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Jane Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as
evidence of Polish-British relationships

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OŚWIADCZENIE

Ja, niżej podpisany

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że przedkładaną pracę doktorską

pt. „Jane Porter’s *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as evidence of Polish-British relations”

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List of abbreviations

- BMGCPB – British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books*
- CCBR – The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*
- DEL – A Dictionary of English Literature*
- DNB – The Dictionary of National Biography*
- EB – The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*
- GDS – Gesamtverzeichnis des Deutschsprachigen Schrifttums (GV) 1700 – 1910 [A Total Register of German Bibliographies (GV) 1700 – 1910]*
- NAEL – The Norton Anthology of English Literature*
- NEB – The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*
- OCEL – The Oxford Companion to English Literature*
- OED – The Oxford English Dictionary*
- PDLTLT – The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*
- TW – Thaddeus of Warsaw*
- WD – Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*
- WEP – Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN [The Great Popular Encyclopaedia PWN]*

Introduction

The following dissertation has been written for a number of reasons. In the first place, it is to present the cultural links between Great Britain and Poland towards the end of the 18th century on the basis of Jane Porter's novel titled *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, which provides an excellent illustration of these links. It has been more than 200 years since she wrote four volumes with hundreds of pages treating of Poland and its citizens, and yet it seems that there has not appeared a thorough work dealing with the theme of this interest or a biography focusing on her life.¹ The author of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* highlighted a significant number of Polish-British connections, which, in fact, trace back over a thousand years. Obviously, it is hardly possible to produce in one work a detailed synopsis of cultural and literary relationships covering a period from a millennium ago to the times of the writing of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, but a telegraphic treatment with selected facts that provides a sketch of such links could be formulated the following way: according to Wojciech Lipoński (2000a: 440), the first mention of Poland-to-be in Old English poetry dates from the 6th/7th-century poem *Widsith*, where the name of the Vistula (Pol. *Wisła*) River appears (*Wistla* in the poem). Moreover, in the 11th century, for the first time in history, Polish and Anglo-Danish bloodlines mix to link the royal milieus of the two kingdoms. Canute the Great, the King of England and Denmark, was the nephew of the Polish King Boleslaus the Brave (Pol. *Bolesław Chrobry*) and the son of Świętosława – Mieszko I and Dobrawa's daughter – and Swein Forkbeard (Pol. *Widłobrody*) (Lipoński 1994: 89; *Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN* (henceforth

¹ No satisfactory biography of Jane Porter exists. Brief accounts occur in Elwood's *Literary Ladies of England*, vol. 2, Allibone's *Dictionary of English Literature*, vol. 2 (1645), or Hall's *Book of Memories*. The Ker Porter Correspondence, sold by Sotheby in 1852 (cf. Catalogue in the British Museum) contained materials for a biography and was purchased by Sir Thomas Phillipps of Middle Hill (*The Dictionary of National Biography*, 1968: 184).

WEP), 1968: 351).² One may even say that Canute (sometimes called *Cnut* or *Knut*) spent part of his life in Poland, because of the fact that he was taught soldiery on the Island of Wolin, off the coast of Pomerania (Pol. *Pomorze*) (“Canute the Great”, 2011).³ Moreover, the Viking Swein Forkbeard was reinforced by 300 Polish cavalymen and infantry when attacking London. If we take a leap to the 15th century, we see that the connections between Poland and England grew closer after the battle of Grunwald. The reasons were rather prosaic: Henry V no longer had to pay off the debt he owed to the Teutonic Order, and he wanted to recruit Polish mercenaries to fight on England’s side in the Hundred Years’ War (Lipoński 2000a: 440). In the 16th and 17th centuries some 30,000 Scottish craftsmen, traders, and religious refugees settled down in Poland, particularly in Leszno, Great Poland (Pol. *Wielkopolska*). During the reign of Mary Stuart, due to hunger and religious persecution, many Puritans left the British Isles and arrived in Poland, and when Elisabeth I was in power, Catholics did the same. Poland’s impoverishment in the 18th century meant that these settlers were less visible; many of them had melted into Polish society in places such as Lublin, Zamość, or Kraków (Brückner 1939, 1: 584). In his *Trilogy* (Pol. *Trylogia*), Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846 – 1916) commemorated the favourite Scottish soldier of Ladislav (Pol. *Władysław*) IV (lived 1595 – 1648, reigned 1632 – 1648), who dies at the battle of Chocim, known in English historiography as Khotyn. In Sienkiewicz’s novel *Fire in the Steppe* (the Polish title *Pan Wołodyjowski*), a fictitious Scot appears named Hassling Ketling (Lipoński 2000b: 460). The 17th century brought a cooling of mutual relations, as Puritans, who were growing more and more powerful in England, disliked any form of Catholicism. The status quo worsened after the beheading of Charles I (lived 1600 – 1649, reigned 1625 – 1649), when the Polish Sejm decided to subsidise the members of his family who had gone to live in exile in France. The situation grew better with the great victory of John III Sobieski (lived 1629 – 1696, reigned 1674 – 1696) at the battle of Vienna against the Turks in 1683. Besides, Charles II (lived 1630 – 1685, reigned 1660 – 1685), Charles

² Canute the Great (date of birth unknown, reigned 1016 – 1035); Boleslaus the Brave (Pol. *Bolesław Chrobry*) (lived 967 – 1025, reigned, as the first King of Poland, in 1025); Świętosława (in Scandinavian sources known as Sigrid Storråda, Saum-Aesa, or Gunnhilda) (dates of birth and death unknown); Mieszko I (lived c. 935 – 992, reigned as the duke of the Polans c. 962 – 992); Dobrawa (also *Dąbrówka*, *Dubrawka*, or in Czech *Doubravka*) (date of birth unknown – died in 977); Swein Forkbeard (Pol. *Widłobrody*, also referred to as *Sven the Dane*, *Swegen*, or *Tuck*) (c. 960 – 1014).

³ Wolin became controlled by Poland under prince Mieszko I around 972; however, it has not been established if the island became part of Poland, or if it was a fief. Polish influences were not firm and ended around 1007 (“Wolin”, 2011).

I's eldest son, was the godfather of Sobieski's daughter (Lipoński 2000a: 440). Interestingly, Charles Edward Stuart (1720 – 1788), nicknamed “Bonnie Prince Charlie”, who is by many regarded as Scotland's greatest hero (after William Wallace), was... half Polish. This exiled Jacobite claimant to the thrones of England, Scotland, and Ireland (in Scots Gaelic, his name is *Teàrlach Eideard Stiùbhairt*) was one the two sons of Maria Clementina (Pol. *Klementyna*) Sobieska (1702 – 1735), who, in turn, was John III Sobieski's granddaughter (“Charles Edward Stewart”, 2011). This illustrious Polish sovereign of international eminence had a doctor by the name of B. O'Connor, whose origin was Scottish or Irish. The medical practitioner has his place in Polish culture, as he wrote two volumes of the *History of Poland* (Lipoński 2000b: 460).

Many a work has been penned on the 18th-century cultural links between the two countries, but this issue seems to be impossible to treat exhaustively once and for all, especially since this period was the prelude to “the most dramatic chapters in the history of our country”, as Jasiakiewicz maintains (1997: 4). This researcher believes that this era is one in which Poles can find the roots of many national personality traits that are still relevant today (Jasiakiewicz 1997: 4). Lipoński's articulation that the Polish-British political, social, and cultural relations of these years are the most neglected in the history of Polish culture (Lipoński 1978: 3) brings us to the second motive for the writing of this work: there has not been a separate and “full coverage” dealing with *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) despite the fact that this unique book is worthy of special study for the reasons noted above.

Sources such as *Bamber Gascoigne Encyclopedia of Britain* (1993), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia* (1994), *The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* (1990), *The Cambridge History of English Literature. The Nineteenth Century* (1916), *The Penguin Companion to Literature*, *Chambers's Cyclopaedia of English Literature* (1971), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (2000), the *British New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1999), George Sampson's *An Outline History of English Literature* (1967), W. L. Renwick's *Oxford History of English Literature 1789 – 1815* (1994), and, finally, *British Writers* (edited by Ian Scott-Kilvert) provide no mention of Porter whatsoever. The following sources are not really any better, as each of them contains no more than one or two sentences about Porter, while some of these works are thousands of pages thick and deal only with the period under consideration. A *Dictionary of English Literature* (henceforth *DEL*) (1945: 225) by Homer Watt says:

“Jane Porter, sister of Anna Maria, both laboured in the field of the historical novel before Scott.” *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (henceforth *OCEL*) (1975: 659) wrote that Porter produced two successful novels: *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) and *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810). In *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (1968: 1703) one can only find out that Porter was a Scottish novelist (most authors would say English) and that her two novels were exceptionally popular. A very similar comment, as terse as the previous one, appears in the *Cambridge Guide to Fiction in English* (1998: 220) by Ian Ousby. This author is also the editor of *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*, where a short reference on *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is made, as well. *Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation* (1918: 85-86) by F. Pierce, provides only a quotation of Porter from the introduction to *The Scottish Chiefs*. *The History of the English Novel: Edgeworth, Austen, Scott* (1935: 134) by Ernest Baker mentions Porter only briefly and only as the author of *The Scottish Chiefs*. *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism* (henceforth *CCBR*) just hints that “though Scott is credited with the origin of the historical novel in English, Porter charted the course to his success” (1993: 191). In *The Cambridge Guide to Women’s Writing in English*, Lorna Sage “reports close to exclusively” that Jane is descended from the Elizabethan poet Endymion Porter (1999: 505). Porter is also barely recognised in the 1935 *National Encyclopedia*; the reference materials there only note that Porter wrote *The Scottish Chiefs* and *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, the latter of which was a great success (176). *Encyclopedia Americana* is almost silent on the works of Jane Porter, as well: “Porter was highly regarded in her own day, she wrote *The Scottish Chiefs* and was a precursor of novels by Scott – her childhood friend”, states *Encyclopedia Americana* (1979: 424). And this is it: there is nothing else on the matter there. If one, in search of Jane Porter, decided to explore *A History of English Literature. From Earliest Times to 1916* by Arthur Compton-Rickett, he or she would have to deal with even a bigger barrier, as the book only says that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is “a well-written story” (1947: 358). Unfortunately, *OCEL* (1975) is similarly laconic. *The Dictionary of National Biography* (henceforth *DNB*) is an exception, as it provides more information about the author.

If sources written in English flout Jane Porter, it is no wonder that major encyclopaedic works of nations different from the Anglo-Saxon ones make literally no reference to her person. The German *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon* [Mayers Lexicon Encyclopaedia] or *Brockhaus die Enzyklopädie* are two examples, the French *Grand*

Larousse encyclopédique [Great Larousse Encyclopaedia] (1963) and Michael Mourre's *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique d'Histoire* (1978) are another two. *Bra Böckers Lexicon* (1998) of Belgium "behaves" like the ones above, and so do the Norwegian *Aschehoug og Gyldendals Store Norske Leksikon* or the Danish *Den Store Danske Encyclopaedi*. None of them provide any(!) information on the author although they are composed of dozens of volumes. When it comes to Polish sources, it is barely possible to present the situation in a more favourable light. The Polish *Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN* [The Great Common Encyclopaedia] from 1967 informs: "Porter Jane, born 1776, died 24th May 1850. English writer of sentimental novels, expressing her interest in history and sympathy for the ideas of freedom. Wrote *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) and *Scottish Chiefs* (1810), the first of which substantially concerning the Kościuszko Insurgency" [translation mine, ML] (*WEP*, 1967: 295).⁴ The 2004 edition of this encyclopaedia is even poorer by the lack of comment saying that Jane Porter wrote *The Scottish Chiefs* (*WEP*, 2004: 99). Other editions of this source treat the British author in a correspondingly neglectful manner and so does *Encyklopedia Gutenberga* [Gutenberg Encyclopaedia] (1997). In *Literatura polska XX wieku: Przewodnik encyklopedyczny* [Polish literature of the 20th century: An encyclopaedic companion] (2000a: 441) only Lipoński notices Porter. The situation is worse yet when we consider books specifically treating English literature. Should one reach for Zbierski's *Historia literatury angielskiej* [A History of English Literature] (2002), Mroczkowski's book under the same title (1986), or Dyboski's *Sto lat literatury angielskiej* [A Hundred Years of English Literature] (1957) in order to find out about Porter, it will be evident that one has taken the trouble only to learn that no such information is available in these books. Porter is nearly non-existent in *Literatura angielska w okresie romantyzmu (1798 – 1831)* [*English Literature in the Romantic Period (1798 – 1831)*] (1928) by Andrzej Tretiak; this monograph solely informs that Porter was an immediate predecessor of Scott in the historical novel (Tretiak 1928: 234).

It seems unthinkable that a writer of the stature and popularity of Jane Porter has been reduced to such oblivion. Fortunately, thanks to a handful of academics, the memory of this British author can be restored. For instance, Wojciech Lipoński, Liliana Si-

⁴ The original version in Polish: "Porter Jane, ur. 1776, zm. 24 V 1850, pisarka ang.; autorka romansów sentymentalnych, w których wyraziły się jej zainteresowania hist. i sympatie dla idei wolnościowych – *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) oraz *Scottish Chiefs* (1810); pierwsza z tych powieści poświęcona jest w dużej mierze powstaniu kościuszkowskiemu.

korska, Zofia Gołębiowska, Piotr Grzegorzczak, and Thomas Anessi have all observed in their publications that Porter is an important literary figure. Nevertheless, it is plain that she and her literary oeuvre have been ignored or treated marginally, although the book saw at least seventeen editions (Gołębiowska 2001: 11). In *Kościuszkę w poezji angielskiej* [Kościuszkę in English Poetry] (1961: 246), Grzegorzczak hints at dozens of editions. In France, as Gołębiowska (2001: 12) informs, the book appeared under the title of *Le Polonais* and by 1809 had already had two editions (*Le Polonais. Traduit de l'anglais par*, Paris 1807 and 1809). In 1831, an English version was edited in Paris, and in 1836 a third edition in French (BMGCPB, 1967: 126, as cited in Gołębiowska 2001:12).⁵ In Germany, the novel came out some time later but in two versions (the first one, *Thaddäus Constantin*, was described by Constantia v. B., Dresden 1825, the second, entitled *Graf Sobieski*, by G. Lotz, Braunschweig 1827) (GDS, 1984: 270; Will 1970: 65-66, as cited in Gołębiowska 2001: 12).⁶ Thirdly, the novel itself has never been rewarded with a translation into Polish albeit it was detailed in the article by R. Dyboski entitled *Powstanie Kościuszki w powieści angielskiej z r. 1803* [The Kościuszkę Uprising in an English Novel from the Year 1803] (1908) – a copy from *Przegląd Polski* or in Monica Gardner's *Polacy w powieści angielskiej* [Poles in an English Novel] (1933). Gardner implies, for example, that by 1809 *Thaddeus of Warsaw* had already had five editions (Gardner 1933: 299). It is also worth noting *Powieść angielska osiemnastego wieku a powieść polska lat 1764 – 1830* [The English Novel of the 18th Century versus the Polish Novel of the Years 1764 – 1830] (1961) by Z. Sinko, as well as W. Ostrowski's *Początki powieści historycznej w Anglii* [The Beginnings of the Historical Novel in England], a work in *Prace Polonistyczne* (Gołębiowska 2001: 10).

All in all, if one considers Porter's importance, and at the same time the cultural void regarding information about her, it becomes clear that not only the scholar but anyone engaged in cultural studies ought to be acquainted with this figure and her work(s). The novelist hugely contributed to highlighting the status quo in the then Polish Kingdom and the cause for which her nationals grappled. She proved that the cultural ties between the two countries were or are very rich and that to think otherwise would be if not naïve, groundless. What is more, the lyricist, though now forgotten and

⁵ BMGCPB stands for *British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books to 1955*.

⁶ GDS stands for *Gesamtverzeichnis des Deutschsprachigen Schrifttums (GV) 1700 – 1910* [A Total Register of German Bibliographies (GV) 1700 – 1910].

neglected, was a very renowned writer of her era, whose style was appreciated by personages such as Sir Walter Scott.

As a result, it appears that a separate publication tackling these matters is necessary. The chief aim of this thesis, therefore, is to do a “close-up” of the person (and to a lesser extent of her family) who so strongly popularised Polish culture. It is also hoped that the Anglo-Polish cultural links of which *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is a fine example and of which so few people are aware will be promoted and looked at from a “more complete angle” in both Poland and Great Britain – that this thesis will supplement and broaden the collection of stories on Anglo-Polish connections, and that recipients beyond just Polish ones will find it worthwhile reading and learning about. Furthermore, the discussion centres on the mentality and behaviours, attitudes, and ways of perceiving different dimensions of life on the basis of the circles of people that Jane Porter sketched in her work. Moreover, the dissertation is an attempt to evaluate the worth of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in terms of its influence on the British public by establishing how it was received in the British Isles. Also, research will be presented on the style of the romance and on an effort to determine to exactly which literary period it belongs. This project is also an attempt to find out how much the Britons of this time, including Porter, knew or cared about Poland. The next goal of the study is strictly connected with portraying the stimuli which were captivating enough for the author to tackle the piece, especially Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746 – 1817), but not only, and the context in which the book was created. It needs to be added here that Jane Porter was a great admirer of the Polish general in British prose. However, Porter’s fascination with Kościuszko was not limited to writing just one novel; she closely followed the general’s fate and the story of his cult, and disseminated these revelations among the British readership. She extolled Kościuszko and his native soil in British prose as Thomas Campbell (1777 – 1844) did in poetry.⁷ Both of them promoted through their literary output the development of polonophilia in British society (Gołębiowska 2001: 13-14). It is thanks to them that “the people of England harboured their first feelings to Poland”, wrote the expert on English issues Koźmian ([1841] 1862: 41). In terms of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* itself, the

⁷ Thomas Campbell, the Scottish poet, is the author of *The Pleasures of Hope* from 1797, where many excerpts about Kościuszko, his comrades-in-arms, and homeland can be found. For example: “Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,
And Freedom shriek’d... as Kosciusko fell!” (*The Pleasures of Hope*, 29).

Polish politician and historian put into words some comments, which could be translated in the following way : “It stuck so strongly in the imagination and memory of the English that just like a considerable number of Frenchmen always imagined a Pole as Prince Józef [Poniatowski], the English confused the notion of a Pole with the dream image of Thaddeus of Warsaw, and even after the downfall of the November Uprising, they greeted Polish immigrants with a similar perception” [translation mine, ML] (Koźmian 1972: 90, as quoted in Gołębiowska 2001: 14).⁸ Ultimately, one of the arguments of the paper is to abolish stereotypes or myths that accompany Polish society, which suggest that the cultural or literary relations between the two countries, in this case at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, were weak.

What the project does not aim at is highlighting or explaining some errors (historical or geographical) that the author made in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. In addition, the attention of the dissertation does not concentrate on answering the question of “what Polish and, all the more, British society in the period under consideration were like in terms of value”. In more simplistic terms, the work is not going to assess the “goodness” or “badness” of these societies; it is not going to give a “grade” to the societies for their behaviours. It is rather yet another puzzle in the myriad ways of deeming the general public in the two countries, and especially in Poland.

Though the story of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* takes place mainly in England, and most of the persons described are English, in the dissertation, the word “British” is principally used. Nonetheless, every now and then the reader will encounter the word “English”. Although the notions, of course, are not identical in meaning, it is hard to state when Porter treats the persons she writes about as just English and when as British as a whole. For example, when she indicates to the reader that she is critical of aristocracy – let us say that the scene is located in London – does it concern the highest class in merely England, or Scotland and Wales, as well? And what about Ireland? Let us bear in mind that the work was composed in 1803, and that the country’s name since 1801 had been the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (not only Northern Ireland like today). The author herself was half Irish and half English, she was raised in Scotland, and lived mainly in England. Not to limit the significance of her romance, there-

⁸ The original version in Polish: “Wbiła się ona tak w wyobraźnię i pamięć Anglików, że jak wielka część Francuzów wystawiała sobie zawsze każdego Polaka pod postacią Xcia Józefa, tak tamci miesza[li] [sic] pojęcie Polaka z wymarzoną wizerunkiem Tadeusza z Warszawy, i jeszcze wychodźców przybywających po upadku powstania listopadowego tem imieniem witali.”

fore, the title of the following disquisition: “Jane Porter’s *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as evidence of Polish-British relationships” contains the word “British” not “English”. The same logic is applied to nomenclature when naming given chapters or subchapters i.e. the word “British” not “English” has been used. Also, the words “aristocracy” and “nobility” as well as their derivatives are used interchangeably. Although they do not signify the same, it is often problematic to state whether a given character is of one origin or the other. Besides, Davies, for instance, includes magnates (or the Polish *magnateria*) in the top stratum of the nobility – the propertied *szlachta* (Davies 1998a: 253).

