wojskiem on sam buntowi poradzi, a żadnych zawieruch i bezprawii nie ścierpi. Mówiąc gestykulował gwałtownie rękami z zaciśniętą pięścią. Olbrzymia postawa monarchy, głos prawdziwie lwiego, wywarły wielkie wrażenie na wieśniakach.¹²

During the Galician events, Tsar Nicolas arrived at the village Michalowice near Krakow to meet his wife returning from her trip to Italy. Using the occasion, he commanded our peasants from the villages close-by to gather. There were a few thousand of them. Nicolas came out to them, and in a powerful voice, he warned them in Polish under strictest punishments not to raise a hand against the gentry. And if a revolt breaks out, he will have the army to fight it, that he and the army will take care of the uprising, as he cannot stand any revolts and disorders. While talking, he made violent gestures with clenched fist. His enormous frame and lion-like voice made a great impression on the peasants.

¹⁰ Wielopolski, *Briefe*, 405ff.

¹¹ Stanislaus A. Blejwas, *Realism in Polish Politics: Warsaw Positivism and National Survival in Nineteenth Century Poland* (New Haven: Yale Concilium on International and Area Studies, 1984) 31.

¹² Skałkowski, *Aleksander Wieopolski*, 108f.

Unfortunately, his positive perception of the Romanovs and Russia in general proved to be mistaken—sixteen years later, Wielopolski would witness Russian officials organizing peasant troops to find the Polish fighters of 1863 and paying them in gold for turning them in.

Before the Uprising: Kongresówka in 1861

Obviously, Gorchakov's political course, supported by the Empire and the Tsar, was pragmatically justified—it was Kongresówka where Russian troops feared a revolt in Russia during the Crimean War. Furthermore, the competing ruling house of Habsburg had started a milder political campaign in Galicia to win over the Poles. Finally, on the level of foreign policy, Alexander searched for a compromise and cooperation with France, for whom, obviously, his brutal policy towards Poles and Kongresówka could not be acceptable. Abuse of Polish sentiment would have exacerbated Russia's increasingly precarious political situation.

All of these reasons helped Wielopolski to establish himself as a respected politician in the eyes of Russian officials. At the same time, he became an object of hatred for both Polish opposition groups, the Whites and the Reds. It was namely Adam Zamoyski (1800-1874), the leader of the Whites and a delegate of Hotel Lambert¹³ in Warsaw, who could not accept Wielopolski's political program and did not want to cooperate with the Count on any level. Even some of his accomplishments—for instance,

¹³ As mentioned before, Hotel Lambert was the cultural and political center for Polish émigrés in Paris with Czartoryski as their leader.

the above-mentioned re-introduction of Polish as the official language in the Polish Kingdom, the opening of the Polish university, the land reform, and the establishment of a middle class created from polonized Jews—would not gain Wielopolski respect from any of the groups of patriotic Poles. Instead, a result of his program, Wielopolski was criticized and surrounded, on the one side by the influential Whites and their supporters in Paris (for his collaboration with Russia), and on the other by the radical and revolutionary Reds with Jarosław Dąbrowski (1836-1871), Zygmunt Padlewski (1935-1863) and Ignacy Chmieleński (1837-1865) as leaders (for his willingness to work with aristocrats). Interestingly, both political factions were established as Polish secret organizations around the spring of 1861.

The radical group, the Reds, mainly propagated the idea of an armed revolution against Russia, but only after gaining the support of the peasantry by promising profound social reform. Ultimately, this party managed to expand its network to embrace Russian Poland, Poznań (Prussia), and Galicia. It established an underground operation in order to build a “secret Polish state,”¹⁴ and even introduced a national tax to support the Uprising. On the other side of the political spectrum were the “Moderates” or the Whites attracting mainly landowners and the bourgeoisie, a group afraid of possible insurrection and the radicalism of the Reds. Therefore, their program was based on so-called “organic work,” promising social reform and emphasizing patriotism. In contrast to the Reds, the Whites stood close to Wielopolski’s *Realpolitik*, but without accepting his collaboration with the

¹⁴ Stefan Kieniewicz, *Galicja w Powstaniu Styczniowym* (Wrocław: Zakł. Nar. im. Ossolińskich, 1980) 159.

Tsar's government. However, several failed attempts by the Reds on the life of Duke Constantine (the Tsar's brother and the Viceroy of the Polish Kingdom) and on Wielopolski made it difficult for the Whites to participate in negotiations with the Russian government. Moreover, as a result of these revolutionary disturbances, the Whites' leader, Zamoyski was finally exiled from Poland. It is, however, important to emphasize that the Reds, despite all their political rhetoric and demonstrations, were ultimately ineffective, mainly because of their lack of financial support and, of course, weapons. Thus, the Whites' options and possibilities predominated in the Polish cause—the aristocrats who, as Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach showed, were isolated from the peasants and bourgeois alike.

However, Wielopolski's unreachable goal in 1861 was to stop the insurrection and restore order in the province, a task he worked on with determination. Starting in February 1861, serious Polish demonstrations erupted in Warsaw, and the result was rather disappointing for any hopes at Polish conciliation—Cossacks broke into churches, people were arrested, Polish patriotic hymns were banned, and Catholic and Jewish clergymen were deported. At the end of the year, Wielopolski was thus curtly ordered to proceed to St. Petersburg under guard to explain himself to the Tsar. Wielopolski then presented a reform plan according to which reform could not be abandoned for fear of popular disillusionment, and repression could not be relaxed for fear of renewed disorder. Therefore, in this plan, reform and repression must proceed hand in hand. After five months of hesitation, the Tsar finally gave formal approval to this concept. In so doing, the Tsar finally rejected Zamoyski's more historically sensitive proposal according to

which Polish spirits might be tamed if Poland were returned to its pre-1772 borders. In light of this information, Zamoyski's idea seemed to be extremely utopian and politically unacceptable.

Wielopolski's plan was implemented almost immediately. In 1862, Russian police undertook a wave of preventative arrests of political activists, which proved to be unsuccessful: the core of the opposition was untouched, and revolutionary spirits were blooming especially among young Poles. Not knowing the source of opposition, the Russian government (supported by Wielopolski) then decided to use a more drastic instrument in the war against Polish revolutionary forces: *Branka*, forced conscription. In so doing, the Russians were suspected to have drafted the young conspirators into the Russian army to keep them under close control. Many Polish historians, such as Zamoyski and Davies, see in the *Branka* (and therefore in Wielopolski) the immediate cause of the January Uprising. A younger generation of Polish scholars, however, seems to validate the Count's decisions, seeing in him a misunderstood patriot who tried to find an alternative for the future of the Polish nation. While Davies asserts that Wielopolski in fact caused the conflict, Wroński states that Wielopolski truly believed in the success of his action: "Wrzód się zebrał i rozciąć do należy. Powstanie stłumię w dwa tygodnie i wtedy będę mógł rządzić"¹⁵ [The ulcer has ripened and should be cut open. I will suppress the Uprising in two weeks and then will be able to rule]. Another Polish scholar, Stefan Kieniewicz, in his *Powstanie styczniowe*, mentions yet another reason for

¹⁵ Paweł Wroński, "Aleksander Wielopolski – realista czy kolaborant?" [Aleksander Wielopolski: a realist or a collaborator], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 5 May 2002.

Wielopolski's determination: after failed attempts on his life, he felt personally drawn into the conflict:

Osaczony przez spiskowców, którzy czekali nań z rewolwerem, sztyletem, trucizną, szukał sobie najbardziej skutecznych sposobów obezwładnienia przeciwnika – trudno się temu dziwić. Nie wydaje się co prawda, aby zdawał sobie sprawę ze wszystkich konsekwencji swojego działania.

It is no wonder then that, surrounded by the conspirators who waited for him with a revolver, a knife, and poison, he was looking for the most sufficient method to suppress his enemy. It does not seem, however, that he was fully aware of all the consequences of his actions.¹⁶

Most likely, Wielopolski thought that *Branka* would behead the hydra, and the Polish elites would be paralyzed and incapable of a military action once its revolutionaries were in the Russian army. Yet he underestimated the determination of the Poles and the hatred they felt towards the Russian oppressors.

No wonder then that by 1863, Poles began the largest revolt yet against Russian rule. Significantly, this move to revolution applied not only to Poles living immediately under Russian rule but also to Galicians who sought to establish an independent Polish state and saw this revolution as an opportunity to change the face of Europe in the future. Determined to free the Poles from the Russian regime, the National Committee declared the outbreak of the national uprising on 22 January. It lasted two years and had profound consequences for Poles and their dreams of establishing an independent nation-state. After the revolution began, all of Count Wielopolski's supporters abandoned him declaring their support for the Poles. Remaining without any political influence,

¹⁶ Stefan Kieniewicz, *Powstanie styczniowe* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1983).

Wielopolski left the Kingdom and resided in Dresden, where he died forgotten in 1877. The last privilege he received from the Tsar was a medal “za usmierzenie polskiego mateja” [for suppressing the Polish motherland], jokingly granted him by Alexander II.

Without a doubt, the January Uprising of 1863 was, aside from the partitions, the most dramatic event in Polish history for its profound impact on Polish policy, culture and future. The events of the Uprising in the Polish Kingdom quite naturally resonated into Galicia and engaged the Galician Poles in an immediate fight for Polish independence—a fight, which Lam will echo in his works.

Wielopolski’s *Branka* scheduled for 14 January 1863, caused revolutionary disturbances and open hostilities. Not surprisingly, many young Poles escaped from Warsaw and found their asylum in the nearby Kampinos. Two days after the conscription, Russian troops were attacked simultaneously throughout the Kingdom of Poland. Yet Polish revolutionary forces failed to capture the city of Płock, chosen to be the Uprising’s headquarters, which ultimately meant that the leaders had to stay and operate either in the countryside or among Russians in Warsaw, a less-than-effective solution. To see the reaction of Galician Poles and the community of interests they imagined, I would like to cite the Call for Support of the Uprising, which was prepared in Kraków by the end of January of 1863:

Ucisk barbarzyński najeźdźczego rządu wywołał powstanie narodu polskiego. Postępy onegoż i organizacja mimo chwilowych niepowodzeń są wiadome. Dlatego wzywa się wszystkich mieszkańców od 15 do 50-ciu lat mających w

Galicji i W. Ks. Poznańskiego, jako Polaków, by pod sztandary ojczyste spieszyli i sprawę narodu zasiłkami pieniężnymi, broni, itd. wspierali.¹⁷

The barbarian oppression of the attacking government caused an uprising of the Polish nation. Its progress and organization, despite momentary failures, are familiar. Therefore, all citizens of Galicia and the Great Kingdom of Posen from the age of 15 to 50 are called to hurry to their national flags and to support the national cause with monetary donations, donation of armaments, etc.

Galician Poles were called to join with Ukrainians ones. As had happened before, the political camps found themselves in conflict, and therefore the leadership was in constant contention.

In the initial phase, however, the initiative laid with the more proletarian Reds and their energetic chairman, a populist student from Kiev, Stefan Bobrowski (1841-1863). However, already in March, the Whites chose Marian Langiewicz (1827-1887), a soldier trained in the émigré academy in Cuneo, as supreme commander of the Uprising. However, Langiewicz was forced to withdraw to Galicia, and Bobrowski was killed in a duel. Thereafter, on the proclamation of the secret National government, the two camps still lived in uneasy alliance, but the Whites controlled the policy and the all-over command. Finally in October of 1863, a new dictatorship was formed combining both the Whites and the Reds and providing co-coordinated military leadership. As agreed by the two camps, Romuald Traugutt (1825-1864) became the political leader and military commander of the Uprising until his arrest on the night of 10 August 1864.

The newly created Polish National Government had five permanent ministers, each with separate staff, seals of office, and secretaries in cellars. Eventually, it also

¹⁷ Prepared by Ława Krakowska, AGAD, XI korpus. Cited in Kieniewicz, *Galicja w Powstaniu Styczniowym* 16.

possessed a Treasury, which collected money from landowners, industrialists, and shopkeepers. Most importantly for foreign affairs, the government sent its diplomatic agents out to be visible in all of Europe's capitals. Acting according to the motto: "*Rząd Narodowy – Wolność, Równość, Niepodległość*" [National Government—Liberty, Equality, Independence], the government assured all the attributes of a modern administration of a future Polish state, and yet officially, the government still did not exist.

The dictator of this would-be state, Traugutt, came from a Polish noble family in Podlasie. Until 1862, he had served in the Russian Army in Hungary and in the Crimea. After he arrived in Warsaw in July 1863, his rise was rather swift; he visited Western Europe seeking support mainly of the French government. On behalf of the Polish National Government, he gained personal interviews with Napoleon III and the French Foreign Minister. Knowing that the Western Powers still looked at Russia as a goldmine for capitalism and, therefore, that no early intervention could be expected, Traugutt returned incognito to Warsaw, took up residence in the Saski Hotel, and calmly informed the National Government of his intention of taking over and becoming a secret dictator. During the time of his dictatorship, he managed to reform the military units, introducing cadres of regular army, divided into corps, regiments, and battalions. Additionally, he called for a tax on Polish citizens abroad, and even issued a decree providing the death sentence for landowners who continued to exact payments in lieu of labor dues. This is the kind of political activity we have seen in Ebner-Eschenbach's works, where country nobles were being called upon to support a nation that did not exist.

Already in April 1863, the revolutionary forces spread towards Russia, after Polish emissaries were sent to all hereditary Polish lands in Lithuania, Ukraine, and Belorussia. An interesting turn of events took place in Belorussia, where there was important activity among the Jews at Pińsk and in the countryside. Additionally, in Belorussia, Konstanty Kalinowski, a Polish nobleman operating in the region around Grodno and Białystok, published a rebel journal *Peasants' Truth*, and so is nowadays regarded as one of the founders of Belorussian nationalism.¹⁸ Furthermore, in Lithuania, the Uprising briefly assumed the same proportions as in the Kingdom under such activists as the White leader Jakub Gieysztor (1827-1897) and the Red lieutenant Zygmunt Sierakowski (1826-1863).¹⁹ The National Central Committee, as the immediate successor of the Warsaw Central Committee, published a Manifesto, which was addressed to the “nation of Poland, Lithuania, and Ruthenia” to show that the existence of one Slavic nation with all nationalities was arguably more real than that of all the Slavs leveled under one Russian Empire.

Still, Polish military actions in the campaign against Russia remained rather fragmented: in the sixteen months of the Uprising, 1229 engagements occurred in Kongresówka, Lithuania, Byelorussia, and Ukraine. Since the soldiers sought to avoid direct confrontation with the superior forces of the enemy, they cannot precisely be called battles. In February, the Western Powers took fright, and so Bismarck sent his General

¹⁸ Konstanty Kalinowski (1838-1864), already before the outbreak of the Uprising, established contact with revolutionary Russian democrats, with the Russian organization *Ziemia i Wolia*, and the London center for Russian émigrés. Kalinowski managed to incorporate Belorussian peasantry into the forces against the Tsar.

¹⁹ Davies, *God's Playground*, 143.

Alvensleben to St. Petersburg to sign a military convention providing for common action. Yet Bismarck let the Tsar suppress the Uprising himself, and the Powers never faced the possibility of a formal Prusso-Russian cooperation in suppressing a domestic event. However, two tripartite notes from Britain, France, and Austria protested against the violation of the Treaty of Vienna and called on the Tsar to make concessions to the Poles, Lithuanians and Ruthenians—the only diplomatic achievements of the revolutionary government.

One of the other important issues, which ran through the politics of the uprising from the very beginning, was the peasants' question. This particular issue interested the Tsar already in 1858, when he invited Polish noblemen to submit their proposals on the issue of peasants' emancipation. The response of the Polish Agriculture Society, which in this period played a leading role in the Whites camp, was to propose that the labor dues of the serfs should be commuted into money rents. By 1863, after the outbreak of the Uprising, the Manifesto of the National Central Committee talked of peasants' ownership of the land. Seeing in this manifesto a potential conflict with Russian and aristocratic needs, the Tsar prepared an *Ukaz* on 18 March 1864 initiating a scheme for giving the peasants the full freehold of the land they worked on, and for compensating the landowner with state bonds. The response of the lowest class was rather skeptical—in general confused, they did not know if they could trust the Polish aristocrats or the Russian Tsar. The unresolved issue played a significant role in the outcome of the Uprising as some of the peasants chose to collaborate with the Russian army by helping

them to capture Polish revolutionaries—they wanted their settlements not the uncertainty of a new government.

In the odd situation of an ill-prepared Uprising, a handful of clerks, students, and teachers led by junior officers were the rising leaders at the top of the movement that tried to challenge the Russian Empire. This situation, not surprisingly, did not last long. The majority of Polish fighters fell into the hands of the enemy, who presented them to the world as a gang of young criminals. Significantly, those who showed repentance and assisted the authorities escaped further trial and were given minor punishments. The final act of the abortive Polish revolution against the Russian Empire was the Tsar's execution of the leaders of the Uprising—all of them, including Traugutt, were hanged.

After capturing the last Polish troops, General Berg initiated the process of closing down all the separate institutions of the Congress Kingdom. In three years as Viceroy, he rescinded all Wielopolski's reforms and all the concessions made to Polish language and culture. Over the period of seven years, the Kingdom was transformed into a completely Russian province, and all the branches of administration were subordinated to the relevant ministries in St. Petersburg. Finally, in 1864, the Kingdom and the name Poland were formally abolished. What had started as an assertion of rights led to an almost complete elimination of the faces who believed in a future independent Slavic nation with Poles as its center. No wonder then, that the remaining Poles would consider federation with Austrian Galicia a much better option.

Galicia and the January Uprising

While the revolutionary movement had already started in Warsaw in February 1861, Galician politicians preferred to concentrate on the fight for the autonomy of the province rather than begin an open military conflict with any of the three partitioned powers. Therefore, not Galicians but activists from Kongresówka and émigrés created a net of conspirators in Galicia, which threatened to unsettle this part of Polish culture. Significantly, the work of the Reds resonated among active Galicians, who created two secret organizations (called “Ławy”), one in Kraków and one in Lwów, which both tried to incorporate the province into the larger plan for a Polish fight for independence. Yet as Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s work alluded, in the region’s political and social situation, the Reds could not be as influential as the Whites. The newly created Rada Naczelna Galicyjska, in its manifesto, proclaimed that “Galicja w dzisiejszym położeniu swoim samodzielnie występować nie może. W organizmie prac narodowych przypada jej stanowisko wyczekujące i pomocnicze” [Galicia in its current position cannot act alone. In the organism of national efforts, we will thus offer it (Galicia) a supportive role]. The outbreak of the actual Uprising surprised both Red and White political camps in Galicia. Unprepared and not expecting military action, leaders of both parties decided to wait and monitor the event occurring in the Russian partition.

In the case of Galicia, it is important to consider the province’s specifics while analyzing the region’s potential participation in an all-national uprising like this one of 1863. Populated predominantly by Poles (especially its Western part) and claiming rising Polishness among its citizens, Galicia in a sense fulfilled the most important requirement

for its engagement in a national cause. Additionally, the geography of the province could play an important role for the potential revolution: mountains at Galicia's border with Russia and a system of rivers would prevent the Russian army from marching directly into Galicia to conscript or chase Polish soldiers. Also, since 1860, Galicia received more autonomy from the Habsburg Empire, which itself felt endangered by Prussia and an emerging Panslavism, as Panslavism was seen by many Poles as closely related to the Tsarist policy and the Russian Empire. The Monarchy, then, was helping create a Slavic identity for Galicia's Poles that was not Russophile. The crisis of the Monarchy and its multinational structure had ultimately forced a reduction in the repression apparatus since it was compelled to concentrate the majority of its military forces closer to the Italian border. Therefore, to the Polish revolutionaries, it seemed as though Galicia would be the perfect supporter of and addition to the Polish Uprising in Kongresówka.

The situation in Galicia, however, was not that clear and simple. Although Galician citizens most definitely supported a Polish "imagined community," a Polish cultural sphere, another "nation" (ethnic group) was waking up and demanding its political rights—the Ruthenians. After the Spring of the Nations in 1848, Eastern Galicia sought to find its way to receive independence. The developing Ukrainian national identity caused a split even among the Ruthenians themselves who were tending towards either St. Petersburg, proposing an option of the Greater Ukraine (Panslavists), or Vienna and the Emperor (as nationalist Ruthenians). Significantly, this particular situation resulted in tension between the more Polish Western and the predominantly Ruthenian Eastern parts of Galicia. But the Polish Uprising in Kongresówka called for social rights

for the peasants and religious freedom—the kind of rights that arguably began to exist in Galicia. As a result of the *Jacquerie* of 1846 and the 1848 revolution, the Habsburg Empire had already introduced social reforms abolishing serfdom. This law did not change, however, the discrepancies and antagonisms between the landowners and the lowest class, especially in Galicia. Not trusting the aristocrats, the peasants could not participate in the efforts of re-establishing the Polish state, where their rights would depend again on the noblemen. Some were therefore susceptible to agitation from the Kongresówka.

One final difference between the Polish regions ceded to Russia and those given to Austria was the religious factor. In the Russian partition, where *pravoslvye* [Eastern Orthodoxy] had the privileged position sanctioned by the government, the Polish Catholic Church openly joined the Uprising and organized numerous religious demonstrations, which incorporated Polish national elements. At the same time, the Habsburg Empire was historically Catholic, the main supporter of the Church State. And although the Catholics in Galicia were divided into two churches (Roman and Greek Catholic), they started to focus on nationality and ethnicity. The Greek-Catholic clergy, dominant in Eastern Galicia, supported the Ukrainian national movement, where the Roman-Catholic priests, of course, concentrated on the autonomy of Polish Galicia within the Austrian Empire.