The chronological framework of all the chapters roughly embraces the second part of the 18th century. Nonetheless, for obvious reasons it is different in the chapter on Jane Porter’s biography, different in the section talking about the historical and cultural background, and varies yet again in the chapter treating the Polish people (chapter four). The time span of the novel itself is between 1792 – 1795, but Jane Porter too leapt out of that period when she found it necessary.

The methodology adopted in this narrative in some places is more process-oriented (dynamic), while in other places it is structural. The dynamic method – based on division suggested by Topolski (1995: 22) – will be helpful when explaining some chronologically organised sequences of events. This method (used for example in the first half of chapter two) is crucial when we want to present and explain some actions, decisions, or processes, and need to analyse some prior or succeeding deeds, events, etc. in order to do this. The structural method will be useful when simultaneous phenomena are of primary importance, though, of course, some sequencing is always unavoidable, so the two “branches” of method will sometimes be present at the same time, but with varied intensity. Furthermore, in order to fully understand the magnificence of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, more than typical literary criticism seems necessary, and so this sketch is an interdisciplinary study. This approach has been used in accordance with Marcin Czerwiński’s reasoning, who, in his *Kultura i jej badanie* [Culture and Its Examination] (1985: 10) states that cultural interpretation ought to break the isolation of literature, knowledge, and other aspects of culture, so that an academic does not merely focus on one cultural dimension, never touching upon any other. Only then is cultural production thoroughly treated. Also, following the words of the cultural expert Wojciech Lipoński (2001: 7), a thesis that sets forth facets of British and Polish culture (like this one) comes under the competence of English philology and of Polish one as well. Conse-

quently, this dissertation has philological, cultural, literary, and historical features and is thus prone to methodological (and factual) flaws. At the same time, cogitating on Micaela di Leonardo's words, care has been taken not to make these methods look hybridised too much (2006: 205).

The subsequent dissertation is composed of five chapters, the first of which focuses on bringing closer the life of Jane Porter; nevertheless, it also touches upon her family. The composing of that part is justified by a number of factors: Firstly, writing only about *Thaddeus of Warsaw* without a sketch of its creator's life would be deficient. The opening years of the 19th century were a time when many patriotic Poles looked up to Great Britain for its culture and political stability. Suddenly, a highly esteemed British writer produced hundreds of pages in awe of the Polish Kingdom and its people. Finally a high profile British novelist took interest in Kościuszko's homeland and not the other way round. Better yet, not only did the lyricist love and express a virtual fascination with Poland and Poles, but she also enormously popularised Polish culture as such in Britain. Jane Porter demonstrated the magnitude of the cultural bonds between the two countries. However, there are yet more reasons for placing the story of Porter's life in this dissertation. As mentioned before, an exhaustive biography of the lyricist is most probably nonexistent, and there is practically no library in Poland whose collections would have a thorough body of her works. Hence, knowledge about the artist remains scant in both Poland and the British Isles. Though a very renowned writer in her days, Porter is now forgotten and neglected. It is only recently, in the internet era, that some accounts of the Briton can be accessed; still, the pieces that can be traced are often erroneous. *DNB* (1968), for example, mentions three siblings of Porter's, whereas Fiona Price of Chichester University cites four (Price 2000). Some call her English, some Scottish, but in fact she was half Irish and half English. Next, many sources provide only a handful of her works. Furthermore, there are authors that go as far as to claim that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* has been translated into every European language, which is highly unlikely. As little documentary evidence as we have and as miscellaneous as it is, these are not the only obstacles a biographer would encounter; some facts from Jane Porter's life appear to be unverifiable, as they basically have not been recorded. Nonetheless, some substantial data on the novelist's life, as well as the description of her literary oeuvre, can be discovered in this chapter.

The main body of section two concentrates on the historical and cultural events of the Great Britain of the Kościuszko era. It seems important that the reader be familiar with the most vital (cultural) moments in the history of the period in order to understand the atmosphere and social patterns of behaviour of the divergent groups of people depicted in the study or in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. (Therefore, the historical and cultural background of Poland is a substantial element of parts three and four of this study, as well).

The primary focus of the third part of the paper is on the context of and motor for Porter's penning the novel. It will merely be noted at this point that the inspiration for the tale came largely from the person of Tadeusz Kościuszko, other immigrants from Poland, and the author's sensitivity to the misfortune of a fallen country and her sons and daughters.

I have decided to entitle chapter four "Virtue and glory or wrongdoing and shame? Poland in the eyes of Jane Porter" albeit it is not certain which characteristics presented in the book of the Polish (and sometimes the British) the author personally identified with. Consequently, it is difficult to state if the following citation, to give an example, reflects Jane Porter's opinion on Thaddeus Sobieski's garment or Jane Porter's opinion on what a faction of British society thought about the Polish uniform.

Look, Lady Tinemouth; look, Lady Sara! If Mr. Constantine does not better become this English dress than his Polish horribles, drown me for a false prophetess!" (*Thaddeus of Warsaw* (henceforth *TW*), 1831: 177).

In other words, the reader may find him/herself at a loss as to how to answer the ensuing questions connected with the above lines: Is this how Polish dress of the 18th century actually looked? Is it the aristocrat's (Miss Dundas's) perspective on these clothes? Or, finally, did Jane Porter use the different heroes in the book to present her own view on the outfit? The posing of such questions by the reader every time he or she encounters such a quote seems inevitable, and due to the myriad ways of interpreting the thoughts illustrated in the work, section four deals with opinions about the Polish (and to a little extent the British), regardless of who actually expresses them. Hence, it needs to be pointed out that "Poland and Great Britain in the eyes of Jane Porter" may not always represent the lyricist's personal stance.

What is more, the aim of this chapter is not to present a full or finished picture of the chosen Polish and British characteristics, but merely to provide another piece in the complex picture of what we could call “the Polish and English (or British) mentality of the 18th century”. Moreover, part four, as the subtitle suggests, tackles in the main the opinions of Porter on the Polish rather than the British. There is a reason for this: Jane Porter knew British society fairly well, having spent her whole life on the Isles, so her description of the British is a description of her fellow countrymen. Nonetheless, some such comments do appear in chapter two. When she pictures the Polish (chapter four), however, she does so from the position of a foreigner, which is why contrasting her standpoint with reality is of greater concern in the dissertation. Consequently, this section is supplemented with opinions of learned individuals from Poland and Britain.

Furthermore, the views shown both in Jane Porter’s novel and in my dissertation relate primarily to the upper classes of Polish and British societies. However, an attempt at writing a cultural dissertation means that references to the poorer classes ought to be there, as well, all the more that Porter in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* does so too. At the same time, Porter’s estimations of the fabrics of the Polish elite are pictured to a large extent, though not only, by means of one character, that is to say, Thaddeus Sobieski (since he is the central figure throughout the novel), whose model, as has already been mentioned, was Tadeusz Kościuszko. Yet, because the features of character of many Polish noblemen are pinpointed similarly to Thaddeus’s, it may be speculated that the author treated him as a common denominator of the Polish aristocracy and nobility of her time. As a result, chapter four describes mainly that very person. Also, part four is composed of ample quotations, as they best paint the atmosphere and certain beliefs held at the turn of the 18th century. Moreover, although the main objective of the chapter is to bring the reader closer to the qualities (rather than individual persons) of the Polish of the period in question, this section does not list given qualities together with the personages who possess them but the other way round, i.e. particular people are presented along with certain qualities. Owing to this manoeuvre and the fact that a person’s characteristics may be discovered on the first as well as on the last page of the book, the events or descriptions placed in this chapter are not always chronological.

The final part, which deals with the reception and historic importance of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in Great Britain, might be credited with illustrating the significance of the book and its creator, since thanks to Porter and her writing, first, many British read-

ers learnt about the wretched situation in Poland in the second half of the 18th century, and secondly, the novel itself left pivotal evidence of foreign interest in the affairs and tragic political developments in Poland.

Naturally, the principal and, at the same time, an extremely valuable source for constructing this project is the book *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. It must be acknowledged at this point that the Library of the Poznań Society of Friends of Science (Pol. *Biblioteka Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk*) was very supportive, as it possesses an original of the tenth edition of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* from 1831, which is a rarity if not the only one in Poland. And not only is it crucial because it makes the core of the following paper, not only because chapter four is based on it, but that tome also provides the reader with notes by Jane Porter which talk about the motive for writing the romance, and they show Porter's extensive familiarity with the history and politics of Poland. Further rewarding sources are Norman Davis' *God's Playground. A History of Poland* (2005), which after the political changes of 1989 was officially recommended by the Polish National Ministry of Education as a historical book for all Polish secondary schools (Lipoński 1994: 88), as well as Willson's *A History of England* (1967). They deal respectively with the situations in Poland and Great Britain and have been used in chapters two, three, and four. In addition, two learned persons rather than their works – due to the big number of them – must be evoked in order to write about the inestimable help for writing the dissertation. These are Wojciech Lipoński and Janusz Tazbir. The materials that turned out to be helpful for sketching chapter one were accessible chiefly on the Internet. Of great aid here were websites on which Price and Peter Garside placed information on Jane Porter. Furthermore, the sites contain reviews that appeared in different British newspapers, and thanks to these it was possible to get an idea of how the novel was welcomed by the British public. These data have found their place in chapter five of the project. These websites were also useful when writing the synopsis of the romance, which is situated in the appendix section of the paper. The synopsis itself has been put in this work for readers who are not familiar with Porter's book. In addition to the synopsis, the appendices contain maps and pictures illustrating certain occurrences, persons, and places, with an emphasis on the period handled in this study, so that the context of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is comprehended as fully as possible. Moreover, this part of the dissertation includes some facts taken from the life of the Polish celebrated hero, Tadeusz Bonawentura Kościuszko, since he constituted the most

critical spur for the writing of the tale. Last but not least, the appendix section is supplemented with extensive fragments of prefaces to, as well as an appendix of, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, because of the fact that information on Porter's life depends heavily on these sources.

Chapter 1: “She has not lived in vain”: Biography of Jane Porter

1.1. Jane Porter and her family

Jane Porter was a British novelist born in 1776 in Durham, England. Her father, William Porter, was an Irish officer and a surgeon in the Sixth Inniskilling Dragoons, in which he served for six years. He married Jane Blenkinsop (1745 – 1831), with whom he had five children. He spent the rest of his life in Durham, where he died and was buried in the churchyard of St Oswalds in 1779 (Price 2000). Jane Porter’s lineage can be followed down to the Elizabethan poet Endymion Porter, which was a source of pride for her (Sage 1999: 505).⁹ Ann Jones (1986: 114) traces back this ancestry even to Agincourt on her father’s side and to the Anglo-Saxon Barons of Blenkinsopp and Hilton on the mother’s.

Jane had, according to Price (2000), three brothers and one sister. The eldest was John Porter (1772 – 1810) – interestingly, never mentioned by *DNB* – who became a Colonel in the British army. He was followed by William Ogilvie Porter (1774 – 1850), a naval surgeon and, after retirement, a doctor in Greater Bristol. William produced a work on typhus and one on medical ethics, as well as a manuscript (edited by Jane) entitled: *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative of his Shipwreck and Consequent Discovery of Certain Islands in the Caribbean Sea: With a Detail of Many Extraordinary and Highly Interesting Events in His Life, from the Year 1733 to 1749 as Written in His Own Diary*

⁹ Endymion Porter (1587 – 1649) was an English royalist and MP, descended from Sir William Porter, sergeant-at-arms to Henry VII. During the Civil War Endymion Porter remained a constant and faithful servant of the king. According to an English antiquary, Antony Wood (1632 – 1695), Porter was “beloved by two kings: James I, for his admirable wit and Charles I, for his general bearing, brave style, sweet temper, great experience, travels and modern languages” (“Endymion Porter”, 2011). During the period of his prosperity Porter had gained a great reputation in the world of art and letters.

(1831) (Price 2000). It is very likely that her older brother's travelling account broadened Jane's geopolitical horizon and caused her to become engaged in East European and Polish affairs.

Jane's younger brother, Robert Ker Porter (1777 – 1842), was also an accomplished figure. Among other things, he was a student of the Royal Academy where "he had gained a reputation as a painter of altarpieces and battle-scenes of imposing magnitude" (*The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information* (henceforth EB), 1911: 116). In 1792, he was awarded a silver palette from the Society of Arts for a historical drawing *The Witch of Endor*. In 1793 Robert Ker Porter was designated to paint an altarpiece for Shoreditch Church, and ten years after that event he became a captain in the Westminster militia. In 1804, he was chosen by the tsar of Russia to redecorate the Admiralty Hall in St Petersburg ("Porter Mss.", 2011). This honour did not come from nowhere: in 1800 his forty-metre panorama painting called *Storming of Seringapatam* and similar pieces of art pinpointing, for example, the Napoleonic Wars astounded viewers and were a commercial success.¹⁰ Hook (1976: 182) believes that her brother's accomplishments in paint might have inspired Jane to do the same in words in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. Sadly, today little is known about Robert's works. The year of 1806 brought him a knighthood from Gustavus IV of Sweden and soon after that the knighthood of St Joachim of Württemberg. In the year 1809 Robert published *Travelling Sketches in Russia and Sweden: During the Years 1805, 1806, 1807, 1808*. At that time he accompanied Sir John Moore on a voyage to Spain, after which he published *Letters from Portugal and Spain Written During March of the British Troops*. In 1811, Robert Ker paid one more visit to Russia, where, on February 7, 1812, he married a Russian princess, with whom he had a daughter, Mary. In 1819, Porter was granted the insignia of the order of the Lion and the Sun by the Persian monarch Futtah Ali Shah. On September 27, 1826, his wife passed away of typhus fever in St Petersburg. In the same year Robert was made British consul in Venezuela. The year 1832 brought him "a knight commander of the order of Hanover in recognition of the benefits he had conferred upon the protestant community of Caracas" ("Porter Mss.", 2011). In 1837, his daughter married M. Kikine, an officer in the Rus-

¹⁰ The Siege of Seringapatam (5 April – 4 May 1799) was the final battle of the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War. (Mysore was a kingdom in the South of India). The East India Company with 50,000 troops defeated the enemy of 30,000 after breaching the walls of the fortress at Seringapatam ("Siege of Seringapatam", 2012).

sian army. In 1841, Porter returned to England and then went to Russia again, “where on 3th May 1842 he wrote to his younger brother William informing him that he was on the eve of sailing for England but then he died suddenly of apoplexy” (“Porter Mss.”, 2011). Robert Ker published a great many letters from his travels in Portugal, Spain, Russia, Georgia, Persia, Armenia or Ancient Babylonia (*EB*, 1911: 116).

Anna Maria Porter (1780 – 1832), the youngest of the siblings, was a devoted writer, who began to work in this field at the very young age of thirteen. She received her education, as did Jane, in Edinburgh. Her sister’s works were often mistakenly put down to her and the other way round. She began with *Artless Tales*, which appeared in 1795 in two anonymous volumes. *Walsh Colville* and *Octavia*, written in three tomes, also came out anonymously, in 1797 and 1798, respectively. In 1803, she endeavoured to write a drama, and her musical entitled *The Fair Fugitives* was staged at Covent Garden. It proved unsuccessful and was never put into print (*DNB*, 1968: 170). Altogether, Maria authored dozens of volumes, *The Lakes of Killarney* in three volumes being one of the most important. It “confined altogether to the events of modern days, and elegant fashionable life; and [was] written with great spirit and accuracy of pointing. It is enriched, as all Miss A. M. Porter’s novels are, with several pieces of true poetry” (“Memoirs of Miss Porter”, 1810: 404). In a letter to a Mr Pratt from 1805, Jane wrote about the above works of her sister that one cannot find there “anything that militates against the system of Truth.” In the same letter she recommended Maria’s book *A Sailor’s Friendship, and a Soldier’s Love* (1805), praising the moral overtone there (Porter 1805, as quoted in Joukovsky 1990: 17). In 1807, when she was living with her mother and sister in a cottage in Esher, Surrey, she published her chief work, the first “to which she put her name”, *The Hungarian Brothers* (*OCEL*, 1955: 633). It “embraces her sister’s scheme of uniting the romance with the novel; and, amidst the deep interest of love and fraternal affection, we are made no less sympathising spectators of the eventful struggle between France and Austria, in the campaigns of 1796” (“Memoirs of Miss Porter”, 1810: 404-405). A further piece of writing by Maria Porter was *Don Sebastian or the House of Braganza*, which was “founded on the extraordinary and mysterious fate of the royal hero, and is managed with great skill and pathos” (405). She also penned *Ballads and Romances and other Poems*, *The Recluse of Norway* (1814), and *The Knight of St. John*, which was a joint work with Jane. Though as a writer she was very productive – she wrote more than fifty works – it is most likely that few could

name any of them. In a letter to her friend, Mary Cockle, Anna Maria Porter (as quoted in McLean 2007: 91) complained: “there was a time when I had no occasion to apologize for a dull letter – but now – I am one of the Has beens; that numerous and doleful family!” One of the reasons for such negligence is writing catered to the then needs of the reading audience of the time, in a style that is (and has been for some time) no longer fashionable, which did not have sufficient power to reach the contemporary reader. However, nearly all her compositions were translated into French, and some were published in the United States. Anna died of typhus fever in Montpellier, near Bristol, on September 21, 1832 (*DNB*, 1968: 170).

Jane was a three-year old child when her father bereaved the family in 1779. The following opinion about how relationships within the family looked after her father’s death was published in *British Lady’s Magazine* in 1815. Beside expressing mutual love, it shows that since her childhood Jane Porter had been cared about in terms of her education:

Deprived of their father at an early stage of life, it devolved on their mother not only to watch the progress of their infant years, but to assist in urging them forward to that distinction at which her children have since arrived. She first encouraged that genius, and gloried in that spirit, to the display of which her family owe alike their respectability and fame. Maternal love has never been more energetically exerted than by this excellent mother; nor has any mother found greater cause to rejoice in the result of her cares, as exemplified in the affection and prosperity of her offspring (“Memoir of Miss Jane Porter”, 1815: 249).

After Jane’s father had passed away, the mother decided to move with her offspring from Durham for educational purposes to Edinburgh, the city in which both Jane and her sister attended George Fulton’s School, a highly regarded institution. Jane’s love for study frequently compelled her to wake at 4 a.m., and, when she was still just a youngster, she read the *Faerie Queene*, Sidney’s *Arcadia*, and many tales of chivalry. The sisters’ development was very fast. At that time, Jane Porter met Walter Scott for the first time, who was then still a little boy, and Luckie Forbes, “a poor woman of unusual intelligence”, both of whom entertained the girls with fairy tales and legends of the borders (*DNB*, 1968: 182). Supposedly, the future Sir Walter adored not only Jane, but Maria as well, a fact which can be seen in the correspondence of Jane to their brother Robert Ker (1828, as quoted in McLean 2007: 100): “When a little child, Sir Walter was so fond of her [Anna Maria].” Next, the family moved to Northumberland

for a few years and then, around 1793, to London, and they lived in the house earlier owned by Joshua Reynolds, the painter, at Leister square (Jones 1986: 115). The friendship of Jane Porter and Scott was refreshed in April 1815 when they met again in England's capital, on which occasion Jane Porter (1815, as quoted in McLean 2007: 89) wrote to her sister Maria: "Walter Scott is in Town, & I saw him yesterday for a few minutes.—I knew him instantly at the door he was coming out of; his picture, but more the face I had remembered in Scotland, assured me it was him.— He kindly expressed much pleasure at seeing me." They had remained friends until Scott passed away though there were moments of dislike, at least on the side of Maria (McLean 2007: 89). One can easily figure out that Scott was older than the sisters (five years older than Jane and nine years older than Anna Maria); nevertheless, they, and especially Jane, are by many regarded as the precursors of national or even historical tales (see also chapter five). And Anna certainly supposed that Scott stole some of their ideas for his own productions, which she voiced in a letter to Jane:

I am somewhat vexed at the unfairness of this concealed writer. He evidently uses *our* novels as a sort of store house, from which... he draws unobserved whatever odd bit of furniture strikes his fancy for his own pompous edifice. I do not say he steals the thing itself, but the idea & fashion of it; and if he had the honesty to shew that he thought well of our writings, by a word or two of such commendation as he liberally gives to works that have no resemblance to his own, I should say the conduct was fair and allowable. But I quarrel with the self-interestedness of *valuing* the hints we give him, yet never owning that he does (A. M. Porter 1823, as quoted in McLean 2007: 89).