In summary, Galicia's particular multinational, political, religious, and social position could potentially limit the engagement of its Polish citizens in the fight against the Russian oppressor initiated by the revolutionaries in the Congress Kingdom. And yet, after declaring the supportive position of Galicia, the Galician Whites nonetheless joined

the Reds in preparing for an upcoming Uprising. This prolonged period of speeches and political debates to recruit volunteers finally ended when the White emissaries received a direct message from Hotel Lambert that Napoleon III would support the Polish national cause on an international forum. Ultimately, this order meant that Galicia should physically prepare to join the military forces in Kongresówka:

Bracia nasi jedną ręką odpierają mężobójcze ciosy azjatyckich gwałtów, drugą wyciągają do nas, którym z łaski Boga lepszy los dostali w udziale, wzywając pomocy, która im choćby nie jak Polacy, ale jako ludzie nieść obowiązni jesteśmy. Towarzysze! Pierwszy raz odzywając się do Was ze stanowiska, na jakie rozkazem wyższym powołany zostałem, podnoszę głos mój do Was z wezwaniem, nie jak żołnierzy, ale jak do Polaków, którym przodkowie święty przykład dali, święty przykazali obowiązek, zawsze tam się znaleźć, gdzie uciskana ludzkość, zdeptane Boskie i ludzkie prawa wymagają tego.²⁰

Our brothers defend with one hand the deadly punches of Asian violence, the other hand reaches towards us, who, thanks to God's grace, received a better faith, and they cry for help, which we are obligated to deliver if not as Poles then as people. Comrades! For the first time using my office, I'm raising my voice to call you not as soldiers but Poles whose ancestors gave a holy example and a holy requirement to always be there where people are oppressed, God's laws are forgotten, and human rights would demand this presence.

Wobec powstania w ziemiach polskich pod zaborem moskiewskim będących mieszkańcy Galicji, jako Polacy, poczuili się do obowiązku świętego niesienia braciom swoim w rozpaczliwej ich walce z Moskwą ofiary z krwi swojej i z mienia swojego!²¹

Regarding the uprising on Polish lands under Moscow's government, the citizens of Galicia, as Poles, felt the holy obligation to sacrifice their own blood and their possessions for their brothers in their fight against Moscow!

Interestingly, both of the cited documents use similar vocabulary to underscore the close connection among all the Poles from all the divided regions, to present them as *one*

²⁰ This document was originally written and published in Kraków on February 3, 1863 by Antoni Lipczyński. Cited in Kieniewicz, *Galicja w Powstaniu Styczniowym*, 203.

²¹ Cited in Kieniewicz, *Galicja w Powstaniu Styczniowym*, 278.

nation, and to propagate a vision of Galicia's privileged position vis-à-vis the Russian Poland (and, by leaving out the Ruthenians, the majority of whom wanted to be Russophile supporters). Once again, human rights and religious tolerance stand as the focal point—the most persuasive and understandable arguments to Galicians whose help was essential for the Uprising. Additionally, all the leaders of the Galician opposition still expressed their support for the Austrian government and its Empire and forbade anti-Austrian demonstrations and attacks on Austrian troops.

The fact that the Whites joined and supported the Uprising ultimately meant a constant power struggle in Galicia. Both political factions, the Whites and the Reds, claimed superiority and a better understanding of the needs of the fighters and “the nation.” In this conflict, even the Warsaw government was not consistent. Initially calling for the help of the Reds, it gradually changed its support to the Whites as this camp, consisting mainly of the Galician aristocracy and gentry, was able to deliver funds and loans in the form of a “national collection.” Additionally, the landowners supported the Uprising by their own free will and not, as in the case of many Poles living in Kongresówka, on the order of the Polish national provisional government. The Whites grew in power by having on their side such powerful personages as Gołuchowski, Adam Sapieha or Ziemiałkowski.²² Meanwhile, the Reds, realizing that without Warsaw's support they could not overcome the Whites' monopoly, established a close cooperation with the Red opposition against the White elements in the national government. Others

²² All of them were wealthy Galician landowners, and especially Sapieha played an important role as a political leader in Galicia during and after the Uprising of 1863. Jan Lam, whose works about these events will be analyzed in the next chapter of this study, included Sapieha to the palette of individuals criticized and commented on by the author.

like Dobrzański, Ujejski or Szczepański protested against the Whites in open demonstrations and publications.²³

Beginning in the spring of 1863, soldiers returning from Kongresówka had an enormous influence on the region's policy looking for asylum behind the Austrian cordon. In time, military actions from and within Galicia became less frequent, but escapees were stationed in large numbers among Polish landowners. After numerous failures of the Polish forces against the Russian troops, the situation in Galicia became critical: conflicts between the local volunteers and soldiers from the Kingdom, Russia, and emigration grew more intense, and the aristocrats' animosities toward the escapees among them became unbearable. As we will see in the upcoming analysis of Jan Lam's text, these events and conflicts are objects of his critique and sarcastic presentation of failed aspects of Polish policies.

Then Traugutt, the leader of the revolt in Polish Kingdom, seemed for a while to be able to control the situation and tame both sides of the conflict simply by dismissing previous leaders and introducing in Galicia a centrist politician, Władysław Majewski, to supervise the Uprising in Austrian Poland. Additionally, the civil and military organizations in the region were restructured so that members from both parties (Reds and Whites) could participate in this Galician government. However, the situation of the Uprising itself in Kongresówka was in a critical phase. Until the winter of 1863, foreign support in the fight against Russia, especially the intervention of the Habsburg Empire,

²³ Among the best-known secret newspapers were *Prawda* in Lwów and *Ojczyzna* in Kraków. Szczepański was the author of the brochure *W tył!* [Backwards!] (published in late nineteenth-century) strongly criticizing the National Government and presenting the critical economical situation in Galicia.

was awaited and expected but the reality proved these expectations to be mistaken. Precisely then, the Austrian government began preparing an agreement with Russia and Prussia, which ultimately meant that Polish revolutionaries could no longer seek asylum in Galicia. Therefore, seeing in simultaneous anti-Habsburg demonstrations a final option for the Polish cause, Traugutt insisted on cooperation among the Poles, Italians, and Hungarians.²⁴ However, the growing radicalism and anti-Austrian slogans of Galician Poles could not find approval among the “White” Galician aristocrats and gentry.

These groups feared for their own safety, believing that the Austrian government might use Ruthenian and Polish peasants to fight against the Polish upper classes as had in Galicia in 1846. Such opinions thus reflect the always-existing memory of the earlier massacre, which further influenced the relationship between classes in Austrian Poland in ways that tended to moderate their enthusiasm for the Kongresówka Poles. Therefore, after realizing that the leftist extremists could possibly overtake the leadership of the Uprising in Galicia, Galician aristocrats persuaded the Austrian government to introduce martial law in the province. And this indeed came to pass. Austrian troops marched in on 29 February 1864 to force a wedge between Galician and Kongresówka patriots. Military trials and punishment were introduced for participating in illegal organizations or helping the rebels. This would mark the end of all military actions in Galicia, and at the same time, drove home the realization that without the cooperation of classes and political parties, any revolt against Polish oppressors—Austria, Prussia or Russia—would be meaningless.

²⁴ Jarzębowski, *Węgierska polityka Traugutta* (Warszawa: Dokumenty Wydziału Wojny, 1939) 266-274.

Significantly, the degree of Galicia's participation in the Polish Uprising of 1863 against the Russian Empire still remains very difficult to measure and judge. While Traugutt himself remarked that "Galicja przyniosła powstaniu więcej szkody niż pożytku"²⁵ [Galicia brought the uprising more harm than good], many historians and politicians agreed that without Galicia's help, the uprising could not have taken place even in the Russian part of Poland.

According to Stefan Kieniewicz, the question concerning the failure of the Uprising is still unanswered. As we will see in the next section of the present study, a few Polish writers tried to discuss some of the reasons in their literary texts, among them Jan Lam, whose vision of Galicia during the time of the January Uprising will stand in the center of my analysis. His position as a true Polish patriot, was a cry for his fellow Poles to give up Panslavism, to divorce themselves from the Ukrainians, and to forget romantic visions of the aristocratic Poland of the past. After the 1863 Uprising, Lam's vision proved itself as more serious than others would have thought. One can take his important novels as comments on what threatened to be the death of Polish culture, as he saw it, long after the Kingdom had perished.

²⁵ *Dokumenty Wydziału Wojny* 216-217.

Chapter 7

The January Uprising and Lam's Response: *Pan Komisarz Wojenny* (1863) and *Koroniarcz w Galicji* (1869)

Clearly, the complexity of the Polish Uprising would have required interpretations even for potential supporters. Austrian writers like Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, for example, simply under-represent the significance of “White” Polish sympathies in rural Galicia. But Polish writers such as Lam took up the challenge of making the Uprising comprehensible as a narrative, as a story that imagined the community that Poles and Ruthenians might have.

Lam's *Pan Komisarz Wojenny* and *Koroniarcz w Galicji* present the events of 1863 from the point of view of a Galician Pole who sees in Russia the biggest enemy of and danger to Polish culture. Although these texts are yet another attempt to reflect upon the Uprising and the faith in a possible Polish nation, Lam's prose significantly differs from

mainstream Polish literature of the time.²⁶ As we will see, Lam avoids the seriousness and pathos of most revolutionary literature and turns rather to satire and humor to change the atmosphere of his texts but not his message. Another significant factor determining the differences between his presentation of the Polish Uprising of 1863 against Russia and other canonical books dealing with the same issue is, without a doubt, his choice of a Galician setting for both of these stories. Lam decided to present the uprising and its outcome from a local perspective, far from the actual battles and the center of the war, to argue its significance for Polish culture.

The stories are by no means told from a disinterested point of view. Lam himself was actively engaged in the Uprising, according to his personal stands and beliefs. Already in 1862, Lam had published several articles for satirical journals such as *Kometa*, *Bąk* or *Krzykacz*, which were known not for their literary accomplishments but rather for their sharp criticism of the Russian Empire and Russophile policy of Wielopolski. Therefore, it is no surprise that, by the time of the January Uprising, Lam decided to join the Polish forces and fight for Polish independence in the Russian-occupied part of Poland. Several memoirs present Lam both as a fighter and a writer:

Komendant Lam, nie odpinając płaszcza, długo siedział na sofie, popijając herbatę podawaną przez uprzejme panny domu. Porucznik Wysocki, zamyślony i milczący, często wychodził i wracał; kilku szeregowców, zapewne znajomych lwowskich kapitana, starało się go rozweselić, sami bez troski i weseli. Jakiś koło północy zapanował spokój zupełny. Ale Lam, jako odpowiedzialny komendant, pewnie go nie miał. Wstawał, chodził, spoglądał w okno, w końcu wyciągnął z

²⁶ Lam concentrates mainly on Galicia and Galician everyday life, habits, political events, and real people. While other canonical Polish writers of that time, such as Sienkiewicz or Prus, opted for the so-called “organic” approach of educating people and foregoing the revolutionary ideas of Romanticism, Lam’s prose is a depiction of true events, fictionally described in his texts.

kieszeni kałamarz i pióro i wydzierając z notatnika kartkę po kartce zabrał się do pisania. Pisał niedługo, ale szybko—pewnie do “Gazety Narodowej”.²⁷

Commandant Lam, without opening his coat, was sitting on a sofa, drinking tea served by the nice ladies of the house. Lieutenant Wysocki, meditative and silent, often kept leaving and coming back; a few of the privates, probably acquaintances of the Captain from Lwów, cheerful and not worried themselves, were trying to cheer him up. About midnight it became completely still. But Lam, as a responsible commandant, had no peace. He kept getting up, looking out the window, and finally he took an inkpot from his pocket and, tearing page after page from his notebook, he started to write. He wrote briefly but quickly—probably to *Gazeta Narodowa*.

Although Lam found his own accomplishments during the initial battles of 1863 disappointing, his next expedition from Galicia to Kongresówka to support the Polish Uprising was more successful. His experiences and memories, as we will see, had an enormous impact on his writing.

Because of the magnitude of the January Uprising, its significance, and the disappointment of its failure, the post-Uprising period gave rise to many Polish literary texts, not only Lam’s, which tried to come to terms with the political and moral consequences of the events of 1863. Moreover, the outcome of the event became one of fundamental themes in the ideological polemics about the significance of such national sacrifices as both of the Polish Uprisings of 1831 and 1863.

The first critical voices concerning the massive sacrifice of the Polish people were raised by Polish conservative historians such as Henryk Lisiecki or Stanisław Koźmian.²⁸ These were followed by progressive novelists whose texts were to become canonical: Eliza Orzeszkowa, *Nad Niemnem* and *Gloria Victis*, Bolesław Prus, *Lalka*, and Żeromski,

²⁷ J. Battaglia, *Wspomnienie mojej młodości*. (Lwów 1913), cited in Frybes, “Wstęp,” XI

²⁸ Lisiecki and Koźmian belonged to the group Stańczycy proposing a conservative and loyalist program.

Wierna Rzeka, to name only a few.²⁹ These texts saw the Uprising as less positive, less pragmatic, and instead postulated the integrity of Polish culture rather than the Polish state. The idea for a new Polish state achieved subsequently a more real, visible form echoed in this literature: a regional cultural network and broader cooperation with the Habsburg Empire as a guarantee of Polish independence and/or Galician autonomy. However, despite the critique of the uprisings and Polish romantic torments in these texts, Russia was always perceived as the enemy of the Polish nation and even of the modern individual: “Przerobić dzieło Boże, przetopić duszę, zmusić istotę ludzką do zmiany jestestwa, osobowości, płci, oto idea rosyjska, oto system rosyjski w Polsce.” [To change God’s creation, to melt the soul, force the human being to change its existence, that’s the Russian idea, that’s the Russian system in Poland].³⁰ But Lam was arguing the earliest to advocate a different vision of a Polish nation, and he remains to this day one of the few using satire.

Two of Lam’s texts, *Pan Komisarz Wojenny* and *Koroniaryz w Galicji*, exemplify his typical personal style and favorite genre, but show his accurate political analysis. Together with the events described and the Galician setting, Lam produced a colorful presentation of Galician social and political life, patriotism, and symbolic integration into the broader Polish traditional system of values in the Uprising of 1863. Through satire and sarcasm, with at times a touch of sadness, he presents two parts of the divided Polish

²⁹ Orzeszkowa and Prus are two canonical Polish writers of the literary period *Pozytywizm*. For more information see, for instance, Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1983).

³⁰ Julian Kłaczkowski, cited in M. Zdziechowski, *Wpływy rosyjskie na duszę polską* [Russian Influences on the Polish Soul] (Kraków: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza, 1920) V.

culture, Poles from the Russian partition and the local Galicians, both ultimately affected by the events of 1863.

Był rok 1863. W całej Polsce odgrywał się krwawy i straszny dramat, o zakroju trochę szekspirowskim, bo obok scen wzniosłych i tragicznych nie brakło komicznych. Rzecz oczywista, że tamte działy się wszystkie za kordonem, a tych wyłączną widownią była Galicja. (*Pan Komisarz Wojenny*, 80)³¹

It was 1863. Throughout Poland, a bloody and terrifying drama took place, in some ways Shakespearean, because next to uplifting and tragic scenes it did not lack the comic ones. Obviously, all of them were happening behind a cordon, and Galicia witnessed these.

The Politics of Fiction

Published in Lwów's major newspaper *Dziennik Literacki* [The Literary Daily] in 1863, *Pan Komisarz Wojenny* is written as a chronicle, based on Lam's personal experience. Despite its subtitle "szkic współczesny z własnych i cudzych spostrzeżeń" [a contemporary sketch based on my own and others' observations], Lam significantly altered all the geographical and last names and added a fictitious plot to the main historical narrative. In so doing, he was able to create representative characters and typical situations, placing them in an authentic, historical moment in telling very fiction. Therefore, it is clear that the narrative position he chooses is that of a Polish rebel taking part in the fight for national independence, through which the reader is provided with all the details of the main plot. Yet that position may or may not be absolutely identical to Lam's.

³¹ Jan Lam, *Pan Komisarz Wojenny* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich) 3-74. (Further references to the texts are included in parentheses; translation of cited quotes are the author's.)

To achieve his goal, that is, to present the events and typical characters of the event, and his own ideology, Lam uses the figure of the narrator and his viewpoints from both the battlefields and the comfortable environments of the Galician gentry's houses. To implicate his readers Lam starts his short story with an immediate address to them:

Szanowny czytelniku! Widzę, jak się zabierasz do czytania powieści . . . bierzesz dziennik do ręki, uśmiechasz się błogo – nie do dziennika – ale do myśli, że przeczytawszy kilka kartek . . . uśniesz tak głęboko, jak ja bym spał w tej chwili . . . Nic - nic z tego nie będzie, moj kochany! . . . Musisz pójść ze mną . . . daleko na północ, do lasu – do obozu powstańców.

Dear reader! I already see the way you are beginning this novel...you take the diary in your hand and smile slightly—no, not at the diary but at your thoughts that after having read a couple of pages, you'll fall asleep so deeply, as I would at this very moment. No, nothing will come of this, my dear! You must come with me far, far to the north, to the woods—to the rebel camp.

Through the eyes of the main character, the reader learns about another figure caricatured by Lam: Mr. Henryk Łąkowski, who appears at the most important moments of the storyline. Łąkowski is a landowner from Kongresówka who decided to flee from the revolutionary politics of Russian partition using the fake excuse of a political mission and play a local hero in the peaceful Galicia among people who support the cause and welcome him with highest privileges. That is, Lam takes great pains to make his readers see how the political ideologies of that time relate to everyday life in Galicia.

Later in the narrative, the reader learns the truth about the self-made hero as the narrator recalls memories provided by one of the Polish fighters who happened to know Łąkowski. Here again, Lam uses humor as a mask, which only partially covers the political nature of the story: the fact that all Poles were united in the fight for Polish independence, although the main struggle was geared against the Russian oppressors.

Later in the story, Lam introduces another event, which is this time truly heroic. A group of Poles under the command of major Rębajło unsuccessfully battles against Russian troops:

Przyczyną tak nagłego wymarszu była wiadomość o zbliżaniu się nieprzyjaciół, którą przywiózł pan Henryk. Dążyliśmy ku pocziwym, starym naszym lasom, co to nie pozwalając wrogom policzyć nas od razu ani zniszczyć z daleka niecelnym ale gęstym ogniem, stały się dzisiaj postrachem niewolniczej czerni, pędzonej bez miłosierdzia na mordercze strzały dubeltówek i na ostre nasze kosy mazowieckie. (10-11)

The reason for such a sudden march was a message brought by Mr. Henryk that the enemy was coming closer. We headed towards our kind, old woods, which, since they did not allow our enemy to count us or destroy us from far away with their imprecise but heavy fire, became the fear for this slaved blackness, led merciless towards our murderous rifle shouts and our sharp Masovian scythes.

Above all, Lam's description of the Russians and their art of war is clearly negative. Although Lam disguises his criticism with humor, the goal achieved is even clearer. The Russians, as presented by the author, are simply a wild, uneducated horde: "dzicz nadwołżańska" [Volga's savages] (26), "cascy posiepaki" [assassins of the Tsar], or "niewolnicza czerń" [slavish rabble].

With increasing sarcasm in many passages, Lam reflects on and depicts the nature of the Russian soldiers in parallel, brutal terms:

Równy ze świtem huk dział przebudził nas i postawił na nogi. Huk ten dawał się słyszeć w odległości całej mili, a zważywszy, że na wiele mil dookoła nie znajdował się żaden oddział powstańczy, nie mogliśmy zrozumieć, co by znaczyło owe strzelanie moskiewskie? Później dopiero wyjaśniła nam się przyczyna całej tej kanonady. Nieprzyjacielem, nie mogąc nas znaleźć od razu, schwytali jakiegoś chłopka i kazali się prowadzić na miateżników (buntowników). Biedny chłopak nie wiedział wprawdzie nic o naszym stanowisku, ale wiedział, że mu Moskale wierzyć nie zechcą i będą bić, póki nie zginie lub nie pokaże, gdzie się schowali Laszki. Wskazał im tedy jakiś kawałek lasu jako miejsce naszego obozu. Moskale, dawszy mu kilka kopiejek na drogę,

puścili go na wolność i zaczęli bombardować bez miłosierdzia niewinne sosny i jodły za to, że wyrosły na polskiej ziemi. (17)

Right at dusk, we were awakened by the roar of the cannons and ready. This roar could be heard a mile away, and considering the fact that none of the uprising troops were close, we could not comprehend what Moscow's shooting really meant. Later on, the reason for the entire cannonade was explained. When they did not find us, the enemy took a peasant hostage and made him lead them to rebels. The poor peasant did not know anything about our position but knew that the Muscovites would not want to believe him and would beat him till he died or showed them where the Laszki³² were hiding. He showed them then a place in the forest, which he claimed was our post. The Muscovites gave him a few kopeks and let him go. Then they began to bombard mercilessly the innocent pines and firs only because they were growing on Polish ground.

This description of Russian troops (and, by implication, of the entire Russian nation) is characteristic of Lam's work in general. This particular viewpoint reflects the overall anti-Russian Polish mentality at this time.

Yet it is also important to look at the Polish nation as presented by Lam to see how the Poles viewed the national mission. Here again, Lam uses his favorite formula: he depicts an opportunist by the name of Łąkowski interested only in personal gain during a time of national sacrifice. In contrast to true patriots and fighters for the Polish cause, Lam gives his readers an example of false virtue: Mr. Łąkowski, whose stories reflect true events, in which, however, he did not participate. Łąkowski states, for instance:

Ojczyzna wymaga od nas tego podatku krwi, bo krew ja tylko zbawić może, i dlatego postanowiłem walczyć do ostatka, nie oglądając się na nic więcej, jak na głos powinności, który mi każe umierać obok moich braci! (39)

The motherland requires from us this sacrifice of blood, because only blood can redeem her. Therefore, I decided to fight to the end, not looking back at anything else but the voice of duty, which let me die among my brothers!

³² Historical name of the Polish tribes, here used by Russians pejoratively regarding the Poles.

Łąkowski, however, had not done this duty in anything but words.

Of course, throughout his text, Lam concentrates more on Galicians and Galician society rather than on the Poles from the Kongresówka and their own battles. In *Pan Komisarz Wojenny*, however, he decided to add an element of foreign critique. While in all of his texts he concentrates on Poles, their mistakes, failures, and heroism, one particular passage in this story presents his views on the international policy regarding the Polish situation. Here, we see Lam's own insights concerning possible and longed for help from foreign powers such as England and especially France, historically the closest Polish ally:

Ale tam na północy huczą działa moskiewskie, krew się leje strugami, ojczyzna wszystkie dzieci swoje woła w bój o życie lub zagładę—uwaga całego świata zwrócona jest w tę stronę, Anglicy i Francuzi o niczym innym nie dyskutują, jedni wymachując rękoma, a drudzy trzymając je w kieszeni. . . .³³ (41)

But there in the north, Russian canons roar, blood is shed, and the motherland calls all of her children to fight for life or extinction—the world's attention is focused on this site, the English and French discuss nothing else but that, one waves his hands, the other keeps it in his pocket. . .