Although Jane most likely never confirmed the above opinion openly, she may very well have thought so, as well, because both of them were earnest about their work. In fact, they treated the practice of their literary potency as a religious must (*DNB*, 1968: 184).

As has been said, Jane's education had been seen to since she was a child. One of the many standpoints approving of Jane Porter's attempts to obtain knowledge, and at the same time one that encapsulates her literary talents, may be found in the *Monthly Mirror*, whose journalists expressed the following remarks:

(...) like her brother, the foundations of her education were laid north of the Tweed, under the inspection of one of the most learned preceptors in Scotland; that the superstructure was finished in England, where, encompassed by ingenious friends, her mind early imbibed the vigour of literary emulation; and that, at a time when other young women have scarcely dismissed their masters in the commonest accomplishments of their sex, she had begun to write for the world, and with applause ("Memoirs of Miss Porter", 1810: 403).

Clearly, Porter's future literary career had solid foundations since very early on, as she spent a lot of time among the brightest literary circles of Edinburgh and then of London. Education is one thing, but what is nearly equally important in the context of Porter's literature is the fact that she was always careful about her ethical code and religious beliefs. Jones (1986: 115) quotes a fragment of Jane's correspondence to Mrs More, a friend of the family, in which the former wrote:

The poor were in profligate ignorance – the rich in presumptuous apostasy. I cannot give the latter a milder name; for I remember that about that period (then a very young person) I burst into tears at a large table after dinner from horror and pity of some persons present, who were scoffing at religion.

The father's death in the late 18th century left the family with limited means for their support and education, so the Porters knew the notion of financial problems. This might be exemplified by their inability to pay for the journey to John James Hamilton, Lord of Abercorn. "Only after a cheque covering the travel expenses had been sent could the Porters arrive at Abercorn's" (*DNB*, 1968: 182-183) and yet "they had not travelled in their best clothes" (Price 2000). Moreover, John Porter, the eldest brother, was threatened with being sent to Newgate, the then infamous prison, for getting into debt. In 1806, Jane received a letter from John Porter (1806, as quoted in Price 2000) in which he asked his sister to pay off the debts: "Nothing but the payment of the whole sum would release [me] from Newgate." His financial behaviour as well as requests for money were repetitious, however, which made Jane sceptical about John's promises of change.

Price (2000), following *DNB*, writes that the Porter sisters and their mother moved from Thames Ditton to Esher, Surrey, in 1822.¹¹ However, the Durham University Library possesses W.O. Porter's letters addressed to Jane and her mother at Thames Ditton long after that time, which implies that Jane, Maria, and their mother went to Esher later than it had formerly been assumed. For all this time the family led a peaceful life, remaining close to each other, despite the fame that the three youngest of the siblings had earned. The three Porter women and Robert resided at Esher until the last day of the mother's life, in 1831. A year later, Jane's sister passed away, and for the next decade Jane, distressed, with limited funds, became a vagabond, moving around in

¹¹ Both places are today in Greater London, around four kilometres distant from each other.

southern England, staying at her family's and friends' places in London, and visiting Paris. In the British capital she met Lord Byron at the house of William Sotheby (1757 – 1833), an English poet and translator (Price 2000). In 1833, she was visited by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1758 – 1841) and other Polish immigrants, as the November Uprising in Poland had ended in failure. Her financial situation, as Niemcewicz (1877: 69) noticed, was not the best. She had lost her mother and sister, and her best friend was very ill. She lived in a small house bought for what she could earn from her literary work, just like Niemcewicz. In 1842, she visited her brother Sir Robert Ker Porter in Petersburg, where unfortunately, soon after her arrival, he died. She then returned to Britain in order to see to her late brother's estate. "In particular she wished to sell some of his watercolours, which had been assembled into a book form partly by Robert himself and partly by Jane, to the British Museum" (Price 2000). Talking the Museum into buying her brother's work was an elaborate undertaking, but Jane demonstrated substantial persistence and was successful. In 1844, she moved to Bristol to stay with William, her other brother, where she spent the rest of her days, passing away on May 24, 1850 (Price 2000).

There are quite a few comments on Jane Porter's physical appearance in *DNB*. These come from many persons, and all of them are approving; for instance, Lord Abercorn said that "she had great personal charms" and a Lady Morgan described her as "tall, lank, lean, and lackadaisical... and an air of a regular Melpomene." Another favourable opinion concerned "her tall and striking figure, her noble face... still possessing the remains of uncommon beauty." Miss Mitford considered her the only literary lady she had seen who was not fit "for a scarecrow" (*DNB*, 1968: 183-184).

1.2. Jane Porter and her works

Jane Porter's collection of literary works is, like her sister's, an extensive one. The first attempts of Jane as a writer concerned, according to *DNB*, a periodical *The Quiz*. Miss Porter, as well as her sister Maria, helped Robert and Thomas Frognall Didbin on that endeavour in 1797 (*DNB*, 1968: 182). *The Spirit of the Elbe* was published anonymously in 1799, while in 1801 Crosby and Letterman released *The Two Princes of Persia*. Jane did not think highly of these two works, as she once remarked that they were

unworthy of attention, because while writing them she was “so young and unreflecting” (Joukovsky 1990: 15). John Graham (1983: 122) lists only one copy of *The Spirit of the Elbe* in a German collection of English novels. Chronologically, Jane Porter’s next piece of literature was her first novel – by many deemed her most masterful work – entitled *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803), which is the subject of the following thesis. The next creation of Jane Porter was a *Selection of Thoughts on Moral Subjects*, from the writings of Sir Philip Sidney, organised in a regular series of aphorisms; and to most of them there are comments, “whose sentiments being built upon the principles of her text, are, therefore, not unworthy a station in the same page.”¹² To the admirers of *Rocheffoucault’s Maxims*, or similar epitomes of ethics, this little vade mecum of ‘honour, manners, and piety’, might be usefully introduced as a valuable pocket and travelling companion” (“Memoirs of Miss Porter”, 1810: 404).

Her second best novel came out in 1810 in five volumes and was entitled *The Scottish Chiefs*. It tells the story of William Wallace, Scotland’s national hero, who fought for his nation’s independence from the tyrannical English oppression embodied by Edward I, nicknamed “the Hammer of Scots”. The story, to which Jane dedicated a lot of energy, deals with the period between 1296 and 1305 in England and Scotland. “She took the cold facts of history and warmed them with the flame of her genius to a warm, throbbing story describing the intimate lives of her characters” (Price 2000). While making preparations for her novel, Porter searched for information everywhere she could. The old, 12-volume poem on the subject, *Wallace*, by Henry the Minstrel (Blind Harry) (c. 1440 – 1492), was most likely known to her (*EB* 1911: 116). Although this 15th-century author – who served at the king’s court – is criticised for inaccuracies in his work(s), it is claimed he did popularise William Wallace and his cause (Lipoński 2005: 121), influencing, next to Porter, Robert Burns. Then, the poet Campbell sent her a sketch of Wallace’s life and recommended books for her to read. The third edition (1816) was dedicated to him by Porter. Nevertheless, driving force behind writing the book first came when Jane Porter was only a little child, “on the border lands of Scot-

¹² Sir Philip Sidney (1554 – 1586) became one of the Elizabethan Age’s most prominent figures. Famous in his day in England as a poet, courtier, and soldier, he remains known as the author of *Astrophil and Stella*, *The Defence of Poetry*, and *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*. He caused a sensation when he voyaged to Poland (“Philip Sidney”, 2011). “This was just after the flight of the Valois, when frantic efforts were being made to find someone to replace him on the Polish throne.” “Allegedly”, says Lipoński (1975: 31), “a secret proposal has been made to Sir Sidney...”

land, where her mother, in an early widowhood, took her and her siblings thither” (*DNB*, 1968: 183). Furthermore, this impetus came not only from scholars and history school lessons, as one could expect, but principally from ordinary people, such as the already mentioned Luckie Forbes, from whom she learnt about the battlefields of Falkirk, Bannockburn, or Cambuskenneth (*DNB*, 1968: 183). As the author herself confessed:

(...) in Scotland, it is not the “pastors and masters” only who educate the people; there is a spirit of wholesome knowledge in the country, pervading all ranks, which passes from one to the other like the atmosphere they breathe; and I may truly say, that I was hardly six years of age when I first heard the names of William Wallace and Robert Bruce:—not from gentlemen and ladies, readers of history; but from the maids in the nursery, and the serving-man in the kitchen: the one had their songs of “Wallace wight!” to lull my baby sister to sleep: and the other his tales of “Bannockburn,” and “Cambus-Kenneth,” to entertain my young brother (...) (*The Scottish Chiefs*, i).

Because her main “instructress in legends”, Luckie Forbes, was a poor woman of “low degree” but one knowing the bible, it is observable that the patriotism in Jane’s vision is not about bloodlines, money, and prestige but about being “educated in the correct, disinterested way” (Price 2006: 643-644). In this respect, a parallel can be drawn between Porter and Kościuszko, as the latter too saw one role of the lower strata of society as that of preserving the nation. However, perhaps curiously, Miss Porter herself did not endorse Scottish independence; what she did advocate and admire was the devotion and intrepidity of Scottish soldiers serving in the British army (Price 2000). Although many would say that the description of Wallace was exaggerated and the presented events lacked historical accuracy, the book became an acknowledged piece of British literature. This may have been achieved largely due to the dazzling manner of writing, of which the following opinion seems to be evidence:

Petite, gentle and shy, Jane Porter wrote of war and battle strategy with the genius of a field marshal. She raises the towers of castles and invests them with men of armour with a sure, certain knowledge of medieval history. (...) Only Jane Porter’s genius made it possible for the sceptical public of her time to accept the work of a “female” writer; only the rich masterpiece of storytelling which “*Scottish Chiefs*” proved itself to be, has kept this breathless romantic thriller as popular today as it was more than a century ago (Price 2000).

It is true to say that some held *The Scottish Chiefs* as even better – that is to say, written more professionally – than *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. For example, Wilbur Lucius

Cross (1862 – 1948), professor of English in the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University, was of the opinion that for writing *The Scottish Chiefs* Jane Porter was better prepared because she had lived in Scotland's capital (but never in Poland's) and visited the places which she described. That was something that "no other romancer had ever thought of doing" (Cross 1899: 113). Next, she acquired plenty of information about William Wallace and Robert de Bruce by reading works such as "the fine old Scotch poem", *The Bruce*, composed by John Barbour (Cross 1899: 113). *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism* (edited by S. Curran) maintains that this work "is of particular import for working out the formulas by which the 19th century historical novel would people crucial events with fictional characters (CCBR, 1993: 191). One of the infrequent negative expressions about Porter's historical skills is given by Tretiak, who in the work *Literatura angielska w okresie romantyzmu (1798 – 1831)* [English Literature in the Romantic Period (1798 – 1831)] wrote that the ethnographic and social picture of Scotland was transported to Wallace's times completely without considering the historical perspective (Tretiak 1928: 234). There are a number of other literati who are critical of lack of truthfulness in the novel, for instance of whitewashing the figure of Wallace, but most are positive. About the narrative being interesting, Cross (1899: 113) wrote that "there is no melodrama in romantic fiction that holds the attention more closely than the capture of Dumbarton Castle, or the scene in the council hall at Stirling, when Wallace pushes his way through the angry and treacherous chiefs."

Thomas Anessi, an American researcher, in his M. A. thesis entitled *England's Future/Poland's Past: History and National Identity in 'Thaddeus of Warsaw'*, adds that the general critical reception of *The Scottish Chiefs* "earned Porter a significant place until 1850 in most surveys of English literature" (1999: 13).¹³ CCBR (1993: 196) goes even further with the timeframe of the novel's popularity, saying that it continued throughout the 19th century.

To speak in recommendation of the book, the *Monthly Mirror* wrote that it was not surprising that this creation met with great interest in Scotland. "Miss Porter having kept to time and tradition, the natives are enabled to travel with her over every rood of land." But, as the *Monthly Mirror* went on, elsewhere in the Kingdom the work was

¹³ I have been provided with the original version of *England's Future/Poland's Past: History and National Identity in 'Thaddeus of Warsaw'* by courtesy of T. Anessi.

also eagerly read, and Jane Porter became a star whose “imitators, as minor planets, shine with diminished brightness” (“Memoirs of Miss Porter”, 1810: 404).

The subsequent account tells the reader what Porter herself thought of the novel’s reception:

[The] author [of *The Scottish Chiefs*] will not deny herself the genuine pleasure of expressing her grateful sense of the candour with which so adventurous a work from a female pen has been generally received. That among these liberal approvers are the people of her hero’s nation – the country in which she first drew the aliments of her intellectual life – cannot but afford a peculiar gratification to her heart; and she expresses her delight on this occasion with the feeling of a child rejoicing in the approbation of indulgent parents; for England, the land of her birth, has not been less kind in its reception. (...) *The Scottish Chiefs* was translated into the languages of the continent. She received from Vienna, Berlin, Wirtemberg, Petersburg, and Moscow, and even far distant India, letters of generous criticism from persons of the highest name in rank and literature (*The Scottish Chiefs*, vii).

The novel was so influential and powerful that the French authorities declared it a peril to their country and banned its coming out, and therefore the first editions in France were published as late as 1814, with the restoration of the Bourbons (Hook 1976: 186). Jones (1986: 130) wrote that “Napoleon certainly did not see a dandy in this portrayal, (...) which must have seemed to the author (...) an honour.” Porter herself confirmed such an opinion: “But when the work was ready for publication in France, it was denounced by the order of Napoleon, as dangerous to the state, and commanded to be withheld or destroyed (*The Scottish Chiefs*, vii). But, as it often goes, forbidden fruit tastes the best and so the 1814 edition was extraordinarily successful (Hook 1976: 186).

DNB, just like the *Monthly Mirror*, validates Porter’s opinion on the outstanding reputation that *The Scottish Chiefs* received: “*The Scottish Chiefs* had an immense success in Scotland. Translated into German and Russian, it won European fame, was proscribed by Napoleon, and penetrated to India” (*DNB*, 1968: 183). Also, full of praise of the novel was none other than Sir Walter Scott himself, who admitted to George IV that *The Scottish Chiefs* stimulated him to write *Waverley*, Scott’s series of historical novels (*DNB*, 1968: 183).

Jane Porter’s next literary attempt was *The Pastor’s Fireside*, which dates from 1815. This is a novel dealing with the later Stuarts. A second edition was published in 1817, and later ones in 1832, 1856, and 1880. After this work, she embarked on writing a number of plays. *DNB* indicates that the first play *Egmont, or the Eve of St. Alyn*e was seen and liked by Edmund Kean, but it was neither acted nor published. Another play,

entitled *Switzerland*, was performed once in London's Theatre Royal on Drury Lane on February 7, 1819 (DNB, 1968: 183). On January 28, 1822 *Owen, Prince of Powys* was acted on Drury Lane but only three times (Price 2000). Unlike her novels, Jane's plays were regarded rather as a failure (OCEL, 1955: 633). In 1824, the voluminous author wrote another novel, namely *Duke Christian of Luneburg, or Traditions of the Hartz*.¹⁴ The novel was written at the personal request of King George IV himself, who wanted to commemorate his ancestor Duke Christian of Brunswick-Luneburg. The king chose Jane Porter because he was satisfied with the faithfulness of the characters that the author had described in her earlier novels (Price 2000).

(...) his Majesty (...) took my early published volumes from the royal shelf, and was so satisfied with the historical fidelity of the heroes they portrayed that Dr. Clarke [the king's librarian] was commanded to communicate to me his Majesty's gracious request that my next subject should be "The Life of his great and virtuous progenitor, Duke Christian of Luneburg" (Price 2000).

George IV was not the only royal figure that Porter was familiar with. Hook (1976: 181) maintains that when this writer was seriously ill, "the young queen Victoria took an interest in the author of *The Scottish Chiefs* and sent her some form of testimony to her concern."

Two years after publishing *Duke Christian* Jane created, this time with her sister Maria, a series of four short stories *Tales Round a Winter Hearth* (DNB, 1968: 184). In 1828, the sisters experimented once more with the effect of *Coming Out* in three volumes, about social life, and a historical novella *The Field of Forty Footsteps*, about strenuous life in the Commonwealth. Ann Jones (1986: 269) notes it is a credible story about a girl raised by a Cromwellian, but this girl begins to develop her liking for royalists. In this work, Porter emphasises the importance of tradition and patriotism, and invites individuals to fight for their country, but at the same time remains in opposition to the kind of individualism "associated with radical thought [that] produces social disorder" (Price 2006: 640-641). That year, Jane sent Scott a copy of the latter work with a courteous note saying "it comes in the light of a tribute, however humble the offering, to the rightful Lord of the soil!" (Porter 1828, as quoted in McLean 2007: 89). Eventually, as has been noted before, in 1831 Jane published *Sir Edward Seawards Narrative*, writ-

¹⁴ Some authors, such as Hook or Price, write the proper name of Luneburg as Luneberg. Others use the version Luneburgh.

ten by her older brother William. Penned in a style similar to Defoe's, it tells a story about a shipwreck in the Caribbean, the main character's survival, and setting up a new island community (Jones 1986: 269-270). The book made a great sensation, but, in the mind of Sage, it was largely, if not wholly, fictitious. "Sir Edward's journal", notices Sage, "was mistakenly believed authentic" (1999: 505). Miss Porter contended that the Diary was genuine, and in the preface to the edition of 1841, she issued a challenge to the Royal Geographical Society to prove that the islands described in the diary were not imaginary. The book was reissued in 1832, 1852, 1856, 1878, 1879, and in 1883 (*DNB*, 1968: 183). Besides the works cited above, Jane Porter published *Sketch of the Campaign of Count A. Suwarrow Ryminski*, a preface to *Young Hearts, by a Recluse* in 1834, and had a share in *Gentleman's Magazine*, S. C. Hall's *Amulet*, and other periodicals. A number of unpublished productions by the female siblings were sold in 1852, and their track is at present irrecoverable, but most productions survived and witnessed great popularity in the United States. In 1844, several authors, publishers, and booksellers from this country sent her a rosewood armchair, "as a token of their admiration" (*DNB*, 1968: 184).

Her masterful literary oeuvre meant that an array of her words has been collected in the form of citations. They principally concern life in general, especially its moral dimension. Consequently, one finds in it passages about love, narcissism, beauty, happiness, sorrow, revenge, guilt, cowardice, knowledge, fame, temptation, trouble, disgrace, hatred, nobility, distrust, despair, confidence, sensitivity, and many, many more. Some of the quotations, placed among others in Porter's *Aphorisms of Sir Philip Sidney*, are educational or even enlightening. She wrote, for example:

- "Beauty of form affects the mind, but then it must be understood that it is not the mere shell that we admire; we are attracted by the idea that this shell is only a beautiful case adjusted to the shape and value of a still more beautiful pearl within. The perfection of outward loveliness is the soul shining through its crystalline covering."
- "He that easily believes rumours has the principle within him to augment rumours. It is strange to see the ravenous appetite with which some devourers of character and happiness fix upon the sides of the innocent and unfortunate."
- "How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!"
- "Happiness is not perfected until it is shared."
- "I never yet heard man or woman much abused, that I was not inclined to think the better of them; and to transfer any suspicion or dislike to the person who appeared to take delight in pointing out the defects of a fellow-creature."
- "In the career of female fame, there are few prizes to be obtained which can vie with the obscure state of a beloved wife or a happy mother."

- “The platform or the altar of love may be analysed and explained; it is constructed of virtue, beauty, and affection. Such is the pyre, such is the offering; but the ethereal spark must come from heaven, that lights the sacrifice.”
- “The virtues, like the muses, are always seen in groups. A good principle was never found solitary in any breast.”
- “The best manner of avenging ourselves is by not resembling him who has injured us.”
- National antipathy is the basest, because the most illiberal and illiterate of all prejudices.”
- “The doubts of love are never to be wholly overcome; they grow with its various anxieties, timidities, and tenderness, and are the very fruits of the reverence in which the admired object is beheld” (Shepard 2000).
- “We all know that a lie needs no other grounds than the invention of the liar; and to take for granted as truth all that is alleged against the fame of others is a species of credulity that men would blush at on any other subject.”
- “Nobility, without virtue, is a fine setting without a gem.”
- “Imparting knowledge, is only lighting other men’s candle at our lamp, without depriving ourselves of any flame” (Porter 1807: 38, 5, 105).