As we will see in the following interpretation of *Koroniarcz w Galicji*, *Pan Komisarz Wojenny* is only a prelude to the subsequent texts, because Lam only touches specific issues avoiding forthright critique or elaboration on the politics that helps Poles to die, as well as criticizing false Polish patriots.

While *Pan Komisarz Wojenny* takes the form of a personal record of battlefield actions undertaken by Poles against their immediate oppressor, *Koroniarcz w Galicji* is

³³ This allusion applies to the foreign policy of England and France during the Polish Uprising of 1863, where the expected help for Poland was reduced to political discussions and stated admiration.

more complicated structurally. In this later text, Lam not only returns to Kongresówka and Galicia of 1863 but also includes digressions and commentaries on Galician political and social life in 1869, that is, after the province received autonomy within the Habsburg Empire. This particular text allows us to gauge how Lam's views on the Polish future, Galician politics, and social issues changed six years after finishing his *Pan Komisarz Wojenny*.

Certainly, Lam's personal touch remains consistent, first of all in his specific writing style. As usual, the narration is interrupted by digressions, commentaries, and ironic descriptions. This ironic-grotesque style operates with caricatures, paradoxical connections, and associations, related to the main text through a joke or word game, such as in names of main characters in his texts (Kukielski: effigy, puppet). Yet, the object of his incipient critique is not necessarily, and not only, correlated with historical events and persons from the recent past.

This novel, like his others, contains a number of allusions and remarks on Galicia in 1868 and the political situation of the time. Therefore it is important to note that *Koroniarz w Galicji* was written in a very turbulent moment of political and social life of Galicia, characterized by misunderstandings, political debacles and parliamentary "games," and that Lam used his knowledge of Galicia's claims for independence or autonomy to influence the many political fractions within Galicia. This point has been undervalued in literary criticism. Many literary researchers (for instance Frybes) claim that the utilitarian party of "mameluki" (Gołuchowski's camp) supported only the upper class leaving out the social issues and the peasantry's rights. Such overstatements that

reduce the issue's complexity are common among "communist researchers," Polish scholars working in Poland under communist rule who are dogmatically committed to workers' rights, not to historical culture.

Yet in *Koroniarz w Galicji*, Lam captures Galician diversity by means of a travel motif, introducing historical events along with his criticism of them. In this case, the traveler and the main character of the text is Artur Kukielski, a young *Zureisende*³⁴ traveling from Russian Poland to Galicia. Yet Kukielski remains a grotesque figure, through whom Lam will expose the reader to the experiences and life of "książę Artura Świętopełek na Starej Czetwertni, Kitajgrodzie *et caet., et caet.* Czetwertyńskiego, *alias* Konstantego hrabiego Cybulnickiego, *alias* majora Jana Wary, *nec non* Henryka de la Roche-Choart, wicehrabiego de Tourne-Broche i barona de Barcarolles, *a recte* Artura Kukielskiego" (*Koroniarz w Galicji*, 330) [of prince Artur Świętopełek from Stara Czetwertnia in Kitajgrad etc., etc., of Czetwertyński, *alias* count Konstanty Cybulnicki, *alias* major Jan Wara, *nec non* Henryk de la Roche-Choart, vice-count de Tourne-Broche and baron de Barcarolles, *a recte* Artur Kukielski]. A Polish reader would immediately recognize Kukielski as derived from *kukła* or in Polish "puppet" or "effigy." Kukielski is thus a highly comic figure, not able to act on his own and not having a strong personality, a sort of opportunistic chameleon changing personalities and identities according to his surrounding. He is an aristocratic version of Hasek's later *Good Soldier Švejk*.

³⁴ *Zureisender*—a name given by the Galicians and Austrian officials to the incoming peoples escaping from Kongresówka and finding asylum in Galicia.

Already in the title of the novel, by naming Kukielski *koroniarz* [coming from *Korona*, the crown, thus from the Russian Poland], Lam sends an important message and commentary concerning his contemporaries and Galician stance on the “other,” non-Galician Poles:

...Bo wolno może Koroniarzowi uważać się za “emigranta”, gdy jest po tej stronie kordonu, ale nie wolno Galicjanowi nazwać emigrantem nikogo, kto przybywa z Królestwa, z Poznańskiego, z Prus, z Litwy, z Ziem Zabrzanych. Polak w polskim kraju nie może być tak nazwanym i sam siebie tak nazywać nie powinien, chyba że jest przypadkowo niemieckim *Grafem* i że mu się daje we znaki nietolerancja instytucji kredytowych, urzędujących w niezrozumiałym dla niego języku polskim. Taki *Graf* jest tutaj prawdziwym emigrantem, nieszczęśliwą istotą, pozbawioną towarzystwa pokrewnych jej wyobrażeniami, mową i obyczajami, skazaną na obcowanie chyba z pensjonowanymi landsdragonami od śp. urzędów cyrkularnych lub *Buchsenspannerami* wielkich panów – bo innych Niemców niewielu znajdzie się w Galicji. (78)

It is allowed for the Koroniarz to treat himself as an émigré when he’s on that side of the cordon, but no Galician is allowed to call an émigré anybody from the Kingdom, Lithuania, from the Annexed Lands. A Pole in a Polish country cannot be named that way, and he should not call himself that unless he is a German *Graf* and the intolerance of the credit institutions, which operate in his incomprehensible Polish language, is a burden to him. Such a *Graf* is here true émigré, a pithy full person, lacking a company of people of similar imagination, language and habits, and condemned to associate probably with retired landsdragons of the “rest in peace” *Zirkamt* or *Buchsenspanner* of important people—because there are not that many other Germans in Galicia.

This particular passage is also Lam’s personal polemic with writers contemporary to him, Józef Narzyski and Władysław Sabowski, authors of a comedy *Emigrant w Galicji* [Émigré in Galicia]. Significantly, the latter was one of correspondents for the Kraków’s newspaper *Kraj*, whose texts criticized Lam and his work. Additionally, his narrator’s views are clear to the readers—first of all, there should be no divisions between Galician Poles and Poles from other partitions since they all belong to the same

nation. They constitute an imagined community, which proves itself to be a single entity despite the political division of the country. Galicia is its core. Secondly, this particular passage refers to many Poles who, wishing to belong to the upper class by any means, simply were buying titles from the Austrian government, thus creating what was known as a “paper aristocracy.” They had no real affiliation and no real cultural identity.

Interestingly, the main character is a similar “pretender.” Using false identities and false résumés, Kukielski creates around himself an aura of “nobility” to win over the Galician aristocrats in order to manipulate them for his own purpose. And while Lam underscores his own devotion to the Polish nation as a single entity, his protagonist does the opposite by claiming a status that is not his own:

Trzeba było bowiem wiedzieć, że p. Artur Kukielski, vulgo Jan Wara, nie tylko przejęty był sam do głębi swoją wyższością nad Galilejczykami, ale okazywał im to przy każdej sposobności. Słyszac go można by było mniemać, że naród polski w istocie składa się z dwóch ras, zupełnie odrębnych, z których jedna mieszka poza Galicją i w doskonałości wszelkiego rodzaju nie ma sobie równej, podczas gdy druga, galicyjska, pod względem zalet intelektualnych, fizycznych i towarzyskich zajmuje zaledwie środek między małpą a niedźwiedziem. (*Koroniarz w Galicji*, 88)

One has thus to know that Mr. Artur Kukielski, vulg. Jan Wara, not only exalted deeply his superiority over the Galicians but showed them this at every occasion. Hearing him one would think that the Polish nation consists in reality of two different races, completely different ones, one of which lives outside of Galicia and in perfection that has no equal, while the other, the Galician one, regarding the intellect, physical, and social talents takes only the middle place between an ape and a bear.

This particular opinion is not only Kukielski’s own; in a real sense, he represents all the Poles from the Russian partition, who came to regret Galicia’s participation in the uprising. As they saw it, Galicia had its own problems with autonomy and, most

importantly, suffered from chaos and misunderstanding among its political leaders. Therefore, many thought it was not reliable and not stable enough to truly support this military movement. As we have seen, however, the conflict between both political camps, the Whites and the Reds, was significant not only in Austrian Poland but influenced local policy in Kongresówka as well.

Here, once more, Lam proves his thorough knowledge of the current situation and all the difficulties under which the national cause had suffered. To present the facts, he uses the figure of Kukielski, the puppet, to reflect upon the struggle of Galicia and Kongresówka and their efforts in the military conflict with the two Powers: the Russian and the Habsburg Empires. Kukielski's multiple identities, similar to these of Preclicek from Lam's *Wielki Świat Capowic*, give the readers a broad view into Galician society. Using his main character, Lam gives his readers the opportunity to meet different societies, groups, and families in Galicia and hopes to show how the aristocratic pretenders of the Kongresówka will not lead to the future of a new Polish culture nation. In so doing, he creates a picture of the significant part of Galician society, leaving out only the lower class, the peasants, as their voice is (in then-current political terms) represented in the novel through the Reds. He identifies the groups that can make the history of his new Poland.

The Question of Aristocrats

Although Lam depicts different political parties and different political views among Galicians, his portrayal is far from an objective historical work. Here again, Lam

takes up his favorite tools to depict the region and its inhabitants—humor and caustic satire. Significantly, the protagonist, Artur Kukielski, starts his journey through the Austrian Poland as an aristocrat, hiding his true identity as an emissary to Galicia from the National Government. Kukielski thus opts for “White cover,” revealing at the same time the Whites’ criticism of the Reds and their political future. In the meantime, however, Lam uncovers the weaknesses, mistakes, and ignorance of the Polish noblemen who in the novel represent the conservative White camp. In so doing, the reader is able to clearly see the reason for the chaos and failure of the Uprising. Additionally, Lam offers numerous personal allusions and digressions throughout the entire novel to show the reader all the different groups Kukielski encounters.

As we have seen, the most powerful group in Galicia were gentry and the aristocracy. Based on their financial resources and support from the émigré circles in Paris (as Ebner-Eschenbach agreed), the noblemen demanded the leading role in the region’s policy and its participation in the Uprising. Other factors, however, determined how adequate the activity of Whites proved to be. First of all, among Galician gentry, their personal benefits and interests played a significant role. Secondly, the family roots of many of them were, paraphrasing once more Strelka, just “paper,” since their noble titles were bought from Austrian officials. Thus let us now look more closely at this social class and its development during the January Uprising as presented in Lam’s *Pan Komisarz Wojenny*.

The main problem of Galician landowners, as presented by Lam, is their feigned devotion to Polishness as long as it was defined in terms of their own benefit and, of

course, including the right name and title. To this group belonged the Galician delegates to the Viennese parliament, postulating and declaring their devotion to the Polish cause, as Lam ironically explain this using a mathematic formula:

...choć powiadają, że niektórzy z tych panów starali się nie tylko o wielkie koncesje dla kraju, ale take o małe koncesje dla siebie, to każdy nie uprzedzony przyzna, że delegat jest tylko częścią kraju, a więc jeśli każdy kraj jest $= a$, to delegat jest $= a/n$, z czego wynika, iż starając się o koncesje dla kraju i dla siebie, delegat miał na oku rezultat: $a + a/n$. Ponieważ atoli $a + a/n > a$, więc delegat tego rodzaju dążył do większego i świetniejszego celu niż taki, który upominał się ciągle tylko o rezolucję, bo ta, według powyższej formułki, jest $= a$. Oto matematyczny dowód, że postępowanie delegacji galicyjskiej w Wiedniu było jak najlepsze, i potrzeba nie znać pierwszych elementów algebry, by tego nie pojąć od razu. (122)

... although some say that some of these men were applying [to the Austrian government] not only for the big concessions for the country but also for small ones for themselves, every objective person will admit that a delegate is a part of the country; therefore if each country equals a , than a delegate equals a/n , from which results that applying for concessions for the country and for himself the delegate had in mind the result of $a + a/n$. Because then $a + a/n > a$, this kind of delegate pushed to a bigger and holier goal than simply asking for resolution, as the resolution according to the above stated formula equals a . This is thus the mathematical proof that the activities of Galician delegates in Vienna were all the best, and one does not need to know the basics of algebra to understand that immediately.

In many similar passages, Lam presents his views on Polish gentry, especially in light of the Polish national cause and their involvement in the Uprising. Lam uses again the figure of Kukielski to access this group and create for the readers an insider's perspective in this class.

In both of the novels, Lam underscores the aristocrats' affection for and bond to symbols and overt demonstrations of nationality, mainly among members of the Polish upper classes. The Polish language as such can be excluded from this context, since,

especially in Galicia, Polish was officially used and accepted among all the classes and permitted by the Austrian government. However, introducing French as the language of all the conversations among some of the “better born” groups in Galicia (as it was in Russia), Lam alludes to yet another long-lasting Polish weakness: the blind worship and imitation of French culture. Even before the Partitions, Polish intellectuals desperately sought a change in cultural areas, calling Poland “papuga narodów” [the parrot of other nations] in the era of literary romanticism (Słowacki). In this particular text, Lam alerts his readers to the reality that nothing has changed. The same values among aristocrats continued to influence their opinions. This point is also demonstrated here through Artur Kukielski, who declares, representing all the illusions and knowledge he possesses about being a “true” aristocrat, that:

P. Artur nadmienił, że z urodzenia i wychowania należąc do “lepszego” towarzystwa, uważa język francuski jakby drugą mowę ojczystą i nie sprawia mu wcale trudności uchodzić za Francuza. W domu pani Szeliszczyńskiej argument taki byłby pogńębiającym, korzono się tam przed człowiekiem należącym do “lepszego” towarzystwa i mówiącym tak płynnie po francusku. Ale parafianka błotniczańska miała inne wyobrażenia w tej mierze i czuła się obrażoną tym, że nazwano “lepszym” towarzystwo, do którego nie należała i chęlpiono się jakoby znamię nadzwyczajnej wyższości wprawą w języku, którym władała może lepiej od panny Celiny, ale gorzej nierównie od pana Artura. Dostał się tedy panu Kukielskiemu w odwet przycinek, że “u nas” l e p s z y m jest to towarzystwo, które jest bardziej polskim, i że tylko trutnie salonowe paplają bez potrzeby po francusku. (117)

Mr. Artur added that being born and raised as a member of a “better” class, he treats the French language as his second mother tongue, and that it is not difficult for him to be mistaken for a Frenchman. In the house of Mrs. Szeliszczyńska, such an argument would be devastating, because there one worshiped a person from a “better” society speaking French fluently. But the girl from the Blotniczny Parish had a different view on this issue and was hurt that Artur called as “better” a society she did not belong to, and that an indicator of high status was a language she spoke maybe better than Miss Celina but much worse than Mr. Artur.

Therefore, Artur received a quick response that “here, in our land” b e t t e r is a society, which is simply a more Polish one, and that only salon drones blabber constantly in French without reason.

In this particular context, it is important to note the discrepancy between the two classes presented: Lam shows the aristocrats as empty and focused on salons and foreign language, while the middle class was proud and concentrated on patriotic issues, including the language and tradition. It is important at this time, however, to underscore that Lam carefully planned the portrayal of the middle class. Unfortunately, not all Polish bourgeoisie is to be treated equally in terms of their patriotism and their engagement in the national cause. Lam’s hopes rest entirely upon the progressive educated middle class rather than upon the self-centered aristocracy or the Polish gentry following in their footsteps.

One significant issue specified by Lam in this particular context is the relationship between the noblemen and the gentry. Interestingly, these two sub-classes, although possessing in the Commonwealth all the same rights and privileges (including the famous *liberum veto*),³⁵ are accurately portrayed as being different and separate. Wishing to achieve a higher social status through titles and service, the Polish gentry, unmistakably described by Lam, simply seeks contacts and full acceptance from aristocrats who, on the other hand, treat them without respect and use them for their own purposes. To best exemplify this issue, one need only look closer at one of the scenes in Cewkowice, a gentry house in Galician countryside where Kukielski, as Prince Czwertyski, reveals his “true” opinion about gentry.

³⁵ For more information on *liberum veto*, please refer to the Introduction part of this study.

He expects a positive reaction and future benefits from the listeners, especially among the ladies, and the acceptance of the master of the house:

Nie, panie – rzekł jego książęca mość z emfazą - w Polsce nie ma arystokracji! Nie mamy wprawdzie w tradycjach naszych absolutnej równości, ale istniała równość szlachecka; szlachcic na zagrodzie równy wojewodzie. ... Wspaniałym jest widok dębu, który pozwala słabemu powojowi wic się około swego pnia odwiecznego, wzniosłym jest Cezar Oktawian August, gdy przyjacielską dłoń podaje Cynnie ... ale dla szlachcica galicyjskiego taki zawsze najpiękniejszym, najwięcej uwielbienia i ucałowania rąk i nóg godnym ideałem będzie książę, który wszedłszy pod jego strzechę, zacznie mówić o równości szlacheckiej i cytować to najfalszywsze pod słońcem, najbardziej ze wszystkich w Polsce kłamliwe przysłowie, że “szlachcic na zagrodzie” itd. Powiedz to szlachcicowi, mości książę, a po Panu Bogu i Matce Najświętszej nie będzie znał innego patrona, opiekuna i jaśnie oświeconego, łaskawego pana, prócz ciebie, nikomu nie będzie się tak nisko kłaniał i nikogo nie uzna wyższym od siebie. (263)

No, my dear mister – said the Count with emphasis – there is no aristocracy in Poland! Although we do not have the tradition of absolute equality, there is the gentry equality; *szlachcic na zagrodzie równy wojewodzie* [gentry on own land has an equal position to a governor].... How wonderful is a view of an oak that allows the weak ivy to grow around its old trunk; how proud is Caesar Octavian Augustus giving his friendly hand to Cynna ... but for the Galician gentry man the most beautiful, the most worthy of respect and a hand and foot kiss will be always a prince that entering the gentry's house would start talking about the noble equality and quoting the most false, most lying proverb under the sun that “szlachcic na zagrodzie,” etc. But say it to the gentry man, and after the Lord and the Holy Mother he won't know a more gracious patron, caretaker and enlightened lord than you, and he won't bow before anybody else, and nobody else but you would he happily consider as better than himself.

Another significant detail did not escaped Lam's attention in describing Cewkowice and the gentry living there. In his portrayal, this family manifests its mourning of the Polish nation's sacrifices by wearing black:

Wszystkie cztery panie były w czarnych sukniach, miały żelazne czarne krzyżyki na czarnych żelaznych łańcuszkach u szyi, czarne paski z białymi orłami u talii i czarne pierścionki z białymi obwódkami na paluszkach. Były to bowiem czasy

żałoby, nasze panie smuciły się nad niedolą ojczyzny – teraz już im weselej, noszą więcej kolorów, niż jest ich w tęczy. (252)

All four women were wearing black dresses, had black iron crosses on black iron chains on their necks, black belts with white eagles around their waists, and black rings with white bands on their little fingers. This was the time of mourning; our women were saddened by the misery of our motherland—now, they are already happier, they wear more colors than are in the rainbow.

And once again, Lam's historical references are unmistakable—indeed, many

Polish patriotic societies even called for this external manifestation of support and asked the Polish Galicians to boycott concerts and public entertainment:

Każdy capstrzyk z muzyką gromadzi zawsze nieprzeliczoną ćmę hołoty wykrzykującej wesoło, za pan brat i w najlepszej zgodzie ze służbą austriacką i policją! . . . A co najboleśniejsza, że ta gawiedz bezrozumna jest po większej części polską i połowa po polsku ubraną! Precz do domu rozupustnicy! Precz od muzyk austriackich, które jak wszystko austriackie nienawistne wam być powinno. . . Za to arystokracja w domu siedzi. Czasem tylko sprezentuje nam przelatujący powóz, fioletowe jasne panie polskie, naigrywające się z narodowej żałoby. Towarzyszą im oficerowie austriaccy lub inny rodzaj hołoty cylindrowej.³⁶

Each evening with music attracts always an unnumbered crowd shouting merrily, like brothers and with best relations with the Austrian servants and police. And what's hurting the most is that this imbecile rabble is partially Polish and half of them are dressed according to the Polish code. Go home, you rakes! Go away from Austrian music, which like everything Austrian should be hated by you... And the aristocrats sit at home. Only sporadically they would show themselves in a speeding carriage, light violet Polish ladies making fun of national mourning. They are accompanied by Austrian officers or by some other sort of rabble wearing tall hats.

In the case of this Polish aristocratic family, their devotion to Poland and the

Polish fight for national independence proved to be only an illusion: black clothes

symbolized their sympathy and solidarity, yet in the reality meant nothing—they did not

³⁶ The color purple represents a compromise between the patriotic mourning and Austrian loyalists sought by some noble ladies; a tall hat for men, on the other hand, was a definite symbol of servilism. Lwow, 30 September 1862, cited in Kieniewicz, *Galicja w Powstaniu Styczniowym*, 7.

act. And as Lam indicated in this much later text, this mourning ended after the Uprising with the “new” era in Galicia, when the province was granted relative autonomy within the Habsburg Empire.

Roughly thirty-five years later, Galicia would actually witness a similar manifestation among the Poles—use of a black dress code and a period of mourning in Galicia as a sign of support for the Austrian Habsburg family after the death of Empress Elisabeth.³⁷ Although the Empress did not possess any close connections to Galicia, Kraków or Lwów, her assassination in 1898 received much attention in the region. Austrian propaganda used the tragic event to appeal to all levels of society, regardless of their ethnic roots, creating sympathy for the Habsburg family. Such demonstrations of support for the Austrian Empire affirmed the absolute loyalty of the Poles to the Kaiser (although not only the Poles, as Jews and Greek-Catholics who also joined Austria in mourning).