The small sample given above suggests that this British author was shrewd, observant, and thoughtful. Her statements, even if one disagrees with their pertinence, appear to have come out from a delicate and feeling heart and an ingenious but not ingenuous mind; a mind that one could learn from, as the novelist’s reflections might be treated as guidance, particularly for those who in their existence feel forsaken or wrestle with being righteous, regardless of the epoch and the part of the globe they dwell in. It becomes strikingly evident that Porter’s principles, mindset, and even code of life expressed in the quotes found their way in her literary themes concerning Poland, of which *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is momentous evidence.

Chapter 2: British historical and cultural context of the novel

The situation in the second half of the 18th century in Great Britain was dissimilar to that in Poland, but this does not mean that nothing linked the two countries. Although threatened by numerous wars, especially with France, Spain, and the American colonies, and finally the uprisings of the Jacobites and Scots, Britain did not have to worry about remaining on the map of Europe. Nevertheless, the last decades of the 18th century were a “busy” period in England. If one wished to depict in short the complications or issues the country was preoccupied with during this period – and which at the same time influenced Porter’s works and/or Poland – these would include: foreign affairs (military conflicts, the colonies, and trade), the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution (and poverty as a side effect of it), the Enlightenment, and various cultural aspects of life, such as the fight for free speech, the abolitionist movement, religion, education, the arts, discussion clubs, social strains, and gardening.

Britain’s military conflicts with France were, from purely historiographic point of view, quite like Poland’s with Germany or Russia. Jane Porter grew up at a time when her countrymen were at war with the French or in fear of one, and her *Thaddeus of Warsaw* was written, in part, as a warning against being politically impotent. The American colonies were rebelling openly in the same year as Porter’s birth. Since in 1700 there were roughly 200,000 colonists, and in 1770 as many as 2.5 million (McDowall 2004: 112), the British legislature did not want to appear to be dictatorial; they solely wanted to control trade. Yet, on the other hand, they looked down on the colonists and thought it was natural that parliamentary decisions were to be obeyed. Consequently, MPs came up with a number of acts leading to discontent among the

Americans. One of these, not necessarily of primary importance, was the Acts of Trade. It stated that colonial raw products could only be exported to England or other English colonies and that the import of articles must come from England (Willson 1967: 555). In 1764, the Sugar Act was passed, under which English commissioners were authorised to hunt down the ships and goods of smugglers, a right used rather eagerly. Next, English soldiers were summoned in Boston, which led to additional strife. The following year Parliament issued the Stamp Act, which said that documents, deeds, bonds, almanacs, newspapers, and advertisements must be taxed. British statesmen wanted colonists to share the costs of the Seven Years War, as, they maintained, it had benefited them (the colonists), as well. Unsurprisingly, the latter viewed the acts as an attack on their property (1967: 559, 557). In 1766, the Stamp Act was repealed, but it was followed by the Declaratory Act, which “asserted the right of Parliament to make statutes binding the colonies in all cases whatsoever” (558). In 1770, in the so-called Boston Massacre, five Bostonians were killed. To console Americans the Cabinet removed many duties, sustaining, however, the one on tea. Within the next three years, the situation ameliorated, but in 1773 the Tea Act was put into practice. It allowed the East India Company to distribute tea to American retailers, hence evading wholesale merchants in both countries (560). In most ports, captains bringing tea were driven away without unloading it, but at the port of Boston the colonists refused to pay the tax on the tea and threw it out into the sea, an event later known as the Boston Tea Party. The Government in England then ordered the closure of the port, which led the colonists to rebel by not letting English goods enter America until the port was reopened (McDowall 2004: 112). Each new act strengthening the power of Parliament was now met with a cumulative anger on America’s side. The first military skirmish took place in April, 1775 at Lexington, marking the beginning of the American Revolution (Willson 1967: 561). This chapter does not aim at presenting the course of battles; nevertheless, it needs to be said that the war for the British resulted in the loss of the colonies, to which both France and Spain substantially contributed. In 1783, the Peace of Paris guaranteed the independence of the United States (556). Opinions on the issue in England were divided; all the same, “the majority of the population, however, never thought about America at all”, as John Plumb (1957: 124) notes. Yet, Porter did think about it, because her hero, Kościuszko, fought in the war against the British, a fact to which Jane devoted many pages in the footnotes or appendix sections of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. There is little evidence of

her standpoint on the conflict, but a perceptive reader will notice that she was rather against independence. She calls the American Revolution a war “between the national parent and its children on a distant land”, but in a different part of the tale “between the parent country and its contumacious offspring” (*TW*, 1845).¹⁵

This may come as a surprise to some, but albeit Poland did not possess any overseas colonies, some dreamt about and planned for such. Forming New Poland in North America was considered in one Thorn (Pol. *Toruń*) middle school on the eve of the 17th century. (In 1801, Henryk Dąbrowski (1755 – 1818), for example, astonishingly opted for a Greco-Polish state in the Peloponnesus). This was a time when, unlike the present, few grumbled about Poland’s geopolitical position. Nationals were proud of the rich soil and natural resources and that the Maker had given them the chance to prove their “Sarmatian” bravery in the face of their hostile neighbours, as well as to guard the *antemurale* – the “bulwark of Christendom”, using Davies’ (2005: 125) phrase, or, in other words, the last outpost of western civilisation. Poles naturally began to judge their location to be disadvantageous when the country was partitioned (Tazbir 2005: 80).

In spite of the fact that the French Revolution, as the name suggests, was not carried out in England, “there was no profounder influence than the French Revolution in moulding the course of English history in the eighteenth century, and the development of its political expression in the nineteenth” (Plumb 1957: 155). Nearly the same can be stated about the impact of the Revolution on creating *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, as Porter openly expressed horror at the possibility of such strife on the Isles. Throughout her narrative, she calls, both overtly and covertly, for patriotism, in the event her country was to face a similar danger. For this reason, it is vital to at least mention the course of the Revolution to understand the occurrences in Great Britain. The upheavals of 1789 in France were initiated by the bourgeoisie, the most progressive class, with its lawyers, doctors, merchants, and manufacturers. They abhorred both the nobility’s enjoying special rights and preserving their political dominance in France, as well as the unjust class divisions (Willson 1967: 603). In England, the bourgeoisie mixed with the gentry in the House of Commons and were also a powerful class (McDowall 2004: 125). In 1789, representatives of the middle class set up a National Assembly and took control in Paris.

¹⁵ Contumacious means perverse in resisting authority, stubbornly disobedient, rebellious, irreconcilable (*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* (henceforth *WD*), 1993: 497). The 1845 edition of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* comes from the Gutenberg project, available on the Internet, and has no pagination.

The crowds in Paris protected the Assembly because the lower segments of society bore a heavy burden in the form of levies, tithes, and intolerable impecuniousness (Willson 1967: 603), while the Assembly announced unprecedented, at least in terms of scale, changes: the termination of feudalism, serfdom, special privilege, oppression, and tithes; the implementation of equality in paying taxes (the nobles previously paid almost none), plus the freedom of religion and speech (Davies 1998b: 763). In 1792, the mob in Paris took control of the Revolution, feeling they were being deprived of its benefits. They proclaimed the Republic of France; the king and queen, together with some nobles and even bourgeoisie, were guillotined. The Reign of Terror of Maximilien François Marie Isidore de Robespierre (1758 – 1794) did not end until three years later, when power was re-seized by the middle class, which ruled through a newly constructed government named the Directory. This government was bribe-prone and faulty enough to be overthrown by the emperor-to-be Napoleon Bonaparte (Willson 1967: 604). At first, the news of the Revolution was welcomed in England by many from every faction of society. Yet with time, when violence and lawlessness were seen to be the order of the day in France, the English, and especially the upper classes and literary figures, became anxious and horrified, showing determination to uphold the status quo (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (henceforth *NAEL*), 2000: 2). As has been pointed out earlier, there were numerous discussion societies in Britain. Some of them were radical, filled with the underprivileged who cheered the victorious plebs in France and pledged neutrality should war between the two states break out. In 1796, when Porter was twenty years old, Great Britain faced the danger of being invaded by France, an event which miraculously never happened, and Ireland was restless. To impede revolt in England, Parliament took a number of strict measures: “for seditious writings and any incitement to revolution one could be charged with treason, conversation clubs and assemblies without prior notice were forbidden, the press was censored (Willson 1967: 606). The actions by the government, in combination with disappointment with the course of events in France and in combination with the teachings of Methodism, prevented revolution in England. In fact, discontent among the British poor in the late 1790s was not as much revolutionary as it was industrial in character. The new proletariat demanded a normal life.

The foreign affairs of all European powers in the 18th century were entangled to the extreme. Countries might change allies or foes, seeking advantage over others. Such

was the case with Great Britain. For some time, a firmer political affiliation, though not always stable, was formed between Great Britain and Prussia, as they had a common enemy, namely France, which had allied herself with Austria. Germany and Russia were subsidised by Great Britain, so no imminent peril was likely to come from those two nations. Despite this, when it proved that Britain had difficulty fighting in the War of Independence, back in Europe many countries – not just France, Spain, or Austria – turned hostile to England. She was left friendless and isolated:

France was trying to recapture the West Indies and India. Spain was besieging Gibraltar and raiding convoys. Holland joined in to get a share of the spoils from the apparently inevitable collapse. The Baltic powers, also concluding that Britain was impotent, seemed likely to carry their objection to her naval supremacy to the point of war. Prussia welcomed any difficulties which drew the attention of other powers from Europe and left her free to pursue a programme of internal reconstruction. Austria wished her ally France well and hoped that she too might gain time for domestic rebuilding. So Britain fought solitarily and ingloriously against western Europe (Watson 1960: 241).

Jane Porter was aware of this political turmoil and was afraid the worst might happen. She also had to acquaint herself with the following situation to create her tome.

During the period of peace after the war in the colonies (1783 – 1793), Britain's objective was to stop France's advance into Belgium and Holland, and Russia's into eastern Europe. Yet, William Pitt the Younger (1759 – 1806), the Premier of Great Britain, could not successfully prevent Tsarina Catherine's incorporation of the Turkish domains on the Black Sea. In 1784, Joseph II of Austria wanted to withdraw claims to the Austrian Netherlands in exchange for the electorate of Bavaria, a policy that Frederick the Great disapproved of. This would also have allowed the French to get hold of the Netherlands, which, in turn, was rejected by George III. Seeing the compatibility of their policies, Great Britain and Prussia strengthened their partnership. It was further cemented in 1787, when Prussia sent troops into Holland to put a stop to an insurgence there backed by France. Having limited funds for the war, the French disengaged from the conflict, hence Great Britain was now able to reduce her isolation by allying herself with Prussia (Willson 1967: 602). This is important for a reader of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* because at the end of the story Thaddeus Sobieski, the Polish hero, refuses to join the British armed forces and criticises the British for "acting in concert with those ravagers" who vanquished Poland (TW, 1831: 343).

In 1792, Austria and Prussia attacked the French to quell the Revolution, but the French struck back in the Austrian Netherlands, demanding that the Schelde River, closed to commerce by international agreements, be reopened. This action meant that the balance of trade in Flanders was shifted, so the government in England unwillingly declared war on France in 1793. Nonetheless, Pitt's prime political aim was to assert dominance over French trade, especially in the West Indies. He did not intend to crush the French on the continent; he wanted his European "friends" to do the fighting there but was prepared to spend money on such an endeavour. The First Coalition (the word coalition implies a closer alliance than really existed) was comprised of Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, Spain, Naples, Portugal, and Russia (Willson 1967: 607). Yet, after initial military operations in the Netherlands, it turned out that these nations were more interested in British subsidies than in fighting itself. For instance:

Prussia was in a sad state, her treasury exhausted and her peasants rioting. Her normal subsidies were not used for operations against the French but for consolidating her hold on Poland – to the indignation of the British who disapproved of the whole Polish affair. (...) The Austrians were already, under the influence of their chancellor Thugut, thinking how best to disengage their army from the Netherlands so as to use it to bargain with Russia and Prussia in Poland. (...) Austria decided only to feign action in the west so as to retain a British subsidy while using it – *a la Prusse* – to co-operate in the suppression of the Polish patriot Kosciusko. The Austrians had steeled themselves to abandon their Netherlands (Watson 1960: 368-369).

For their part, the disciplined French (supported by a substantial number of nationless Poles) fought with a new patriotic confidence, and were commanded by ruthless and talented generals, who were about to be further strengthened by the prodigious soldierly skills of Napoleon Bonaparte. Great Britain did well against France at sea in the West Indies, but the death toll caused by challenging the French, native Negroes, and yellow fever reached 40,000 men, with even more being injured (Willson 1967: 608). After more than two years of warfare, the solitary France still appeared strong. To make matters worse, the coalition fell apart. In 1795, Prussia made peace with France when Pitt's funds began to be used in Poland; Holland and Spain followed Prussia's example in the same year. Russia was preoccupied with Turkey and Persia, rather than with the western theatre. In October 1796, Spain declared war on Britain due to a conflict over the West Indies (Watson 1960: 370-371). The only help – having nothing to do with philanthropy – now came from Austria:

(...) for she felt she had to make gains in the western war which would compensate for her disappointment of seeing Russia and Prussia take the lion's share of Poland while she was left only the jackal's. (Watson 1960: 371).

Having fewer foes, Napoleon Bonaparte succeeded in defeating the Austrians and dictated to them the conditions of the peace of Campo Formio in 1797. Ireland was on the verge of rebellion; France and Holland were preparing to invade the island... Britain was alone again. Still, a year later she was able to call up another coalition (there was yet another one in 1805), but it broke up for pretty much the same reasons as the first. The only reason Great Britain was not on her knees was that the country possessed the brilliant admiral Horatio Nelson (Willson 1967: 609). He meant as much for Britain at sea as Bonaparte did for France on land. Since it is not purposed here to pinpoint the plentiful battles or intrigues of the war that were to take place in the years to come, it will only be stressed here that Britain was the only country that did not surrender to Napoleon (who, by the way, forbade the French to read *Thaddeus of Warsaw*), even after it had been abandoned by her political partners.

During the Georgian era (1714 to 1837), Britain witnessed the development of the cultural press. A mass of titles appeared, such as *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, the *Oxford Gazette*, the *Daily Courant*, the *Examiner*, the *Guardian*, the *London Journal*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, *Idler*, the *London Magazine*, the *Monthly Review*, the *Critical Review*, the *Morning Chronicle*, and the *Times*, many of which remain among Britain's most influential periodicals today. The papers discussed matters related to politics, social rights, culture, philosophy, religion, and literature (Lipoński 2005: 322, 324). In literature, the country produced such renowned figures as the subject of the dissertation, Jane Porter (1776 – 1850), as well Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744), David Hume (1711 – 1776), Daniel Defoe (1660 – 1731), Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797), William Godwin (1756 – 1836), William Blake (1757 – 1827), Horace Walpole (1717 – 1797), Robert Burns (1721 – 1784), Walter Scott (1771 – 1832), Thomas Moore (1779 – 1852), George Byron (1788 – 1834), Samuel Talyor Coleridge (1772 – 1834), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 – 1822), John Keats (1795 – 1821), and many, many others. However, more attention will be given to literature in Great Britain that relates to the Poland of Kościuszko's times. In 1792, in the face of the Russo-Polish War, the Society of Friends of Poland came into existence in London, and financial help for Poland was organised by the city's mayor, J. Hopkins, the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Star*. Another newspa-

per, the *Public Advertiser*, printed an emotional poem *To Poles*. A year later, an author under the pseudonym Calm Observer, published a protest in the pages of the *Morning Chronicle* against the league of Austria, Prussia, and Russia and their intervention in Poland (Lipoński 2000a: 441). Kościuszko's arrival in London in May 1797 spurred authors to write poems in honour of Kościuszko and Poland. The initiator of this trend, which hugely influenced the perception of Poland in Britain, was Coleridge, who wrote *Sonnet VII* (1794), which had to wait 150 years for its Polish translation (by Stanisław Baliński) (Grzegorzczak 1961: 242). A year later, shortly after the third partition of Poland, George Galloway wrote a volume of poetry *The Tears of Poland* (McLean 2007: 98). Henry Francis Cary (1772 – 1844) produced the 130-line poem *Ode to General Kosciuszko* (London 1797) (Grzegorzczak 1961: 242). In praising Poland he was followed by John Keats (1795 – 1821), James Henry Leigh Hunt (1774 – 1859) and George Byron. In his work *Kościuszko w poezji angielskiej* [Kościuszko in English Poetry], Grzegorzczak suggests that it was the glory of Kościuszko that pushed Byron into going to Greece, where he fought for its freedom. (Credit to Edmund Burke and Thomas Campbell for their literary dedication to Poland is given in chap. 4.4). One Pole who managed to spread the Polish cause in Britain (and British culture in Poland) was the traveller Krystyn Lach Szyrma (1791 – 1866). In 1823, he published in Edinburgh *Letters, Literary and Political, on Poland*, in which he encompassed the pronunciation of Polish proper names for users of English. Szyrma may rightly be credited with one more attainment regarding Anglo-Polish cultural links: he created the first English-Polish dictionary. In addition, Lipoński writes that when it comes to unpublished dramatic works in which issues related to Poland are the main or at least a secondary theme, the number reaches as high as 50, and this figure concerns only those from the first half of the 19th century (Lipoński 2000a: 441, 435; Szyrma 1823: xii).

The influence of 18th- or 19th-century authors from the Celtic nations on Poland is felt less, not just because it was not as big as that of England, but it has been further downplayed by the nonchalance of the Polish (and not only) readership, which often treats Gaelic or Breton works as English or French.¹⁶ (The fact that the invaders im-

¹⁶ There is some incongruity among scholars over how to group the Celtic languages. One of the simplified divisions suggests two groups: Gaelic (with Irish, Scottish, and Manx – the language once spoken on the Island of Man) and Brythonic (with Welsh, Cornish, and Breton – the language of the Celts who escaped from the Anglo-Saxons to Brittany, in today's France, in the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries) (Lipoński 2000b: 447).

posed their languages lessens a little the guilt of complacency). Additionally, Celtic literary figures are sometimes simply classed as British, and, again, many look at Great Britain through the eyes of England. Such ignorance may make Thomas Campbell, Walter Scott, or Edmund Burke English. Another problem arises due to the mixed origin of many personages. Jane Porter herself exemplifies such a complication; she had English blood through her mother, Irish through her father, and fate led her to be brought up in Scotland. Still, in addition to those non-English writers of the period in question of Celtic origin (or of Celtic-English origin) already pointed out, there was a handful of others. Lipoński (2000b: 452) suggests the Irish aristocrat, painter, and writer A. Shee, influenced by *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, wrote a play in 1822 about the 16th-century Polish clergyman Jan Łaski, known in Britain as Alasco. The interest in Poland among the Irish increased when their country too lost independence in 1801.¹⁷ In Scotland, the newspaper that was foremost in highlighting the Polish cause was the *Edinburgh Review* (452, 460). Wales, meanwhile, has always had the weakest cultural representation in Poland, with the greatest propagator of Poland in Wales (and elsewhere) being Norman Davies.

From among Britain's scientists, the person of Henry Cavendish (1731 – 1810), the chemist, is worth mention. He was the first to state and prove that water is a chemical compound. Another contributor to education worldwide was Joseph Black (1728 – 1799), who discovered carbon dioxide (Zins 1979: 309). The next famous British researcher was Joseph Priestley (1733 – 1804). A member of the Royal Society, he worked in the fields of chemistry, biology, literature, architecture, and philosophy (Johnson 1995: 250). A link between science in Great Britain and Poland could be found in the person of King Poniatowski. A major patron of science, he possessed in his Physics Study an array of English models, machines, and astronomical and mathematical devices, most of which were prepared by London-based optical firms (Butterwick 2000: 21) (See also chap. 4.1).

Philosophy in Georgian Britain, and later, is a field in which the British can pride themselves on the great minds: George Berkeley (1685 – 1753), David Hume

¹⁷ In Poland, the first institution where the Irish language and other aspects of Irish culture were taught is the Department of Celtic Languages at the Catholic University of Lublin. This department published the first course book of Irish *An Ghaeilge* (1991) by E. Gussmann and A. Doyle. Irish issues are popularised in the Society of Polish-Irish Friendship (since 1990) and in the anthology *Narodziny cywilizacji wysp brytyjskich* [The Birth of the Civilisation of the British Isles] by Lipoński (2000b: 460).