In Lam’s reflections, neither of the two political camps could completely justify its actions in terms from which the future Polish nation (or a future state) could profit. As is clear in the novel, the Whites cultivate and represent the “old,” conservative thinking with the goal of self-aggrandizement. On the other hand, however, when the Red group called for reforms and political program, they did not fully understand their proposed program. To best access the Reds’ political program, Lam will back away from his own

³⁷ In 1898, after the tragic events in Geneva when Empress Elisabeth was fatally wounded and died, the whole region of Galicia joined the Kaiser and the other parts of the Empire in practices remembering the dead monarch’s wife. Significantly, the assassination perceived initially as sensation, was speaking to all levels of Galician society and to all religions represented in the province. In villages and cities, black flags were hung as a sign of mourning, theatres and shops were closed, and special funeral services were celebrated in Rynek Główny in Krakow to honor Elisabeth.

literary commentary and include in the text immediate slogans and opinions from the Reds themselves. One particular scene in Lam's novel, at the house of the patriotic middle-class pharmacist Odwarnicki, allows a look into this group, its background and postulates:

Tu jakiś eks-chłopoman z kijowskiego uniwersytetu świadczył się z Janem Jakubem Rousseau, że wszyscy ludzie są braćmi, cytował Eugeniusza Sue na dowód, że jezuici zgubili Polskę, i wywoływał różne okropne widma z różnych okropnych historii jako jasne argumenta, że szlachta jest do niczego i że nie będzie Polski, póki nie powieszą ostatniego szlachcica, bo szlachcice paplają po francusku, traktują braci demokratów przez nos jako "tych panów" i jeżeli idą do powstania, to pchają się zaraz do sztabu. (125)

Here some ex-peasant fan from Kiev University was proving, using Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that all people are brothers, he quoted Eugene Sue as proof that the Jesuits brought Poland to disaster, and he recalled some other terrible ghosts from different terrible stories as arguments that the gentry is worth nothing and that there won't be any Poland until the last nobleman will be hanged, because the nobles blabber only in French and promote themselves immediately to the command.

In this scene, Lam refers to the "Red Radicalism" as a program originating among politically active students at the university in Kiev and which was characterized by a fanatic devotion to peasantry (much similar to that presented by Leo Tolstoy). In his satiric portrayal, however, Lam emphasizes the fact that the Reds sought solutions for actual Polish social issues in utopian visions of the greatest men of French, and European Enlightenment, Rousseau (1712-1778), and in writings of Eugene Sue (1804-1857), whose anticlerical novels portray social injustice in rather unreal settings.

Because of this radicalism, unrealistic elements of the program, and the engagement of mainly young people without life and political experience, Lam thus turns away from the "Red" political option and tries to find counter-elements in the "White"

camp, located on the far right of the political spectrum. And yet, in *Koroniarz w Galicji*, Lam characterizes the Whites through humorous anecdotes, portraying them essentially as a group without true devotion and, most importantly, without common sense.

Similarly, while the Reds are left radical, the Whites represent “old” conservatism, attachment to symbols, to papal supremacy. In the same scene in Odwarnicki’s house, Lam juxtaposes two camps, presenting both sides’ commentary to actual events of Galicia. Thus was the position taken by the “niebieski ultramontanizm spod Wawelu” (126) [blue ultramontanizm from Wawel]:

Jakis młodzieniec z Krakowa, który rozróżniał między ludzmi braci starszych i młodszych, widział zbawienie Polski w katolicyzmie i nie był za bezzwłocznym wytepieniem szlachty, ale przyznawał, że są indywidua, które sobie za wiele pozwalają. (126)

Some young man from Kraków, who divided people into older and younger brothers, had seen Polish redemption in Catholicism and, although he was not for an immediate extermination of the gentry, he admitted that there are some individuals, who allow themselves too much.

In this context, Lam refers explicitly to popular romantic conceptions of solidarity, for instance, those postulated by Zygmunt Krasiński³⁸ (1812-1859), as indicated in the above-mentioned division of people into “younger and older brothers.” Consequently, this faction is more closely aligned with the Catholic Church, more specifically to the Vatican, in contrast to the ideas of the Reds who separated the Church from the national concept. The Whites, as presented in *Koroniarz w Galicji*, demonstrate that it is not without significance that Lam concentrated on Galician aristocracy and

³⁸ It is extremely interesting that Lam uses the historical hidden reference to Krasiński, as Krasiński represented in Polish literature a tendency called “Poland, the Messiah of Nations,” and later in his works postulated national-religious solidarity and criticized national revolutions that could harm the religious order.

gentry as the core of the White political option. As Lam satirically points out, the Whites i.e., the aristocrats and gentry, joined the Uprising only because of the Reds' engagement and political success. The fear of losing political power over Poles in Galicia was ultimately the only factor determining their actions.

Lam's comparison of the two main political factions in Galicia suggests what Lam postulated, namely that a wise leadership for a Polish nation would be based on a clearly stated program suited to the specific needs of the region and its condition, somewhere between the Red and the White camps from the Kongresówka.

Significantly, Galicia witnessed yet another political attempt to influence the future of Poland and the Galician Poles. Although not emphasized in this novel, Lam adds to his spectrum of political options and parties the existing group of Panslavists.

Ponieważ zaś kuśmierz także w lecie chodzi bez futra, więc i literaci, a nawet dziennikarze narodowo-demokratyczni sprawiają sobie na lato lżejsze, ogólnosłowiańskie ubranie, a ducha narodowego tylko od czasu do czasu przewietrzają i trzepią go z wielkim hałasem, ażeby wiadano, że mają go u siebie i "stoją przy nim na straży". (252 f.)

Because in the summertime the fur-maker is not wearing a fur coat either, the literates and even the national-democratic journalists are finding themselves for the summer a lighter, an all-Slavic costume, and they are airing the national spirit only from time to time, beating it with big noise so that everybody would know that they have it and "guard it."

For Lam, who openly expressed his bias against Russia, such a solution would have meant a complete abolition of basic rights and culture in general and, therefore, it became yet another target of his sharp criticism. Associated with everything Russian and hence detested by the majority of Galician Poles, the option of an all-Slavic connection was perceived as a mistake, and its allies as traitors to the Polish cause. To remind his

readers of the threat the Russian Empire presented and its barbarism, Lam reveals the “true” nature of Russians and their opinion about the Poles:

Wiadomo było, że niektóre partie wychodzców, wydane przez Austriaków Moskalom, w oczach żołnierzy austriackich wymordowane było przez żołdactwo carskie. . . . Każdy wiedział, że za kilka dni albo zginie albo, co gorzej, zostanie się pod śledztwo moskiewskie, gdzie zechcą mękami wymusić na nim zeznanie odnoszące się do organizacji ruchu, a w końcu zabiją go, jak innych. (344)

It was known that some of the émigrés extradited by the Austrians to the Muscovites, were murdered in front of Austrian soldiers by the Tsar’s mercenaries. . . . Everyone knew that in a few days they were either going to die or, what’s even worse, fall under Moscow’s interrogation where he would be forced to testify against the organization, and by the end, would be killed like all the others.

Russia, as pictured in *Koroniarcz w Galicji*, does not fulfill the European standards of rights and culture and could in no way be accepted by the Poles. The Russians are treated in the novel as uncivilized and ruthless oppressors. And although Lam criticizes the Poles and their mistakes, he clearly draws a line between them and the Russians. Having a European heritage and cultural connection, the Poles have the right to be independent from their “Asian” enemy.

Conclusion

Although Lam represents the events of the January Uprising and in his protagonist, an opportunist from Kongresówka seeking asylum in Galicia among aristocrats and who changes identities to provide a better life for himself, the focal point of the novel is Galicia, its society and its politics. Writing about Poles as a single nation fighting for their possible independent nation-state, Lam thus satirically differentiates

between and shows that the difference between the *Koroniarze* [Poles from Kongresówka], Galicians, and Poles from Posnania are what made the emergence of a viable nation-state unlikely. By incorporating comments on contemporary events and politicians in his text, Lam underscores the otherness of Galicia, and its vital need to remain federated with Austria. At the same time, his two stories confirm the existence of a relatively subtle imagined Polish community in the region. Significantly, the specifics of Galicia are present in every scene of the novel: in characters, landscapes, language, and a Galician understanding of Polishness.

Through *Koroniarz w Galicji*, even a casual reader would discover why this Austrian part of Poland had a chance to become the heart of Polish culture and Polish being in the nineteenth century, even if it never become a nation state. Without a doubt, one significant factor of Galician otherness is its social-political identity: class structure and multi-ethnicity of the society living in the province. Nowhere else had the aristocracy and the gentry such an impact on policy and history, on almost every aspect of every day life, often with a negative outcome. Therefore, Lam's suggestions and reflections on the future of the Polish nation are unmistakable: all his hopes lie in a progressive middle class, the only truly patriotic and educated group, able to resurrect the fallen dreams of the independent Polish nation or a nation seeking existing within an autonomous state because it resists extremes of nationalism and class structure.

Conclusion

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and on the eve of Poland's acceptance to the European Union, the Poles find themselves seeking their "true" identity by returning to Europe, as they understand it, i.e., to the West. Throughout the 120 years when Poland was partitioned among Russia, Prussia, and the Habsburg Empire and the state ceased to exist, this project has addressed some strategies through which the Poles attempted to preserve their distinct cultural identity and their nation without a state. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, many such memories of the past and the political and cultural struggle of the nation still exist in the peoples' minds and every-day life (e.g., schools, language, movies, TV, and journalistic articles). Specifically, the images of Russian oppression and Germanization have remained elements of the collective memory of contemporary Poles, and only Galicia, despite the incorporation of the region into the Habsburg Empire, continues to function as a mental "safe haven" for Polish culture and as the place for celebrating the roots of a Polishness that might be recoverable for the nation today.

This fact of cultural memory, however, has not necessarily been preserved as part of official historical memory. Although the partitioned Poland disappeared from Europe's

political maps by the end of the eighteenth-century, the *Realpolitik* of the nineteenth-century, like the literary production of the era, still provided a space for the Poles and their lost nation-state. As we have seen in this study, the Poles sought to remain Polish and were seeking a political option that would grant them relative freedom as a culture and a hope for a future re-establishing of Poland as a state of some kind.

The first nineteenth-century political power that gave the Poles a glimpse of hope for a (quasi-)independent nation state was Prussia. Strongly supported by the Polish Prince Radziwiłł, this solution proved to be disappointing for the Poles, as a new strong political leader, Otto von Bismarck, made Prussia into the core of the German Empire, germanizing the Poles and closing the door to a kind of Polish-Prussian union. This mismatched “marriage” or rather this unfinished “match-making” between the Poles and the Prussians/Germans was the theme of Theodor Fontane’s *Vor dem Sturm*. As Fontane shows, Poland and Prussia cannot co-exist in the political environment of the nineteenth-century Prussia, slowly becoming a part of *Deutsches Reich*. Significantly, however, Fontane was one of many germanophone writers who were quite willing to postulate Prussia as multiethnic or to support a recreation of a Polish state. Freiligrath, Herwegh, Heine, Chamisso, or von Platen, to name a few, all saw Poland’s fate as historical injustice and demanded recognition for the Poles’ rights.

Specifically, these romantic poets used this (rapidly fading) image of Prussia as a counterweight to a real historical problem for any possible reemergence of Poland: the fact that, after Prussia, both Russia and Austro-Hungary were empires with claims to and designs on once-Polish territory. Almost uniformly, they considered Russia and the

Russian Tsar as the source of horrible oppression and brutality. Indeed, *Kongresówka*, the part of Poland ceded to Russia as a result of the three partitions, witnessed extreme Russian violence and punishment for the Poles' attempts to win their independence from the Russian state (November Uprising of 1830 and January Uprising of 1863). In the Poles' views, then, incorporating the region into Russia and transforming Poles into Russian citizens would ultimately mean the abolishment of all cherished values, Western values, as they saw it, such as independence, religious freedom, or education in the Polish language. Being part of Russia for them equaled being part of barbaric Asia, the "eindringliche Barberei von Osten," as Heine pointed out already in 1823 in his memoirs *Über Polen*.³⁹ Many Polish authors recognized this Russian threat and described it in their poems and novels, for instance, the Polish canonical romantics Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855) and Juliusz Słowacki (1809-1849), or the later realists from *Kongresówka*: Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841-1910), Bolesław Prus (1847-1912), Stefan Żeromski (1864-1925), and from Galicia the discussed in this study Jan Lam. All of these authors were interested in what Poland's future might be, after the Prussian option disappeared, and so they took up various versions of a debate that played off Austro-Hungary against Russia, discussing two further fates of their culture in this way.