(1711 – 1776), Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797), or Thomas Reid (1710 – 1796).¹⁸ The influence of Reid, as well as other Scottish philosophers, on Polish Enlightenment thinkers was truly outstanding. In *The Scottish Enlightenment and Polish Thinkers* (a paper from *Polish-Anglosaxon Studies*) Zabieglik (1997b: 79) illustrates the impact of the Scottish School on, for instance, Jan Śniadecki (1756 – 1830), Krystyn Lach Szyrma (1791 – 1866), and Michał Wiszniewski (1794 – 1865), all of whom studied on the British Isles and all of whom thought highly of the Scottish Enlightenment.¹⁹ Wiszniewski's study of philosophy, political economics, banking, and agriculture at Edinburgh was discussed with George Adam Czartoryski and implemented at the Liceum Krzemienieckie (in English known as Kremenets High School, Volhynian Athens, or Czacki's School) and later at Kraków University, where Wiszniewski tutored.

However, the chief architect of British philosophical thought of the era was Adam Smith (1723 – 1790), whose professorship at Glasgow University was replaced by that of Reid. Thanks to the power of the press, the fundamental shift represented by Smith's economic thought and moral philosophy spread. He asserted that gold and silver, which at that time were viewed as the criterion of the country's wealth but were kept in the hands of a few, were less important than consumable goods, buildings, canals, machines, and factories, which constituted the real well-being of the nation. Hence, he went on, the fabrication of the above-mentioned was more crucial than trade in precious metals.

The way to increase production, he believed, was to allow the individual manufacturer the greatest possible freedom, for his self-interest would lead him to produce the goods that society wanted. The state should not interfere, but should permit the private enterprise of the manufacturer to come into gradual alignment with the needs of society. Artificial barriers to trade should be removed. This was the doctrine of *laissez faire* (to let alone) which led England eventually to adopt free trade (Willson 1967: 587).

Smith called such an approach “the natural system of perfect liberty and justice” (Zabieglik 1997a: 228-229), which, if allowed by the rulers, could freely function in concert with human nature. As can be seen, Adam Smith – broadly cited in the Polish

¹⁸ Berkeley and Burke were in fact of Irish origin, but their educational life was markedly connected with Great Britain.

¹⁹ Zabieglik's other great work entitled *Wiek doskonalenia: Z filozofii szkockiego Oświecenia* [The Century of Improvement: From the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment] handles the influence of Scottish philosophy not only on Poland but also on Europe as a whole. Unfortunately, this great Polish philosopher passed away on May 4, 2010.

press and known, for example, by Hugo Kołłątaj – demanded a kind of freedom that in his days was almost unthinkable (228-229). Yet there is an even more important kind of freedom, which many today take for granted and which had to be fought for both in Poland and Great Britain: freedom of speech – and not just for a handful of the privileged but for the masses, as well. From among the many notable endorsers of it in the latter country, John Wilkes (1725 or 1726 – 1797), a well-educated and rich colonel in the militia and an MP, must be introduced. In 1763, he became (in)famous for offending King George III and the Cabinet in his newspaper, the *North Briton*, after they made peace with France, which ended the Seven Years War (1756 – 1763), without earlier informing Great Britain's ally in the war, Prussia. The Cabinet decided to imprison Wilkes for libel, and he was put in the Tower (McDowall 2004: 111). The crown argued that this act was caused by state necessity. Later, this argument was rejected, and the judge's verdict was that "public policy is not an argument in a court of law" (Plumb 1957: 120). However, Wilkes happened to live at a time when newspaper editors were active and their articles could be disseminated all over the country in a relatively short time due to the improvements in communication. What is more, the latter half of the century saw the rapid spread of discussion clubs, where even ordinary people talked about current political issues. Aware of this fact, John Wilkes did not stop his quarrels there. Every time the government made a mistake, he ridiculed and publicised it, rendering it in such a way as to seem an act of tyranny on the side of the government.

He brought Parliament into great disrepute. He demonstrated by his actions its unrepresentative nature; its dependence on the Crown; its corruption and prejudice – facts known for decades, but never so amply demonstrated; nor had the danger to personal liberty, so inherent in such a system, been so clearly proved (Plumb 1957: 123).

The clash between Wilkes and the king helped to establish those basic liberties of the individual and the germ of the freedom of speech that we cherish today and upgrade the quality of political life in England.

(...) the Wilkes agitation produced new political methods. The public meeting was born and stayed alive. The Supporters of the Bill of Rights Society was founded, the first political society which used modern methods of agitation – paid agents were sent round the country to make speeches, and the press was deliberately and carefully exploited. Political dissatisfaction was given strength, and coherence, by deliberate organisation. Politics were ceasing to be a part of the social life of a gentleman. Organised public opinion had become a factor in politics, and its strength increased, as the government of George III was overwhelmed by problems too vast for its comprehension (Plumb 1957: 123).

To comprehend the significance of Wilkes's deeds, one must bear in mind that 240 years ago notions such as "the liberty of individuals" or "the freedom of speech" existed merely in the minds of the brightest scholars or were touched upon in conversation clubs only; definitely they were not used in practice (Plumb 1957: 120).

What connects Wilkes with Porter is that they both seemed to shout out: "You cannot deprive people of liberty!" and "You cannot treat citizens as nobodies!" The publications of Porter (but of people like Wilkes, as well) were a direct signal that not everybody was "okay" with a situation in which people were enslaved. Porter chose Poland (*Thaddeus of Warsaw*) and Scotland (*The Scottish Chiefs*), but her books were read in many other countries, so she in all likelihood influenced other nations, as well. It cannot be passed over that back in Porter's days there were only a dozen European powers, so millions did not enjoy an independent motherland. She definitely swayed, besides the previously-mentioned Campbell, another Scotsman, William Aytoun (1813 – 1865). Authors like these wrote on Polish historical matters before Scottish ones. "Indeed, Poland became a kind of testing ground for these writers, allowing them to investigate the tragedies of a distant land before digging into the ruins of their own national history. Though the historical links between Scotland and Poland are less obvious today, *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is as much about 'the cultural rapprochement of a colonizing nation and a colonized one'" (McLean 2007: 98).

But Great Britain also produced personae who opposed such crimes on a more global scale, for instance, Aphra Behn (1640 – 1689), the author of the first anti-slavery novel. Her *Oroonoko*, published in 1688, is a true and deeply touching story of an enslaved African prince and Imoinda, the daughter of a general. The action is situated in Surinam, where the author witnessed the events which she presented in her book. "I do not pretend, in giving you the History of this *ROYAL SLAVE*, to entertain my Reader with the Adventures of a feign'd Hero." She added in the story that the accidents of Oroonoko, the main hero, are "such as arrived in earnest to him" (*Oroonoko and Other Stories*, 9). Though some researchers doubt the correctness of this statement, one thing is certain: her account is a protest against the barbarian practices of the so-called "civilized" West and against any form of enslavement. Her work is all the more important because, as Zins holds it, into the 19th century slavery was accepted by both the Christian and the Muslim worlds, by philosophers and theologians, by Luther and Calvin. Even such outstanding eulogists of freedom as Hobbes and Locke did not provide the

basis of stopping the inhumane procedure. The latter wrote about the liberty of the individual but also that “slavery resulted from just wars” (Zins 1999: 180, 182). In his essay *Of National Characters* (1754), even the Scottish philosopher Hume maintained that in science, for instance, “Blacks did not show any creative abilities” (182). Besides high profile thinkers from the Isles, such as Dafoe, Smith, or Burke; or French ones, like Rousseau or Montesquieu, who clearly did condemn slavery, we should mention Thomas Clarkson (1760 – 1846) and William Wilberforce (1759 – 1833) – British activists who played a major role in abolishing slavery. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Clarkson’s friend, called him “a moral steam engine” for achievements in this field (Cummins 2009: 156). Nevertheless, Aphra Behn, together with the Quakers – a religious group fighting slavery – demonstrated their dissatisfaction with slavery at least a hundred years prior to the above-mentioned figures, successfully pushing politicians to forbid the slave trade in the British dominions in 1807 (Berlin 2010: 9). What Behn did to protest against inhumanity to Negroes, Porter did in relation to the enslaved Polish. She may very well have driven the abolitionists in her country to more action, at least in the field of literature. Another connection between Britain and Stanislavian Poland can be seen as comparison (in political literature, for example) between the situation of Polish serfs to the one of African slaves. The Polish intellectual and patriotic elite, including Niemcewicz, Staszic, Krasicki, and Gurowski, strongly criticized slavery and the maltreatment of serfs (Zins 1999: 190-192).

Because Stanisław Poniąkowski and other enlightened Polish personages sent a number of young Poles to Great Britain (and elsewhere) to study, it is worth briefly examining education in that country. The universities were dormant in Great Britain at that time; exclusive public schools, however, were doing fine: Great Britain had many famous artists, “the English novel reached the first climax in its development and the theatre was on a par with literature” (Lipoński 1987b: 36). Travelling and studying abroad, in particular in Italy, was a sign of refinement and prestige available not only to the aristocracy and landed gentry, but also to affluent townsmen (2005: 319). Those who could not afford such extravagance attended Sunday schools; there were more and more of these, and in the first years of the 19th century they educated as many as 1.5 million children in England and Wales. Others learnt in charity schools. The former stressed the importance of studying the Bible, and due to this aim they contributed to the eradication of illiteracy. The first community in the whole of the British Empire,

including England, to have eradicated illiteracy totally was the Puritan colony in Massachusetts (390-391). However, Georgian Britain was a place where intellectualism was elevated even in the street. Richer and richer commoners (but people of lower status, too) met in discussion clubs and over coffee, tea, or hot chocolate conversed about politics and current social issues, such as freedom of speech. In this period, aesthetics emerged as a distinct field, and the standards of the cultural press were set. Indeed, people in these places could be called the precursors of civic society (Rietbergen 2001: 328). In the early 18th century, Britain boasted over 3,000 such spots (Lipoński 2005: 318-319). Late 18th-century “Sarmatia” also witnessed the emergence of discussion clubs; this is another facet linking Poland and Britain because the first ones, formed in Warsaw, were modelled on the British ones (Kowecki 1987: 89, 98). Porter herself discussed Poland’s issues in one such place.

In undertaking to portray the elements of Georgian society which affected Porter, some light needs to be thrown on religious matters, since these are omnipresent in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, and the writer attached immense weight to them. This aspect of existence was dominated in Great Britain by John Wesley, the founder of Methodism in England and America. Although he was a clergyman, religion was not the only aspect of life that Wesley altered for the better; notwithstanding this, it is good to start with this in order to introduce this person. The state of the official church of England – the Anglican Church – left much to be desired. It was highly hierarchical, and its archbishops and bishops, deriving mainly from the aristocracy, often spent lavishly, cared little about the needy, and were often supported in the political dimension by those who had chosen them for their posts. Their sermons were unemotional and lacked spirituality. Due to the leisurely lives they lived, priests had trouble getting through to the hearts of average people, who frequently preferred staying in their homes or industrial slums to attending Mass (Willson 1967: 538-539). Within 50 years, however, the zealous preacher Wesley travelled over 220,000 miles to deliver some 40,000 sermons. His flowery speeches were so moving that his adherents wept, had paroxysms of guilt, hysteria, and dedication, and even sometimes passed out (541). His divergent stance on certain doctrines (he stressed the importance of studying the Bible, regular fasting, contemplation, and prayer, and of calling on the deceased, the needy, and prisoners) as well as his originality and popularity earned him the dislike of and exclusion from the Church of England, after which, in 1784, he established Methodism. The word “Meth-

odist” was first used to mock the new religious movement, but, curiously, it was accepted by its followers as the official name of the new church (Lipoński 2005: 401). In essence, John Wesley was a man who gave the have-nots from industrial areas and villages hope for justice and salvation in the afterlife through hard work, thrift, discipline, and philanthropy. This last feature was noticed by Szyrma, who wrote in his memoirs that many English people were full of philanthropy and had commendable morals (Szyrma [1828] 1981: 345, 318). Critics of Wesleyism contended that it was not intellectual, that it was malicious to Catholics and Jews, did not condemn child labour, and flaunted education, that it believed in witches, did not advocate political clout for the poor, and that Wesley’s word was always final (Willson 1967: 542). Regardless, Doctor Wesley’s impact on instilling a sense of living among the impoverished masses is unquestionable. Ultimately, since Methodists thought suffering and poverty did not block the path to salvation, many learnt to accept the uncivil circumstances of their life and therefore did not rebel. Thus, Wesley played a substantial role in keeping the country out of revolution, although such a “fine” example was set by England’s neighbour across the Channel in 1789 (McDowall 2004: 125). (Speculation over what Porter thought about Methodism is disclosed in chap. 4.2).

The English school of painting at the beginning of the 18th century is believed by some to be the first that had a distinctly British style, particularly in terms of portraits and landscapes. Among the artists of this period were William Hogarth (1697 – 1764), a major English painter, printmaker, pictorial satirist, social critic, and editorial cartoonist. Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723 – 1792), George Stubbs (1724 – 1806), and Thomas Gainsborough (1727 – 1788) were remarkable, as well. The late 18th century and the early 19th century could be described as the most radical period in British art, with William Blake (1757 – 1827), John Constable (1776? – 1837) and Joseph Turner (1775 – 1851) as notable figures. The latter two are by many perceived to be the most internationally recognised of all British artists. Turner was renowned for his wild, almost abstract, landscapes that explored the effects of light. He had a strong impact on the later impressionists and was acknowledged by the abstract expressionists, as well. Like Turner, Constable produced landscape paintings that influenced the impressionists, but he is noted more for his imprecise brush strokes and elevation of “mundane” subject matter (“Art of the United Kingdom”, 2011). Nonetheless, according to Lipoński (1975: 30), even the names of Constable or Turner never had the draw of names from Paris or even

Munich. Perhaps this why in Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* the character of the young Somerset, who resides for a period in Warsaw, is portrayed admiring a great portrait of John III Sobieski in Wilanów. Images of this famed Polish king could also be found in Britain in Porter's day, for example, in London mansions, where the Polish writer Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz came across them. The inscriptions on the portraits began with the following words: "Great champion of the Cross, whose glorious name outshines all heroes in the books of fame (35). Jane Porter informs the reader that she herself had a very correct likeness of Stanisław August Poniatowski (TW, 1831: 294). A similar supposition may appear in the reader's mind concerning music: the fictional Pembroke Somerset "cannot imagine anything more beautiful than the Polish music" (TW, 1831: 41), because, as Lipoński writes, the English did not have such great music or painting as in Germany or France. In music, England had made no mark in Europe since the beginning of the 18th century (Lipoński 1975: 30). 18th-century English music revived in the 1930s and 1940s due to artists such as Gerald Finzi (1901-1956) and Constant Lambert (1905-1951), but many of these composers' works are relatively unknown today (Slade 2009).

During the period in question, Britain's citizens were in the midst of the Industrial Revolution, a phenomenon which had, and continuous to have, a colossal impact on society. The new inventions and advances in technology that accompanied it provided the basis for the modern industrial world. Despite the fact that the timeframe of the Industrial Revolution is generally held to be 1760 – 1820 (interestingly coinciding with the reign of George III (lived 1738 – 1820, reigned 1760 – 1820)), the process which led to such abrupt changes in the 1760s must have started decades or even centuries earlier (Willson 1967: 570). A number of factors provided the ground from which the Industrial Revolution grew. Firstly, there was an increase in the population in the 18th century (England and Wales had 5.5 million people in 1700 – half a century later, they had nearly 9 million) (McDowall 2004: 114), which was further increased by poor Irish immigrants. Children also filled factories, with few seeing anything wrong with boys and girls aged five or six working all days in harsh conditions. A larger population meant a skyrocketing demand for articles and an abundant labour force. Huge private fortunes provided capital for investing money in new factories and machinery. Another motivating factor for the Revolution was improvements in agriculture achieved, at least for part, thanks to enclosures. Fencing off land had been going on since the late Middle

Ages, but never before had it been so intensive. This process both drove paupers off their land, leading to a supply of cheap labour force in cities, and enabled affluent owners to cultivate the land more effectively (Plumb 1957: 82). Moreover, livestock was raised in more proper conditions and was better fed (towards the end of the 18th century sheep weighed twice as much as at the start, and calves were three times as big), and so food was more available (Willson 1967: 578). The next stimulus without which the Industrial Revolution would surely have been hindered was improvements in transportation. In the last decades of the era, numerous roads were built or fixed, and many canals were constructed. By 1830, there were 4,000 miles of canals in England and another 500 in Scotland and Wales. Owing to these innovations, products could be dispatched all over the country (Willson 1967: 581). The use of iron was omnipresent, as evidenced in the following passage about John Wilkinson (1728 – 1808), an advocate of substituting anything made of stone or wood for iron.

His faith in the possibilities of iron were boundless and, as he controlled the greatest ironworks in the country, he could test his faith. He produced railroads for mines (1767), built the first iron bridge in the world over the Severn (1779), built an iron chapel for Wesleyans, saw the first iron boat afloat (1787), and finally he was buried suitably in an iron coffin (1805) (Plumb 1957: 79).

Last but certainly not least was the myriad of inventions due to which the Industrial Revolution picked up its tempo. A new steam pump to lift water from coal mines, a flying shuttle to weave larger pieces of cloth than was previously possible, a drill to plant seeds in rows (Willson 1967: 583), and Watt's steam engine are just a handful of examples of the innovations coming from the epoch. There were indeed a host of positive upshots of the Industrial Revolution. One of these was, as has been mentioned, the reduced cost of production, which means commodities were more widely available, because their prices went down. Another effect was the "looming" of the capitalist: hardworking, individualistic, and determined to climb up the social ladder, he often faced the scorn of the gentry. Next, the south (except for London), which until then had enjoyed more political and economic importance, had to share this significance with the north, where many moved to work in mines and factories (588).

Yet, to avoid whitewashing the general picture, one cannot depict the Revolution without its obvious abuses, including the foul conditions of labour, the very long working day, the inhumane working age limit for children, the widened chasm between the

impoverished and the well-off, blood sports, alcoholism, and riots (Langford 2000: 382-383). Furthermore, the rapid increase in the population combined with mechanical innovation helped to maintain wages at a low level, for women in particular. It can be clearly seen that not all enjoyed the benefits of industrialisation, and surely not the humbler representatives of the “looming” proletariat (382, 384). Besides, products in the form of guns guaranteed victory in the colonies and a ready market for further production. And those who praised it uncritically were eager to forget that a worker’s life was drudgery, while they themselves had rarely, if ever, held a spade in their hands. To balance the picture, it needs to be said that with time luxury did become democratised and that the staunchest opponents of industrialisation were the same people who enjoyed the fruits of it in their daily lives (Rietbergen 2001: 338, 340).

In *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, Porter does not refer to the Industrial Revolution directly, because the term itself was coined much later. Still, she demonstrates a consciousness that this vibrant social and economic transformation was taking place. Porter is hypersensitive to the needy, even those from France, a country she feared due to the possibility of the French Revolution spreading across the English Channel, and the reigning poverty came largely as a side effect of Great Britain being intensely industrialised.

There were other problems taking place on the eve of the Industrial Revolution, though not always connected with it, in Scotland and Ireland. Although Scottish issues are dealt with by Porter in the *Scottish Chiefs* and Irish ones by Porter’s literary colleagues, such as Lady Morgan and Maria Edgeworth (see chapter three), *Thaddeus of Warsaw* influenced many writers in these countries. It is therefore worth taking notice of the actuality in these places at that time. After a series of Scottish attempts to restore a Stuart on the British throne in 1715, 1719, and 1745, all of which came to naught, Scotland had witnessed the destruction of the Highland Scottish lifestyle by the English. To provide just one example, wearing a kilt could be punished by death. Many Scotsmen from the North were killed even though they did not partake in the rebellions. Moreover, George II (lived 1683 – 1760, reigned 1727 – 1760) introduced clearances in the Highlands (replacing Highlanders with sheep on arable land), a process that successfully annihilated the culture, social solidarity, primeval democracy, and national consciousness of Scottish villagers. A great many Highlanders emigrated, and as a result there were more Celts in North America than in Scotland at that time (Davies 1998b:

680). Ireland, which in fifty years' time was going to officially become part of the kingdom, was exposed to similar treatment. In short, Irish Catholics were deprived of holding any public post, were forbidden to possess land, marry Protestants, or have an education according to their own religion, since Catholic schools were banned (McDowall 2004: 113). The privileged class, comprised of English and Scottish Protestant settlers, the first group of which had been sent to Ulster by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, were granted full rights by the king.

It would be incautious to indulge in the pleasant thought that this was the end of troubles in 18th-century Britain. Next to the aforementioned hardships of political nature there were also moral ones, which, again, Porter's tale presents. Thaddeus Sobieski, the novel's protagonist, is shocked that a married woman tries to seduce him; not being able to understand how this is possible, he cannot fall asleep. Is it the writer's gullibility or, more plausibly, is she trying to show the Polish nobleman's pureness? Whatever the answer, in the 18th century, there are thousands of houses of prostitution in Britain, and prostitutes were often treated as objects or indeed devils. This gave "gentlemen" the moral right to insult, rape, and beat the women and teenage girls who served them. There are stories about cage-like rooms with no door handles so that the victimised ladies would have no chance to flee. In many male minds, poor females were guilty of the men's dwelling in houses of ill repute, as they were devilishly seductive. The victims of this abuse could not appeal anywhere, since in the hypocritical society the lawmakers themselves were often wrongdoers, as well. Young girls serving in so-called "good homes" were often abused there, too. When they were pregnant, they were forced to leave, and, in order to feed the babies, they prostituted themselves. In the 18th century, there were thousands of girls like this in cities such as London, Paris, or Vienna (Rietbergen 2001: 323). As a result, although abortion – naturally in primitive conditions – was illegal and thought of as a mortal sin, it flourished, wreaking havoc. In reality, a blind eye was turned to prostitution; it did not evoke moral disapprobation. This changed only after "free sex" inducing syphilis reached the army (324, 179). Babies that escaped abortion and survived were left on the doorstep of churches and later charity organisations, with their number being counted in the thousands every year (325). It does not take a genius to imagine what the life of these orphans looked like. This horror was caused by a macho culture seen in the following self-explanatory, yet horrifying, rhyme, which referred to this dark side:

“A woman, a dog and a walnut tree,
The more you beat ‘em, the better they be” (Ponsoby 1995: 118).

Such animalised men’s behaviour was not infrequently boosted by alcohol, of which gin, otherwise known as “Mother’s Ruin”, held the pride of place. Gin is said to have started out as a cure for gout and indigestion, but most of all, it was inexpensive. The following notice could be seen across the whole of the British capital in the 1730s: “Drunk for 1 penny, Dead drunk for tuppence, Straw for nothing” (“Mother’s ruin”, 2008). In London alone, 10 million gallons of gin were distilled annually, and there were more than 7,000 “dram shops”. This drink became the “tradition” of the poor, and some workers were given gin as part of their wages. Gin caused men to become impotent and women sterile, and as a result, the death rate in London exceeded the birth rate. Because gin was consumed by women too, their offspring were often poorly cared for. It was not rare for children to be sold into prostitution due to heavy drinking. It was even given to babies in order to quiet them. Furthermore, this alcoholic beverage led people to debtors’ prison and even destroyed them, driving them to madness, to suicide attempts, and eventually leading to their death. In the late 1830s, there were 56,000 Public Houses in England and Wales. The government of the day became alarmed when it was found that the average Londoner drank 14 gallons of spirit each year (“Mother’s ruin”, 2008).²⁰ Drinking and gambling were a nightmare, as the impoverished working class sought refuge in them from their brutal reality. This reality of corpses lying in the foul streets, hungry children with alcoholic mums and dads, the homeless and criminals all constitute the grim picture of life for many in cities like London. Many of these problems were by-products of industrialisation. It ought to be noted here, though, that the hygienic situation changed for the better towards the end of the century, among other reasons, due to the increasingly common use of water closets, which were invented in 1778 and popularised by Joseph Bramah (Lipoński 2005: 379).

Unbelievably at first sight, the lawlessness in Great Britain provided theatrical entertainment for throngs of the “hoi polloi” and scientific materials for researchers. The most well-known bandits attracted up to 200,000 “fans”, blood thirsty crowds, in

²⁰ This amount makes an average monthly consumption of spirit more than five litres! In comparison, today’s Poles, who, to put it gently, cannot be classed as abstaining from alcohol, and who are drinking more and more each year, drink monthly around one litre per person. And this situation is believed to be alarming...

the capital, especially to the place of execution called Tyburn.²¹ This figure is comparable to the capacity of the football grounds *Estadio Azteca* in Mexico City and *Camp Nou* in Barcelona combined. Fees for these popular culture shows were paid, especially for occupying the most comfortable section for spectators (344). The audience celebrated such events with emotions that were close to an orgy and catharsis in one. These public executions were to show people that social norms and order would be restored (Rietbergen 2001: 179). Beginning in 1752, parliament allowed criminals' bodies to be used in anatomical experiments, but because the demand was not satisfied, academics pressed for more severe verdicts (Lipoński 2005: 346). Curiously, in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, many scientists believed that corpses provided natural medicine: blood was supposed to heal epilepsy, and human grease – pneumonia. Thus, during executions there were queues of diseased people nearby guillotines or gallows carrying bowls for blood and grease before the victim went stiff. An exemplary cannibal monarch, though he himself never admitted being one, was King Charles II (1630 – 1685, reigned 1660 – 1685). His four doctors prescribed him a peculiar medicine: a solution of skulls and alcohol. Nonetheless, this did not stop British colonists in the following centuries from laying African territories to waste, with cannibalism being one of the excuses for this (*Forbidden rites: Cannibalism*, 2000).

The most vivacious theatrical life in London, and in Great Britain as well, resembled that in Tyburn: the audience was separated from the actors by a fence in case they became dissatisfied, in which situation pieces of food and even dead rats were often thrown at the performers. More sophisticated viewers gathered in Drury Lane, where some of Porter's plays were acted (Lipoński 2005: 346). One thing that links Polish and English theatres in the 18th and 19th centuries is the fact that Polish dress was worn in plays where characters were non-Polish (Krajewska 2000: 96-97). (See also chap. 4.3).

In presenting British culture with reference to Poland, one cannot forget about the garden. As early as the 16th century, England had lost many of its trees, which were in demand for the fleet, agriculture, and industry. Meanwhile, British sailors and colo-

²¹ Tyburn was a village in the county of Middlesex close to Marble Arch. It took its name from the Tyburn or Ty Bourne (two brooks), a tributary of the River Thames which now flows underground. The place was used to punish mainly London criminals. Executions took place at Tyburn until the 18th century (with the prisoners dragged from Newgate Prison). The first recorded execution took place in 1196 and the last one was in 1789 (Lipoński 2005: 344).

nists feasted their eyes on the beauty of exotic countries, which contrasted with the gloomy views back in the British cities. English gardens soon became breathtaking, a fact which was noticed and appreciated by Izabela Czartoryska (1746 – 1835).²² Owing to her and Adam Czartoryski's trip to England between the years 1768 and 1771, an English irregular sentimental garden was created at Powiązki, a famous Polish cemetery (Butterwick 1998: 196). What is more, inspired by English gardens, the female aristocrat wrote *Myśli różne o sposobie zakładanie ogrodów* [Various Thoughts on the Methods of Creating Gardens], which had a significant readership, and a dozen years later Stanisław Wodzicki (1764 – 1843) estimated the number of English gardens in Poland at over 500 (Lipoński 1978: 26-27).

A little on British sport should also be added, following Joseph Strutt (1775 – 1833), who wrote in *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1810) that in order to fairly describe any nation, "it is absolutely necessary to investigate the sports and pastimes most generally prevalent among them" (Lipoński 2006: 3). In his *World Sports Encyclopedia*, a work highly commended by UNESCO, Lipoński (2006: 10) estimates the number of indigenous sports to have been as high as 8,000; this intellectual himself presents more than 3,000 of them. Although Porter does not treat of this issue, it needs to be emphasised that her era saw an expansion of British sport in the world. England, and later Great Britain, has always been home to this cultural aspect, and historically speaking, it is the most advanced European country regarding physical education, producing the largest number of sports disciplines in the world. Cricket, football, rugby, tennis, golf, curling, squash, badminton, billiards, and snooker are just a sample, and one that does not include regional variations of many sports. Moreover, the English (or British) created the modern rules for many sports, such as boxing, that they themselves did not invent.

Like elsewhere in Europe, sport in this country stemmed from military needs (Lipoński 1996: 10). Later, colonial expansion demanded toughness, good reflexes, and psychophysical immunity against tropical conditions; boxing and rugby, for instance, were ideal for these features (1974: 71, 69). Since it is impossible to fully present the enormous impact of British sport on life in general, it will only be accented here that it

²² This grandiose woman created the first museum in Puławy and even helped personally with the building work. She commented on that: "My motherland! I could not defend you, let me at least make you immortal" (Grodziski 1999: 139).

created an entire lexicon. The word *box*, for example, in English appears to be an onomatopoeia of the sound of fist punching, given the fact that in many languages the sound of the words *box*, *beat*, or *hit* is akin (1987a: 50).

Pondering over the fate of Great Britain, one might be tempted to say that there was virtually nothing to be shared between her and Poland: unlike Great Britain, *Rzeczpospolita* was weak economically, politically, militarily, culturally, and eventually disappeared from the political map. (See chapters three and four). The all-powerful nobility seemed to possess polarized qualities: devotion to their homeland, reformist and educational zeal, and tolerance, on the one hand, and privacy, backwardness, xenophobia, and drunken revelries on the other. The development of towns and trade was hindered. In the 18th century, there was no industrial revolution, no overseas colonies, no leading philosophers, but there were no religious massacres, either. Yet, behind arguing that little linked Poland and Great Britain lies an overly parochial view; if one scratches below the surface, one can notice similarities in addition to those presented in this chapter – for instance, the personal union between Poland and Lithuania of 1386 under Jagiełło resembled the one James I established between England and Scotland. Similarly, the parliamentary Union of Lublin in 1569 was like the one of 1707 in Great Britain (Butterwick 2000: 25). For the British, their Irish colony was a little like Ukraine for the Poles. The anglicization of Scots mirrors somewhat the partial polonization of the Lithuanians. Mutual visits between the countries, rare as they were, did take place, which allowed for a flow of cultural, political, philosophical, economic, or agricultural trends between them. Current events in Poland echoed in the British press and literature, as did British scientific, political, or cultural news in the Polish press.²³ Education, too, was another aspect that linked these two countries. The famous *Liceum Krzemienieckie* together with a portion of other Polish high-level schools (with some British teachers working there) could be compared to the famed public schools on the British Isles. The emulation of British discussion clubs, the English garden, and a new, active interest in the English language (with the borrowing of some words) by Poles was highly visible, as well. In fact, the evidence is against the popular notion that France was the only

²³ More information about the links (in various periods) between Poland and Britain is given in *Polish-Anglosaxon Studies*. This compendium was initiated in 1987 by Wojciech Lipoński and is published by the School of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. International and interdisciplinary in scope, it carries original articles on all aspects of cultural relations between Poland and English-speaking nations, in their historical as well as contemporary dimension.

country that Poles looked up to. ("I love France, governed by Louis XVI", wrote Stanisław Poniatowski) (Konopczyński 1947, as quoted in Lipoński 1978: 21). For instance, the concept of engaging the British political scene with its prowess in Polish issues was begun by the Czartoryskis between 1746 and 1752. Their reformatory attempts to restore Poland's trade, towns, administration, law, agriculture, education, and even their liberal views were in large measure based on the British model. Indeed, there is cause to maintain that in the strained times of the 18th century much connected the two countries (Lipoński 1978: 16, 19, 20), which we shall examine more closely in the following chapters.

Chapter 3: Under the spell of Poland: Factors influencing the creation of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*

Thaddeus of Warsaw was Porter's first novel, yet many held it to be her best. The narrative is composed of four parts, the first of which presents the Polish struggle for independence after the Russian invasion in 1792. In brief, in this part of the novel the writer mourns the annihilation of the May 3rd Constitution, the partitions, and the loss of Poland's sovereignty. The story begins in Wilanów, where Thaddeus Sobieski prepares to join his grandfather in Volhynia (Pol. *Wołyń*) in order to fight under the command of Tadeusz Kościuszko and Józef Poniatowski against the Russians. Among other things, he resists the foe in the battles of Zieleńce (Zieleme in the novel), Inowłodź, Maciejowice (Brzesc in the novel), and Praga.²⁴ In this first section, after many adventures, the young Pole loses his grandfather, mother, and his country and leaves for England. The remaining three parts of the narrative are a sentimental romance; the main character suffers from poverty, loneliness, and a longing for his motherland. He gains and loses friends, becomes the object of love of some English ladies, and finally falls in love himself and gets married. Towards the end of the story, the Polish aristocrat discovers his father, an English nobleman, who had left Thaddeus before his birth. (See the synopsis of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in Appendix One).

Porter's inspiration for the writing of the story originated from a number of sources. To encapsulate these reasons in one sentence, one could point to King Poniatowski's abdication and his exile in Grodno on November 25, 1795, after which the

²⁴ Four days after this famous battle in Zieleńce, from June 18, 1792, where the Poles under Kosciuszko and Józef Poniatowski beat the Russians, King Stanisław August Poniatowski introduced Poland's highest military decoration for outstanding combat activity: the order *Virtuti Militari* (military courage). After the fall of Poland, it was only a historic(al) souvenir until Napoleon reinstituted it officially in 1807 (Rostworowski 1958: 304-305; Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 3: 302).

Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania disappeared for 123 years. Nevertheless, to capture the circumstances that led to this calamity for Poland, one needs to be acquainted with the Kościuszko Uprising of 1794. The Uprising, for its part, was an outcome of the second partition of Poland in 1793, which, in turn, was a direct result of the Polish-Russian War and the Targowica Confederation of 1792, both of which were brought about by the passing of the May 3rd Constitution in 1791. The reforms that led to the creation of the Constitution were implemented by the Four-year Sejm (Pol. *Sejm czteroletni*), which operated between 1788 and 1792. Obviously, one could go back further in time showing additional causes, resulting from various events. For example, the second partition was caused indirectly by the first one in 1772, while this took place due to the Confederation of Bar four years earlier. The Bar Confederation, in turn, was formed by a number of Polish noblemen to oppose Russia's interference in Poland's domestic affairs, which the Russians were able to do, because the Polish Kingdom was militarily and economically backward (Davies 1998b: 707). This was possible because a faction of narrow-minded Polish noblemen (*szlachta*) privileged their private interests, resulting in a period of anarchy. The roots of this so-called "golden liberty" (Pol. *złota wolność*), in turn, date from over a hundred years before, and so on, and so forth. Nonetheless, in order to avoid writing the entire history of Poland, I will concentrate here on the period between 1792 and early 1795, just as Porter did in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*; her story commences with the Russo-Polish War of 1792 and ends shortly after the third partition.

The flame of nationalism that persisted after the May 3rd Constitution helped to keep Polish aspirations for a sovereign state alive for generations. But, unfortunately, the Constitution precipitated the Polish-Russian War of 1792 – also called the War in Defence of the Constitution or the War of the Second Partition – and the acts of the Constitution were rescinded shortly afterwards ("Constitution of May 3, 1791", 2007). Porter announces this in her tome by saying that in 1792 three formidable states, envious of Polish patriotism, "regardless of existing treaties, broke in upon the unguarded frontiers of Poland, threatening with all the horrors of a merciless war the properties, lives, and liberties of the people" (TW, 1845).

The war broke out because, although some of the Polish nobility strived to get out of the economic stagnation caused by the greed of Russia, Prussia, and Austria (Korzon 1883: 367), a number of Polish magnates who had opposed the Constitution

from the start, including Feliks Potocki (1779 – 1811) and Ksawery Branicki (1730 – 1819), asked Tsarina Catherine to intervene and restore their privileges that had been abolished under the Constitution. Through the Polish characters, Porter virtually laments over this fact in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, calling the Constitution glorious and wise, and one that placed Poland “in the first rank of free nations” (TW, 1845).

With Catherine’s backing and with neutral support from Austria, a group of Polish magnates formed the Targowica Confederation (Pol. *Konfederacja Targowicka*), and in their proclamation criticised the Constitution for propagating democratic ideas (Lord Eversley: 1915b: 108). Władysław Serczyk (1980: 21) says that Marshal Stanisław Szczęsny Potocki (1753 – 1805) was the one who went to Petersburg to request military aid from the tsarina and made the deal; nevertheless, many magnates believed that inviting the Russians to go to the war against the Polish monarch was an act of patriotism and that their Fatherland could only be saved by Russia. Here are some of the words expressed by Confederates: “The intentions of Her Highness the Empress of Russia, ally of the Polish Commonwealth, in introducing her army, are and have been none other than to restore to the Commonwealth and to Poles freedom, and in particular to all the country’s citizens, security and happiness” (“Constitution of May 3, 1791”, 2007). A year later they were to find out poignantly how naïve it was of them to trust Catherine against the Polish king. These elements of history are reflected in Porter’s novel. For example, she criticizes Austria for staying neutral in the war and for partitioning Poland, the same Poland that by the might of John III Sobieski saved the “ungrateful” Austrians, as well as Christendom. “Where was memory of these things?”, asks the author (TW, 1845).

On May 18, 1792, over 20,000 Confederates crossed the Polish border together with some 96,000 veteran Russian troops. Stanisław Poniatowski and the reformers could raise an army of merely 36,000, many of whom were inexperienced recruits. The Polish Army, under the king’s nephew Józef Poniatowski (1763 – 1813) and Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746 – 1817), won several battles, but, unexpectedly, the king himself joined the Targowica Confederation. This act, by many deemed betrayal, took place in July 1792, when Warsaw was threatened with siege by the Russians, and the king believed that defeat was inescapable due to the overwhelming odds (Davies 2005: 404). Because of his decision and the fact that the king was (and still is) deemed by many a traitor, it is worth presenting the opinion of the discontent ones expressed by Ponia-

towski's envoy to Petersburg, Augustyn Antoni Deboli (1747 – 1810), the monarch's explanation, and later Porter's stance on the matter. Deboli's correspondence, dated 10 Sep. 1792, says:

The opinion of the public and even of our ministers is so little on your side that it is true to say that they unequivocally condemn the action which Your Majesty was compelled to take. What a pity to hear from all sides with no exception that your irrecoverable negligence is that Your Majesty did not come to the camp to lead the soldiers even for a couple of days. Should you have done that, even under the terms that you were forced to accept, the deed would be more bearable [translation mine, ML] (Poniatowski and Deboli 1964: 174).

The king's response to Deboli arrived only twelve days later. The majesty's words were the following:

I really wanted to go the camp, but I was strongly advised not to do so. (...) If I had, there would probably have been one more battle at Kurów. If we had lost, the country's downfall would have been accelerated like after the battle of Zieleńce; that is to say, the following day we would have been lacking ammunition. And Warsaw together with the whole of Great Poland would already have been ruined by that time, not only by the Muscovites but also by the Prussians, who would have been let into Poland by Moscow were I to have gone to the camp [translation mine, ML] (Poniatowski and Deboli 1964: 175).

In the face of overwhelming odds, the final determination whether Poniatowski was a traitor or not is left with the addressee. One thing can be stated decidedly: Porter shared Poniatowski's views. She writes about the threat of harsh executions if Poniatowski had not complied with the empress's demands; they would have lasted "until both the people and their proud sovereign were brought into due subjection" (TW, 1845). In fact, throughout the book one comes across a real apotheosis of the Polish monarch by Porter.

The aforementioned battle of Zieleńce is also painstakingly and colourfully presented in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*.²⁵ The word "colourfully" has been used, because next to factual figures, such as Kościuszko, Porter places fictional ones, like the main character of the book – Thaddeus Sobieski. Intriguingly, Porter never mentions the Targowica Confederation, but is very prolific when sketching the war of 1792 and what was "behind the scenes". She portrays the 1792 campaign very imaginatively, describing with

²⁵ The actual name is Żylińce – Zieleńce in Polish. The Poles had 15,500 soldiers with 12 cannons against the Russian general Markow's 8,000 (other sources speak of 11,000) troops. The Poles won but "strategically they gained nothing" (Korzon 1894: 230).

dynamism the fighting, its tragic nature, the devastating odds against the Polish, and the gradual loss of hope. Through this, the British recipient could learn about the situation and feel the atmosphere of the dying country.