Interestingly, Lam's perspective on Russian and the Polish part of Russia is that of an outsider, although presenting a strong engagement in the political issues and a thorough knowledge of historical facts. As we have seen, Lam writes as a Galician citizen

³⁹ In 1823, Heine published his memoirs from the trip to Prussian Poland *Über Polen*. It is an objective, critical yet positive portrayal of Poles, especially the younger generation

of the Habsburg State, rather than as a Polish nationalist. Hence his views on Russia also reveal a great number of digressions and political allusions to the situation in Galicia, as a crown land of the Austrian Empire. In his writings, Lam concentrates on the culture of Galicia, depicting the region, its inhabitants, their habits, and life styles rather than discussing political independence. Significantly, Lam writing from a Polish perspective presents a picture of the region similar to that of the Austrian Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach. Both of the writers perceive Galicia as a special place for the Poles, a place where Polish language and habits are cultivated and preserved.

Without a doubt, this study shows in what ways Galicia played a central role for preserving the Polish identity in times when the Polish state no longer existed, for over 120 years. In fact, Galicia (next to Bukovina) could be labeled as a “microcosm” of the Habsburg Monarchy -- a juxtaposition of various ethnic (Poles, Germans, Jews, and Ruthenians) and religious (Catholics, Protestants, Uniates, Armenian, and Jews) groups living together in one geographical place, able to conceive of a cultural freedom that allowed for a limited political dependence (as, for example, part of a federation rather than as colonized peoples). Although the present project concentrates on the issues of Polishness and the idea of preserving the Polish national identity in all three regions of partitioned Poland (Galicia, *Kongresówka*, and Posnania), Galicia emerged as the most particularly complex and problematic of all the parts.

Especially after the *Ausgleich* of 1867 when Hungary got an independent parliament, the Polish Galicians felt that they were at the beginning of a new era, a time, which could bring their own legislature and administration of the region. At this moment

of hope, Galicia became an almost mythical place for all the Poles, and a place where a whole new set of demonstrations of "Polishness" was allowed to arise—e.g., theatre, historical discussions, newspapers, magazines, etc. The relatively innovative cultural and political freedom in Austrian Galicia gave the province an important site for debate on Poland's future, in ways that it may have not in the past. As such, Galicia and especially Kraków, the ancient, most historic, and almost sacred city for all Poles, became "the focal point for commemorative activity during the years preceding Poland's reemergence as an independent state."⁴⁰ Therefore, it was Galicia where celebrations served as a way to discuss the future of Poland in the presence of Poles representing Galicia, *Kongresówka*, and Posnania.

Without a doubt, to fully comprehend the complexity of the region as a set of cultural forces without overt political tools at their disposal, it would be beneficial in the future to compare the emergence of this "imagined" Galician Poland in the nineteenth century with parallel situations for the Ruthenian and Jewish populations of Galicia and their literary representations in germanophone, Polish, and Ukrainian literature. For both these ethnic groups, Galicia became a center of political thought (Ukraine), culture (Jewish Enlightenment), and a safe place to live, although perhaps not with the same divisions between religious, cultural, and political affiliations. A project about the nineteenth century region's multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity, in history and through literary

⁴⁰ Keely Stauter-Halsted, "Rural Myth and the Modern Nation," *Staging the Past*, eds. Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield, 156.

texts, would shed more light on the problematic relations and potential conflicts between certain social and ethnic groups, as well.

For instance: Galicia functioned as the place where the Ukrainian nationalist movement developed and flourished in the late nineteenth century. Because the majority of Ruthenians was composed of individuals from the lowest social class, the peasantry, the actual carrier of the Ruthenian culture was the Uniate Church. Some Ruthenian political groups, however, sought to establish an official program to support the development of the language. Their efforts were awarded in 1848, when the University of Lviv created the first chair in Ukrainian language and culture. Significantly, however, following the *Ausgleich*, many Ukrainian priests, following the dictates of Orthodoxy rather than Roman Catholicism, began to support Russophile ideas about the necessity for one great Russian nation (with Ruthenians/Ukrainians as its part). For a while, it seemed that the Ukrainians would forgo their individual Slavic heritage and support the Panslavic option (under the banner of Russian culture) for their own nation without a state. In the late nineteenth century, however, more progressive students and intelligentsia established the political liberal Ruthenian Club and the journal *Dilo* (1880) to propagate Ukrainian literature and culture outside of church influence and to inform the readership independently about the situation in Galicia.

The material to do so exists. In the area of the Ukrainian language and linguistic behavior authors such as Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) or Ivan Franko (1856-1919) played an enormous role in establishing the standards of the Ukrainian language. Both of the writers became canonical figures for Ukrainian history and literature despite the fact

that Ukraine as such did not exist at that time. Especially Franko, who collaborated with the later historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky, was active on many fronts: as journalist, writer, poet, literary critic, and political activist, and translator.⁴¹ Interestingly, Franko wrote fluently in three languages and published in all: Ukrainian, Polish, and German. He dealt not only with philosophical themes but also proved himself master of social and analysis. As Galician Ruthene/Ukrainian, he collected a wealth of materials and wrote many articles in the field of folklore and ethnography, documenting the every-day life of Galician peasants. In summary, Franko regarded Ukraine as a sovereign entity claiming that “there will come a time when you [Ukraine] will sit the circle of free nations.”⁴²

The history of Ruthenian/Ukrainian-Polish relations is a troubled one, yet within the context of Galicia, the antagonisms were less pronounced, especially before 1890s. The two World Wars sharpened old conflicts and territorial demands, which resulted in tragic events in 1945-47 when Poles and Ukrainians turned violent against each other. To this day, these events stay in the way of Polish-Ukrainian treaty and were the major topic of talks between the Polish President Kwaśniewski and the Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma in 2003. The more traditional affinities have remained largely undiscussed.

This shift is not without historical precedent, but it obscures an on-going relationship of Germans and Poles as Europeans. While the *Ausgleich* resulted in a growing Russophile tendency among Galician Ruthenians, the Jews of the region turned

⁴¹ Hrushevsky is known as the most distinguished Ukrainian historian, “the “father” of Ukrainian history writing. His area of expertise was reaching from the thirteenth century Volhynian question through feudal castles in the sixteenth century to a general history of Ukraine throughout centuries. A start on this project is represented in the book *Von Taras Sevcenko bis Joseph Roth: Ukrainisch-österreichische Literaturbeziehungen* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang; 1995).

⁴² Cited in Clarence Manning, Ivan Franko (NY: Ukrainian University Society, 1937) 34.

in contrast towards the Poles as new reforms came into force establishing Galicia's new autonomous status within the Habsburg Monarchy. As Leo Herzberg-Fränk1 maintains, in the 1880s and 1890s (when the Ukrainian national movement was particularly strong in Galicia and the Ukrainian separatists demanded the division of Galicia into Ruthenia [the eastern part of the province] and West Galicia), it was "the younger generation, particularly in larger cities, which began to assimilate Polish culture, though without completely distancing themselves from German language and education."⁴³ German in particular was perceived by the Jews as the key opening the gate to education and literature. Although some researchers claim that the assimilation of Jews was a result of strong political pressure of the Polish circles, Albert Lichtblau and Micheal John argue that

In spite of the fact that enormous pressure was frequently placed upon Jews . . . we can nevertheless work under the assumption that there was a massive tendency toward Polonization among Galician Jews.⁴⁴

The Life of Galician (and Bukovinian) Jews, their life style, intelligence, customs, and habits were the main topic of works by Karl Emil Franzos and Sacher-Masoch. In the context of Galicia and the process of Polonization of Galician Jews, especially Franzos' *Aus Halb-Asien* [From Half-Asia] depicts an interesting portrayal of Eastern Jews in a contrast to the superior German people. While Sybille Hubach and Fred Sommer suggest that Franzos admired the German spirit and saw German as exemplary for any other ethnic group (especially for the intellectually and physically weak Jews), Sander Gilman

⁴³ Leo Herzberg-Fränk1, "Die Juden," *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild: Galizien* (Vienna: Kaiserlich-königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1898) 478.

⁴⁴ Albert Lichtblau and Micheal John, "Jewries in Galicia and Bukovina," eds. Sander L. Gilman and Milton Shain, *Jewries at the Frontier* (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1999) 34.

argues that Franzos represented rather the Jewish superior intelligence and creativity, despite the lack of physical strengths.⁴⁵

What needs to still be balanced in these pictures is class position vis-à-vis ethnicity in these regions, as well. On the one hand, for example, Galician Jews were a rather isolated and poor group, on the other, for instance as represented by Soma Morgenstern in *In einer anderen Zeit*, a Jewish family could practice Yiddish, German, Ruthenian, and Polish language and co-exist peacefully in this cultural mélange, Austro-Hungary.⁴⁶

Looking at the entire structure of the nineteenth-century Habsburg Empire, then, Galicia also might be seen to share certain attributes with another Habsburg province, Bukovina. Significantly, both of the regions represent similar characteristics: they were situated at the frontier of the Monarchy, their inhabitants were people of different origins and religious beliefs, and both were incorporated against their peoples' will into the Austrian Empire. Yet the situation did not improve overall once Poland came back into existence. After WWI, Galicia was granted to Poland, creating problems for the multiethnic structure of the region, a scheme repeated in the case of Bukovina, which eventually became a part of an independent Romanian state. In this political situation, the relatively harmonious co-existence of different ethnic groups in both of the provinces

⁴⁵ See Sander L. Gilman, *Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1996); Sybille Hubach, *Galizische Träume: Die jüdischen Erzählungen des Karl Emil Franzos* (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1986), and Fred Sommer, *Halb Asien: German Nationalism and the Eastern European Works of Karl Emil Franzos* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1984).

⁴⁶ Soma Morgenstern, *In einer anderen Zeit: Jugendjahre in Ostgalizien* (Lüneburg: Zu Klampen, 1995).

ceased to function, and what we have seen at least as gestures toward multi-ethnicity simply crumbled into brute nationalism as it fell out of historical memory.

WWII and the Cold War caused significant changes to the political map of Europe and to peoples' minds. Polish Galicians, although some still secretly admiring Francis Joseph, then concentrated on their Polishness, taking that left-over mythic vision of humanism from nineteenth-century Galicia (without naming it) into the emotional core of Polish culture in resistance to Russia, in this case and in this era, the underground culture forbidden by the official communist government. Hence, many historians today, even Davis or Zamoyski, are thus still privileging in their works a later preference for the ethnic nation state over the multiethnic vision that emerged from the most successful political gambit available to Poland's nineteenth-century intellectuals -- today's historians privilege a free and ethnic Poland rather than the vision of a Galicia that united Poles, Germans, and Jews alike as part of a European vision which persisted for a century after the Partitions but which itself ultimately perished in two world wars and the Soviet State.

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This dissertation was typed by the author.