Because of the king's order to surrender, the Polish Army disintegrated and many pro-reform patriots became self-exiles: in 1793, the second partition took place (Lord Eversley 1915b: 139-140). The Russians robbed Poland of the rest of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with its 250,000 square kilometres, while the Prussians annexed the city of Danzig (Pol. *Gdańsk*), the city of Thorn (Pol. *Toruń*), and the whole of Great Poland – 57,000 square kilometres in total. Austria gained no lands in the second partition (Davies 2005: 405). The Kingdom lost 54% of what had remained after the first partition (Lord Howard 1984: 225). One of the pretexts for seizing Poland's territories for the second time was that Poland was a threat to monarchy; the revolution in France had been going on for three years and the partitioners feared that Polish Jacobins (the might of whom had been blown out of proportion) might join the revolution (Davies 1998a: 587). Porter herself, too, believed that such a danger was exaggerated.

The Polish reformers were ordered to surrender, but the desire to resist the enemies could not be so easily eradicated. A national rebellion seemed to be merely a matter of time. On March 24, Kościuszko was ready to commence an insurrection. In Cracow, he pledged the following: "I, Tadeusz Kościuszko, swear before God and to the whole Polish nation, that I shall employ the authority vested in me for the integrity of the frontiers, for gaining national self-rule and for the foundation of general liberty, and not for private benefit. So help me, Lord God, and the innocent suffering of Thy Son!" (2005: 406). On May 7, he issued what is known as the Połaniec Proclamation or the Manifesto of Połaniec (Pol. *Uniwersał Połaniecki*), which granted freedom to the peasantry and ownership of land to all who fought in the insurrection. (In truth, this act did not abolish serfdom, but it did reduce it greatly) (Brückner 1931: 195). This made many peasants join the revolutionists, and for the first time the Polish have-nots were publicly called and perceived as part of the nation, a term formerly reserved for the upper echelons of society. After some initial victories, including the Battle of Raclawice (April 4) and the capture of Warsaw (April 18) and Wilno (April 22), the Uprising began to collapse due to the combined forces of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, which at some battles outnumbered the Polish ones 4:1. On September 4, the Russian troops started an attack on Praga, the right-bank suburb of the Polish capital. After four hours of hand-to-hand

fighting, the Russian army with 24,000 soldiers broke through the Polish line of defence and started wreaking havoc in the district, killing some 20,000 Warsaw inhabitants (“Kościuszko Uprising”, 2008). This is how William Gardiner, the British ambassador to Poland, described the slaughter of Praga in a letter to the British Secretary of State: “It is with regret I inform your lordship that the day of the forcing the lines of Prag was attended by the most horrid and unnecessary barbarities – Houses burnt, women massacred, infants at the breast pierced with the pikes of cosaques and universal plunder, and we now know the same fate was prepared for Warsaw...” (Davies 2005: 410). It is fairly easy to predict that Jane could not remain silent on the horrid slaughter that has gone down in history as *Rzeź Pragi* – the massacre or slaughter of Praga. Porter’s description of this criminal act serves as a literary presentation of the events, functioning to show the world the historical (and historic) truth. That was very important, because the invaders’ propaganda machine did everything to distort these facts and appear in other countries as saviours, not as oppressors.

After the massacre, Tomasz Wawrzecki (1759 – 1816), one of the generals of the Insurrection, decided to withdraw his remaining forces southwards, and on November 5 the city was captured. Kościuszko himself had been earlier wounded at the battle of Maciejowice and was taken prisoner by the Russians, who sent him to Petersburg. And here Porter makes an error. She portrays the battle fought on October 10, 1794 as the Battle of Brzesc [sic] instead of Maciejowice. The Battle of Brześć did take place but more than two years prior to that date. Again, although some inaccuracies take place in the demonstration of the struggle, the portrayal shows the spirit and courage of the riflemen, their zeal to protect the motherland, the military tactics used in the battles, problems like a lack of ammunition, or the historic figures involved, such as Ivan Fersen or Suworow.

The Polish king abdicated twenty days later, and the third partition followed. Porter makes this moment the turning point in her narrative, as this is the time when Thaddeus Sobieski, companionless and hopeless, leaves for London. The British writer could not have guessed that this country would disappear for 123 years, but she knew that the perpetrators were to share the Kingdom between themselves. The Prussians took over Warsaw from the Russians and gained 48,000 square km with one million people, and Austria 48,000 square km plus 1.5 million citizens. Russia annexed 120,000 square km and incorporated 1.2 million people (Franaszek 2006: 341). In general, the

three partitions gave Russia 62% of Poland's territory and 45% of her nationals, Prussia occupied 20% of the area with 23% of the population, and Austria took 18% of the land and as many as 32% of the Kingdom's citizens (Kieniewicz 1968: 13). The horrifying allegorical account of the Commonwealth's fate is best presented by the British (Welsh) historian Norman Davis:

The partitioning of Poland, effected in three stages in 1773, 1793, and 1795, was without precedent in modern European History. Although victorious powers habitually stripped their defeated rivals of territorial possessions and were not averse to dividing the spoils of India, America, or Africa, there is no other instance when they deliberately annihilated one of Europe's historic states in cold blood. Poland was the victim of political vivisection – by mutilation, amputation, and in the end total dismemberment (...) Frederick had designed an operation whose avowed purpose was to weaken the Republic, and to destroy its powers of resistance. Dissatisfied with the side-effects of his earlier, direct acts of aggression, he was now perfecting a technique which cost less and looked better. The demon-surgeon picks his victim well in advance, and locates its weaknesses. Posing as a well-wisher disturbed by the symptoms, he pokes the affected area until convulsions are produced, and the victim is writhing in agony. Next he advises preventive surgery, to which the desperate patient is easily persuaded to submit. During the operation he takes care to leave enough of the diseased tissue untouched so as to ensure future inflammation, and invites his assistants to amputate an arm or a leg by way of surgical practice. Afterwards, when the greatly weakened patient suffers further convulsions, another operation can be prescribed, and then another, and another. If, at the end, the patient is dead, and his property is in the surgeon's pocket, the world can be told, with regret, that his illness was malignant from the start, and that costly and elaborate efforts were made to save him. After all, it is the surgeon who makes out the death certificate. Who will know that the patient's disease was not really fatal? Who will suspect that he has been foully murdered? As Frederick well knew, his new technique of 'decisive surgery' gave all the appearances of legality and respectability. It was much safer and much more efficient than assaulting one's victim in the street. Indeed, as it involved a minimum of overt violence, it earned the skilful practitioner the admiration of the civilized world. It is a marvellous technique which Catherine II was destined to master in her own right, and which aspiring tyrants of later ages have been only too willing to imitate (Davies 2005: 386, 395-396).

Antoni Mączak, the late Polish professor, confirms the pertinence of this sort of analysis; he said that the Ancient Rome and Greece collapsed, as well, first losing their freedom and then their existence. Poland, on the contrary, fell when patriotism had strengthened and real freedom was being revived (Korzon 1889: 47). Lipoński encapsulates the situation like this: "the three neighbours divided Poland and suppressed the 'Polish danger of democracy'" (Lipoński 1978: 172). Indeed, Poland was destroyed not due to its anarchy but because of its desperate efforts to get out of it.

To write that Jane Porter was knowledgeable about many of the above truths would not suffice and would be an act of unfairness against the British writer. She knew so much that it is close to impossible to present it in one work. It is no great risk to say

that today she would make most Polish people blush due to her extensive knowledge of Polish history. Her foreignness only strengthens this discrepancy. All the above, in combination with her shrewdness and sensitivity, must have engineered the production of her tale about Poland. However, the recipient would be very wrong to think that Porter's acquaintance with Poland ended in the period she addressed in her tome. The following passages present merely a slight portion of this writer's broad knowledge about the Polish Commonwealth – which, as the text shows, was obviously one of the spurs for creating her book – but let the author speak herself:

Under that of her early monarchs, the Piasts and their senate, she sat beneath an almost patriarchal sceptre, they being native and truly parental princes. John Sobieski was one of this description by descent and just rule. Under the Jagellon dynasty, also sprung from the soil, she held a yet more generalizing constitutional code, after which she gradually adopted certain republican forms, with an elective king - a strange contradiction in the asserted object, a sound system for political freedom, but which, in fact, contained the whole alchemy of a nation's "anarchical life," and ultimately produced the entire destruction of the state. From the established date of the elective monarchy, the kingdom became an arena for every species of ambitious rivalry, and its sure consequences, the interference of foreign influences; and hence rapidly advanced the decline of the true independent spirit of the land, to stand in her laws, and in her own political strength; her own impartial laws, the palladium of the people and a native king the parental guardian of their just administration (*TW*, 1845).

Porter was perfectly aware that well into the 19th century Poland's social ferment had been attracting foreign expansionism. She learnt about the train of events that led to the partitions, which constituted, and which still do, a watershed of Polish history. However, she also understood the hearts of Polish patriots, who never forgot who and what was the most important and dear to them.

Though their country appeared thus lost to them, they felt its kingdom still in their minds - in the bosom of memory, in the consciousness of an ancestry of bravery and of virtue; and though the soil had passed away from the feet of those whose ancestors of "sword or share" had trod it as sons and owners, and it now holds no place for them but their fathers' graves, yet the root is deep in such planting, and the tree, though invisible to the world, is seen and nourished in the depths of their hearts by the dews of heaven (*TW*, 1845).

As can be concluded from the fragments, Jane Porter, firstly, shows considerable knowledge of many significant moments in Poland's history; secondly, she comprehends or, one might even say, joins with the Poles in their suffering when "Sarmatia" lay in blood; and, thirdly, while acknowledging their heroism, she is far from toadying

to them when giving the causes of the country's downfall. The next example, seeming contrary to the previous one, portrays how "knowing the facts" can be debatable and how easy it is to fall into the trap of treating Poland only as the victim but never as the victimizing country (a one-sided story often told even today, even by academics). This is how Porter idealised the Poles: "Yet they were always distinguished by a particular chivalry of character, a brave freedom from all foreign and domestic vassalage, and a generous disposition to respect and to assist the neighbouring nations to maintain the same independence they themselves enjoyed" (TW, 1845).

In another sample of being educated in the field of Polish history, the Briton expresses her views on the elective monarchy of the later sovereigns of the Jagiellon dynasty, Sigismund I the Elder (Pol. *Zygmunt I Stary*) and his son Sigismund II Augustus (Pol. *Zygmunt II August*), and that of their successor, John Sobieski. She explains that "in Poland electing kings appeared sound, but soon after the death of the last-named monarch, the utopian idea of the perfection of an elective monarchy began to shake the stability of even the monarchy itself" (TW, 1845). Next, she goes on to display what she knew about the Polish Kingdom and its most renowned nationals when it faced the peril of being devoured by neighbouring states.

The sole remaining princely descendants of the three just referred to, true patriot-monarchs, were the earliest awakened to resist the spirit of evil spreading amongst all classes in the nation. The Czartoryski and the Zamoyski race, both of the Jagellon line, and near kinsmen to the then newly raised monarch to the Polish throne, Stanislaus Poniatowski, appeared like twin stars over the darkened field, and the whole aspect of the country seemed speedily changed. A contemporary writer bears record that one hundred and twenty-seven provincial colleges were founded, perfected, and supported by them and their patriotic colleagues; while the University of Vilna was judiciously and munificently organized by its prince palatine, Adam Czartoryski himself, and a statute drawn up which declared it "an open high-school from the supreme board of public education for all the Polish provinces." Herein was every science exalting to the faculties of man, and conducive to his sacred aspirations, seriously and diligently inculcated; and every principle of morality and religion, purifying to his mixed nature, and therefore calculated to establish him in the answering conduct, truth, justice, and loyal obedience to the hereditary revered laws of the nation, equally instilled, qualifying him to uphold them, and to defend their freedom from all offensive operations at home or abroad, intended to subvert the purity of their code or the integrity of their administration. Such was the import of the implied vow on entering the university (TW, 1845).

Owing to these notes, included in the preface and the appendix, the British reader (of Porter's times) could make sense of the novel, fixing its events in the historical context which existed at that time and thus comprehend the story to the maximum. Here, however, the objection can also be raised that historical facts too frequently mix with the

lyricist's subjective opinions or sentiments. In order for Polish readers to acquaint themselves with not merely what the British romance writer knew about *Rzeczpospolita* but also what her feelings towards it were, fragments such as the following are of significance. This one comes from the appendix section of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and demonstrates the author's enormous empathy for and friendly attitude to the murdered Kingdom of Poland and her citizens:

To recapitulate the memorable events of the threatened royal freedom of Poland, by the three formidable foreign powers confederated for its annihilation, and in repelling which General Kosciuszko took so gallant a lead, is not here necessary to connect our memoranda concerning his unreceding struggles to maintain her political existence. (...) He and his equally devoted compeers held their indomitable resistance till the fatal issue. "Sarmatia lay in blood!" and the portion of that once great bulwark of civilized Europe was adjudged by the parricidal victors to themselves: a sentence like unto that passed on the worst of criminals was thus denounced against Christendom's often best benefactor, while the rest of Europe stood silently by, paralysed or appalled, during the immediate execution of the noble victim (TW, 1845).

The author was well aware that Poland, though dismembered and removed from "the map of nations" by a combination of usurping ambition and broken faith, and though no longer regarded as one in its "proud cordon", retained "a mode of existence unknown till then in the history of the world – a domestic national vitality" (TW, 1845).

Should one still be unconvinced of why the most stimulating muse for Porter's novel was Poland herself and her brave people, or, to put it differently, should one still raise the query "why Poland"?, the author gives an exhaustive explanation in the preface to the first edition of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. She illustrates "the Sobieski race" as leading remarkable lives; she judges them through their actions, not pretensions. When such people, she explains, face the tentacles of outside interference, they do not think about their righteous greatness and glory, their power and pride, or "self-aggrandizement in themselves", but about their duties towards their motherland (TW, 1845). This is the reason why Poland itself is foregrounded in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*:

To exhibit so truly heroic and endearing a portrait of what every Christian man ought to be, - for the law of God is the same to the poor as to the rich, - I have chosen one of that illustrious and, I believe, now extinct race for the subject of my sketch; and the more aptly did it present itself, it being necessary to show my hero amidst scenes and circumstances ready to exercise his brave and generous propensities, and to put their personal issues to the test on his mind. Hence Poland's sadly-varying destinies seemed to me the stage best calculated for the development of any self-imposed task (TW, 1845).

Veritably, the sullen struggle for liberty in *Rzeczpospolita* and defence against a combined invasion of three of the most potent European powers provided Jane with a theme for treatment. The ensuing excerpt shows how Porter looked back on it some years later:

In sitting down now to my retrospective task, I find myself writing this, my second preface to the story of “Thaddeus of Warsaw,” just thirty years from the date of its first publication. Then, I wrote when the struggle for the birthright independence of Poland was no more; when she lay in her ashes, and her heroes in their wounds; when the pall of death spread over the whole country, and her widows and orphans travelled afar (*TW*, 1831: viii-ix).

As has been said and cited, both the wretched fate of Poland and her heroes were her most vital stimuli for producing the tale. To be more specific about the heroes who “made” Porter write, we must look to the celebrated Polish general, Tadeusz Kościuszko (Thaddeus Kosciuszko in the narrative). This may sound peculiar, as he was neither an aristocrat nor, according to one school of thought, Polish. This celebrated hero was born into a family of impoverished nobility and could be considered to have a threefold national identity: Belarusian, Lithuanian, and Polish. His birthplace, Novogródok (Pol. *Nowogródek*), lies today in Belarus, but this territory was previously incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which, in turn, after the 1569 Union of Lublin, became part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita*), of which the Polish king was in nominal control. Since the Kościuszko family background was mainly Catholic Polish, and, back in those days, cultural or religious backgrounds were as crucial as ethnicity in determining one’s origin, the general’s roots are for many open to debate. To make the issue more tangled, later in his life Kościuszko received both US and French citizenship (Wilde 2001). Nonetheless, he was an illustrious figure for Porter, because she had heard of the Pole’s bravery and dedication to his homeland. When Kościuszko stopped in London on his way to the United States in May 1797, he attracted a great deal of interest, and many of the British elite wanted to pay homage to the outstanding hero (*TW*, 1831: x). In connection with the big, positive stir that Kościuszko’s arrival in London evoked, Niemcewicz ([1848] 1957: 209) wrote that “in no other country are the love for freedom and respect for its defenders dearer than in England.”²⁶ It is no wonder then, proceeded the Polish patriot, that Kościuszko’s arrival was

²⁶ Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1758 – 1841) was a Polish scholar, playwright, poet, patriot and statesman. He visited France, England, Italy, and Germany. He co-authored (with Hugo Kołłątaj) the project of the May 3rd Constitution. He served as aide to Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski and to Tadeusz Kościuszko and

hyped all over London and that his figure attracted to the capital the most magnificent persons of all kinds. Everybody thronged to the Tablioners Hotel (Porter uses the name Sabloniĉre's Hotel) at Leister Square, where the Polish commander resided. (In fact, Porter lived nearby, also at Leister Square). Among those who were fortunate enough to reach the veteran was the Russian envoy Woroncow, who was ordered by Tsar Paul I, another admirer of Kościuszko, to "soak up" any information about the Pole (209). Another person who contacted the Polish general in person was Robert Ker Porter, Jane Porter's brother. Jane remembered her brother's portrayal of the Polish hero: "My brother, on his return to us, described him as a noble looking man, though not at all handsome, lying upon a couch in a very enfeebled state" (*TW*, 1845). His poor state, as wrote Porter, resulted from the many wounds he had received in his breast "by the Cossacks' lances after his fall, having been previously overthrown by a sabre stroke on his head" (*TW*, 1845). She reported the words of her brother, according to which the general's voice, due to this induced weakness, was very low, and he could hardly speak. "He wore a black bandage across his forehead, which covered a deep wound there; and, indeed, his whole figure bore marks of long suffering" (*TW*, 1845). She also learnt from Robert Ker about examples of Kościuszko's virtue and generosity (in the USA, for example, he sponsored Black men's education) (Grodziski 1999: 175), and about his misfortunes. This event generally helped to disseminate the facts about the then ill-fated Poland and the cause for which Kościuszko fought, which further urged her to proceed with her work (*TW*, 1831: x). The following passage written by Jane Porter is evidence of the inspiration that Kościuszko provided for the writing of the novel.

Is it, then, to be wondered at, combining the mute distress I had so often contemplated in other victims of similar misfortunes with the magnanimous object then described to me by my brother, that the story of heroism my young imagination should think of embodying into shape should be founded on the actual scenes of Kosciusko's sufferings, and moulded out of his virtues! (...) the memory of the magnanimous patriot and exemplary man, Thaddeus Kosciusko (...) had first filled me with ambition to write the tale, [he] died in Switzerland, A. D. 1817, fuller of glory than of years. Yet, if life be measured by its vicissitudes and its virtues, we may justly say, "he was gathered in his ripeness" (*TW*, 1831: x, xi-xii).

during the Kościuszko Uprising was taken prisoner with him at the Battle of Maciejowice (1794), and shared his captivity at St. Petersburg. On their release in 1796, they went together to the United States, where Niemcewicz married. After the Congress of Vienna, he was secretary of state and president of the constitutional committee in Poland, but in 1830-1831 he was again an exile. He died in 1841 in Paris. ("Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz", 2007; "Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz", 2008).

Grzegorzczuk believes there were two Polish characters that kindled the artistic work of European poets, novelists, and artists, and who at the same time fascinated masses of people, who could recognise their countenances in artistic renderings. These were Jan III Sobieski and Tadeusz Kościuszko. “No other person moved the hearts of the English, entered their conscience, and became the myth of unparalleled heroism more than Kościuszko” (Grzegorzczuk 1961: 241) – a symbol of love for one’s motherland and the fight for liberty. What is more, the female writer was full of admiration for Kościuszko’s modesty and pride. When Kościuszko was offered an estate from Tsar Paul of Russia for his greatness, the general refused it, as he did when Napoleon proposed he rule Poland, though not as an independent state. These are Jane Porter’s words about what she thought of the hero’s stance:

(...) he refused, though with an answering magnanimity of acknowledgment, a valuable property offered to him by the Emperor of Russia, as a free gift from a generous enemy, esteeming his proved, disinterested virtues. He also declined the yet more dazzling present of a crown from the then master of the continent, who would have set him on the throne of Poland - but, of a truth, under the vassalage of the Emperor of the French! Kosciuszko was not to be consoled for Poland by riches bestowed on himself, nor betrayed into compromising her birthright of national independence by the casuistry that would have made his parental sceptre the instrument of a foreign domination (*TW*, 1831: xii).

Porter was truthful about Kościuszko’s humbleness. While in Stockholm, shortly before journeying to Britain, he refused to be portrayed by an artist, who later had no other choice but to produce the general’s image from memory... In London, the portraitist Richard Cosway (1742 – 1821) did such a job surreptitiously, creating, to Niemcewicz’s mind, the best version of all. Richard Cosway’s wife, Maria Cosway (1760 – 1838), too, painted a portrait of Kościuszko, when she had the honour of having the general over (Lipoński 1978: 23). This Lady also had the task of presenting art in Britain to Prince George Adam Czartoryski during his stay in London (Dębicki 1888: 68). In 1798, her husband’s icon was popularised by Anthony Cardon’s (1739 – 1813) etching, which was given to Kościuszko as a present from the Club of Whigs. Among these artistic works there is also a contribution from Anna Maria Porter (Jane’s sister) – a quatrain written to honour the Polish champion (Grzegorzczuk 1961: 241). The verse reads:

“O Freedom, Valour, Resignation! here
Pay, to your godlike son, the sacred tear;

Weave the proud laurel for his suffering brow
And in a world's wide pity, steep the bough" (Grzegorzczuk 1961: 241).²⁷

So greatly moved was Jane Porter (but as can be seen her sister as well) by the Polish hero that she kept a lock of his hair as well as a medal of his (*TW*, 1831: xii-xiii). Tadeusz Kościuszko was implicitly made the main character of her first novel, because the young writer feared that showing the magnitude of Kościuszko the way it really was would present too big a challenge (Grzegorzczuk 1961: 246). Grzegorzczuk's opinion coincides with the composer's, as she herself noted: "To have made him the ostensible hero of the tale, would have suited neither the modesty of his feelings nor the humbleness of my own expectation of telling it as I wished. I therefore took a younger and less pretending agent, in the personification of a descendant of the great John Sobieski" (*TW*, 1831: x). This "less pretending agent" in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is Thaddeus Sobiński. Porter precisely localises the socio-historical context from which the young Pole comes to show that the values common for him and other Poles emerge from their historical past and its influence on the present. By such a technique – and this is another argument for placing Poland and Poles in the centre of the novel – the author demonstrates that "both class and heredity are less important than national identity in determining one's character" (Anessi 1999: 27).

By 1810, the novel had reached a ninth edition. Porter dedicated the tenth edition of the book (1819) to Kościuszko: "This tenth edition is humbly and affectionately inscribed to the memory of the late justly revered and renowned General Thaddeus Kosciuszko" (*TW*, 1845). Later editions appeared in 1831 (with a new and valuable preface), 1840, 1860, and 1868 (*DNB*, 1968: 183).

The general himself read Porter's production, a fact Porter noted in the preface to the edition of 1831. The writer did not mention how the Polish hero received the book, but one supposition is that Kościuszko read the book in the German version. Thanks to a letter to the general, written on September 13, 1816, it turned out that the giver of the book was the novelist herself, who sent the copy to Switzerland, where Kościuszko resided. The same letter also confirms that Miss Jane Porter had unsuccessful

²⁷ Grzegorzczuk in *Kościuszko w poezji angielskiej* [Kościuszko in English Poetry] (1961) placed the following translation: "O Wolności, Odwago, Wyrzeczenie! złożcie tutaj swemu boskiemu synowi daninę świętych łez, uwijcie na cierpiące jego czoło dumny lauru wieniec, który niechaj zrosi całego świata współczucie."

fully tried to reach Kościuszko as early as 1814. The covert hero of the story had a chance to congratulate the writer on the book in a letter, adding, however, a few humble opinions concerning his figure (Biblioteka Czartoryskich; *DNB*, 1968: 183; Sinko 1961: 168, as cited in Gołębiowska 2001: 12-13):

In your book you mention my name with worship and honour. I am glad it was placed in a romance, as nobody will ever believe that I am so in reality. A writer is more sensitive than others, so he has more feelings of noble morality and in the hour of inspiration he can put on paper whatever his soul is possessed with [translation from Polish mine, ML] (Tadeusz Kościuszko [n.d.], as quoted in Gołębiowska 2001: 13).²⁸

The British composer's interest in the Polish nobleman was not restricted to writing one novel only. She persistently followed the fate of her hero and his cult. In addition to the aforementioned qualities, she appreciated the fact that Kościuszko "was not to be consoled for Poland by riches bestowed on himself, nor betrayed into compromising her birthright of national independence by the casuistry that would have made his parental scepter the instrument of a foreign domination" (*TW*, 1845). This is how the "Polander" became a symbol of timeless values for Porter. In 1823, she penned another literary piece entitled *A Fragment of Poland*, based on the events of the general's funeral in the cathedral in Wawel and the forming of the burial mound of Kościuszko on St Bronisława's Hill in Kraków. "The author emphasised that this worthy rival of Egyptian pyramids is not a treasury of forgotten rulers but an object dear to all Poles and by them themselves erected" [translation from Polish mine, ML] (Gołębiowska 2001: 14).

One problem arises, however, when writing about the Pole and the universal splendour he enjoyed: while Kościuszko's immense popularity is fairly easy to understand among Polish and American people, it is intriguing why the British, with Porter at the head, admired him so much. The same British people who virtually worshipped the general must have known that in the War of Independence the Pole was on the side of the Americans-to-be, and therefore against the Britons. Porter was aware of this too, as she refers to this fact in a footnote in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. She wrote that in the war Kościuszko, "eager to measure swords in an actual field, had passed over seas to British America, and offering their services to the independents, which were accepted, the ex-

²⁸ The Polish version (translation from French): "W swojej książce przytacza Pani wielokrotnie moje nazwisko ze czcią i honorami. Cieszę się, że znalazło się to w romansie, gdyż nikt nie uwierzy, że takim jestem w rzeczywistości. Pisarz jest bardziej wrażliwy niż inni, ma więc więcej uczuć szlachetnej moralności i w godzinie natchnienia potrafi przelać na papier to, co tkwi w jego duszy."

traordinary warlike talents of Kosciuszko were speedily honored by his being made an especial aid-de-camp to General Washington” (TW, 1845). Generally, Porter cautiously shuns this issue and clearly distances herself from judging Kościuszko’s engagement in the fight against Great Britain. She is similarly lapidary when it comes to moralising about the British colonists, and the only one such slight criticism can be found in the appendix to the book: “(...) the hard-fought contest ended in a treaty of peace between the parent country and its contumacious offspring, in the year 1783, with England’s acknowledgment of their independence, under the name of the United States of America” (TW, 1845). Actually, her only negative remark is expressed in one – rarely used today – epithet “contumacious”. As has been explained in chapter two of this thesis, this word denotes “perverse in resisting authority, stubbornly disobedient, rebellious, irreconcilable” (WD, 1993: 497). Consequently, on the one hand, we have Porter (together with other British people) who loses the colonies, the fact of which is merely slightly frowned upon, and on the other, a Pole who greatly contributed to this and who at the same time is her idol. This ambiguity can be explained by the application of the following logic: if she had openly condemned the rebellious colonists, Porter would have had to do so with regard to Kościuszko as one of the prime perpetrators, and she could not have afforded that, because she considered him to be the purest hero on earth, which only adds to the discussion of why the Polish general was her inspiration for *Thaddeus of Warsaw*.

Nevertheless, although Kościuszko constituted the core of the story, he was not the only personage to “push” Porter into penning her novel, since immigrants of every segment of Poland’s society were a noticeable part of that story, too. Let me be excused for the length of the following quotation, but its content better than anybody else’s words displays the reasons for which Miss Porter embarked on producing the book, and, apart from that, shows the cruel destiny of such immigrants:

In the days of my almost childhood, - that is, eight years before I dipped my pen in their tears, - I remember seeing many of those hapless refugees wandering about St. James’s Park. They had sad companions in the like miseries, though from different enemies, in the emigrants from France; and memory can never forget the variety of wretched yet noble-looking visages I then contemplated in the daily walks which my mother’s own little family group were accustomed to take there. One person, a gaunt figure, with melancholy and bravery stamped on his emaciated features, is often present to the recollection of us all. He was clad in a threadbare blue uniform great coat, with a black stock, a rusty old hat, pulled rather over his eyes; his hands without gloves; but his aspect was that of a perfect gentleman, and his step that of a military man. We saw him constantly at one hour, in the middle walk of the Mall, and always alone; never looking to the right nor to the left, but

straight on; with an unmoving countenance, and a pace which told that his thoughts were those of a homeless and hopeless man - hopeless, at least, of all that life might bring him. On, on he went to the end of the Mall; turned again, and on again; and so he continued to do always, as long as we remained spectators of his solitary walk: once, indeed, we saw him crossing into St. Martin's Lane. Nobody seemed to know him, for he spoke to none; and no person ever addressed him, though many, like ourselves, looked at him, and stopped in the path to gaze after him (TW, 1831: ix).

Porter wrote that she herself wanted to open her mouth to the wretched stranger or “silently send comforts to him.” In her circle this “apparently friendless man” was often the object of talks and sympathy. She hoped that Providence would show mercy to the Polish immigrant through “those who had both the will and the power given” (TW, 1831: ix-x). With regard to the Polish immigrants in England presented in her work Porter confirmed in the preface to the first edition that she was very faithful to reality. She went on to explain that though her book was a romance, the virtues of the refugees she portrayed were factual: “(...) indeed I have designed nothing in the personages of this narrative out of the way of living experience. I have sketched no virtue that I have not seen, nor painted any folly from imagination. I have endeavoured to be as faithful to reality in my pictures of domestic morals, and of heroic life” (TW, 1831: vi). The accuracy of her accounts shown in the book was also confirmed by general William Neville Gardiner (1748 – 1806), who had the post of plenipotentiary in Warsaw. When he read the novel, he was so certain that the facts it represented had been witnessed in Poland that he expressed his amazement to some friends of his that the writer, an English lady, was in Warsaw during all the mishaps and that he had had no knowledge about it. Having shared this observation with the Duke of Roxburgh, his sister-in-law, who had heard what was said and knew Jane Porter, answered him by saying: “The author has never been in Poland.” “Impossible!” answered Gardiner, “no one could describe the scenes and occurrences there in the manner it is done in that book, without having been an eyewitness.” The lady explained to the ambassador that the author of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* was a school girl in England when the tragic events took place (TW, 1831: xiii). Porter was so precise in telling the narrative, because she interviewed Polish immigrants she had met in England who knew about the events in question. She questioned them, among others, in the Literary Society of Friends of Poland (Pol. *Literackie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Polski*), which she frequently visited. Polish immigrants, such as Niemcewicz and Koźmian, and British polonophiles, like Jane Porter or Thomas Campbell – who chaired the meetings – discussed poetry, literature, drama, music, painting, trade,

industry, law, and even fashion. Polish themes predominated over any other, and every newspaper editor in London was hungry for stories about Poland. (At this time, Porter got to know Catherine Grace Frances Gore (1799 – 1861), the author of *Polish Tales* (1833), which nonetheless was never as famous as *Thaddeus of Warsaw*) (Kozmian 1862: 11). Hence, every individual, every detail, anything that she wanted to put into her story “gradually grew upon her knowledge”, and finally she became thoroughly familiar with all the characters. The geography of Poland, as well as the emotions of her citizens, were acquired from eye-witnesses to the battlefields, too, as not until the book had been completed, did Porter visit Poland and the places she had written about (TW, 1831: xiii). Additionally, Porter had gained an impressive knowledge of Poland’s history, which she showed in the appendix section of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. Not only did she write in length about the Polish history of her times – about King Poniatowski or noblemen such as the Czartoryskis and Krasiński, the achievements of the Enlightenment in Poland, or the partitions with their usurpers – but, as presented earlier in this section, about the history of Poland from the Piasts and the Jagiellons to the Sobieskis, as well. She also seems to have known every detail of Kościuszko’s or Niemcewicz’s life from the cradle to the grave. Moreover, she informed the reader about the complicated mixture of Poland’s politics and culture, of the “Polanders”’ dedication and patriotism, on the one hand, and of their privacy and anarchy, on the other. (See Appendix of the 10th Edition of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*).

The heretofore presentation of Porter’s inspirations for her sketch might evoke in the reader a feeling that *Thaddeus* is a perfect piece of literature. Whereas all the commendable words about Porter’s skills as a writer are fully justifiable, it cannot escape remark that there is a detail about her writing that sheds a ray of negative light on the historical part (volume one) of the novel. In 1795, Stephen Jones (1763 – 1827) edited his *History of Poland: From Its Origin as a Nation to the Commencement of the Year 1795*, with a portrait of Kościuszko on the cover. The work, according to Grzegorzczuk (1961: 246), is a fabricated and close to useless compilation based on non-Polish sources. As claimed by this author, the materials used for Jones’s “useless compilation” served Porter while sketching *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. Sadly, Grzegorzczuk falls silent on what and how much information from Jones’s book Porter actually included in her narrative. Perhaps her studying Jones’ *History of Poland* resulted from Porter’s making some errors in proper names or distance, especially in the first of the four volumes. Next

to the already highlighted confusion between the Battles of Maciejowice and Brześć, she writes, for instance, that Kraków lies 130 miles from Warsaw (TW, 1845). What is more, Kościuszko, the greatest spur for writing the novel, is placed in events in which he never partook, but this, as Gołębiowska (2001: 10) explains, was done purposely in order to exhibit the person of the Polish commander. Whatever the flaws, if a perceptive observant takes into consideration all Jane Porter's strengths as a writer-historian, one brisk, colloquial, and conclusive utterance may be given: this author did a really good job.

That *Thaddeus of Warsaw* may also have been inspired by debates about national identity closer to home is suggested by her account of her mother's guests while the novel was being written. In a footnote about these guests in her preface to the 1840 edition Porter remarks:

In this bright little circle were also the revered female names of Mrs. Hannah More, Mrs. Barbauld, the late Lady de Crespigny, (of literary and beneficent memory) Mrs Hamilton, authoress of *Modern Philosophers*, (the fine principles and wit of which work, so put those vain and mischievous workers to the rout in England, that our then venerable sovereign George III distinguished her with a particular mark of the royal favour). We had likewise her nobly talented friend Miss Benger, the charming historian of *Anne Bullen* and *Mary Queen of Scots* (Price 2000).

The "debates about national identity" were critical, especially in the light of three dramatic changes, that is to say, three revolutions. 18th-century Britain had experienced a real "shake-up" in the sense of national belonging due to the American and French Revolutions. From the very beginning, Porter was a staunch opponent of the strife in France, which she made very clear in the preface to the first edition of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*:

It sprung from a tree self-corrupted, which only could produce such fruits: the demon hierarchy of the French philosophers, who had long denied the being of that pure and Almighty God, and who, in the arrogance of their own deified reason, and while in utter subjection to the wildest desires of their passions, published their profane and polluted creed amongst all orders of the people, and the natural and terrible consequences ensued (TW, 1845).

Though nothing of that kind of unrest ever happened on the British Isles, the threat of it was strong. Porter herself feared that the "terrible regicidal revolution", this "tale of horror", and "the work of demons in the shapes of men", as she called the French Revo-

lution, might spread to Great Britain. “May God grant that so fearful a visitation may never be inflicted on this world again”, she wrote (*TW*, 1845). This is why the ideals of the main hero, Thaddeus Sobieski, are painstakingly isolated from any connection with the French Revolution. “The patriot should not be a Napoleonic expansionist, pursuing imperial profit.” In identifying oneself with the nation, regardless of one’s social status, there is no place for “radical individualism” but rather for Christianity (Price 2006: 647-648). She considered the Polish or British model of monarchy to be “more moral, and therefore preferable, model for English social transformation than the godless ‘Terror’ in France” (Anessi 1999: 39). If we add the third abrupt upheaval – this time economic and social – in the form of the Industrial Revolution, there is no wonder that sensitive and judicious patriots like Porter were anxious to raise such issues. Anessi, the author of an article devoted to Jane Porter and *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, concurs with this logic: “The threat that these radical brands of Enlightenment politics posed to England’s social order, both to the monarchy and the church, prompted Porter to seek a means of illustrating a link between the particular historical events that shape a nation and the national identity of its people” (4).

It is thus evident that one of the reasons why Porter chose to write *Thaddeus of Warsaw* was the desire to present the evolutionary social and political alterations of her time and to caution the British against any contributory negligence that might lead to disorder in her home country which would be comparable to that in France. Moreover, in all probability, through her book Jane Porter wished to strengthen the national identity of Britons and make them aware that they should do everything in order to avoid the sorrowful fate of Poles. Porter writes about the vanquished Poland to show how “the threat looming over England in 1803 needs to be taken more seriously by the English gentry, who are in the best position to act” (40):

Because the Poles fought against absolute monarchy, but in support of constitutional monarchy, they provide a perfect example to the English, who had not seen a serious threat to their position on the island since 1066, had not been invaded since the raids of the Vikings, but by 1803 seemed to be in crisis as the influence of the revolution in France spread (Anessi 1999: 39-40).

By comparing the British with the Polish, Porter lets the addressee know that although Poland, geographically speaking, was no longer an independent country, its nationalism flourished. Great Britain, on the other hand, had its borders firmly established, but, as

Porter appears to see it, the country's nationals lacked "a clearly defined sense of historically-determined selfhood" (Anessi 1999: 28). Moreover, unlike the Poles, "the British nation had become complacent during the years of relative safety from foreign incursion." Consequently, the political and social situation of Great Britain is mirrored through contrasts against "the more passionate and agrarian Poles" (40, 6).

Yes, Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* was, among others, an appeal to her fellow countrymen for coming to their senses: for living in a spirit of patriotism and for dedication to their land if bloodshed like that in France was to be avoided. But it does not seem a baseless supposition that even if she had not witnessed the French Revolution, something would have caused her to write the novel anyway. This something has no timeframe, this something is not limited by geography and cannot be brought down to nationality only; it is ethical behaviour as such, it is living in harmony with one's moral code, it is decency, probity, and honour. The author opens a window onto this aspect in the subsequent manner:

I, though a poor weak woman, have so much of the patriot's spirit in my breast, as to mourn in heart, the degeneracy of English Honour, and Chastity: - The Men, have forgotten the *real* meaning of the *word* which ought to rule their conduct: - And the Women, have ceased altogether to remember, that the *soul* of their *Purity* and *Estimation* ever had existence. - It was under these impressions, that I ventured to write 'Thaddeus of Warsaw' (Porter 1805, as quoted in Joukovsky 1990: 17).

At first, the novelist did not want to publish *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, which was written in the form of an essay, fearing its reception by the reader. She mainly wrote it, as has been mentioned, because she needed an outlet for her strong feeling towards the ill-fated country of Poland. Her imaginative empathy with Poland was evident as was the tragedy that the country faced. (When the novel was being penned, Poland was no longer on the map of Europe). However, once the romance was finished, a circle of people encouraged the writer to publish it. Still, the "penwoman" felt apprehensive about presenting the work to the public:

When the work was finished, some of the persons near me urged its being published. But I argued, in opposition to the wish, its different construction to all other novels or romances which had gone before it, from Richardson's time-honoured domestic novels to the penetrating feeling in similar scenes by the pen of Henry Mackenzie; and again, Charlotte Smith's more recent, elegant, but very sentimental love stories. (...) I urged, how could any one expect that the admiring readers of such works could consider my simply-told biographical legend of Poland anything better than a dull union between real history and a matter-of-fact imagination? (TW, 1831: xi).

She was particularly anxious about the reception of the first volume of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* by the female part of her readership, because the opening pages of the book are nearly exclusively devoted to the battles that took place before and after the second partition and their socio-historical context. These, Porter thought, would be too boring for ladies to pore over, so she advised women to be patient while reading the first volume of the tale. She wrote that she realised that “war and politics are not the most promising themes for an agreeable amusement”, but right afterwards added that “the battles are not frequent, nor do the cabinet councils last long” (TW, 1845). Finally, the decisive argument for giving the story to the world, as Porter maintains, arrived from Sir Walter Scott, who approved of the novelty of the style present in the book. The author commented on Scott’s approbation with the following words:

Such evidences in favour of an argument could not fail to persuade me to undertake the desired elucidating task; feeling, indeed, particularly pleased to adopt, in my turn, a successful example from the once Great Unknown - now the not less great avowed author of the Waverley Novels, in the person of Sir Walter Scott, who did me the honour to adopt the style or class of novel of which “Thaddeus of Warsaw” was the first, - a class which, uniting the personages and facts of real history or biography with a combining and illustrative machinery of the imagination, formed a new species of writing in that day (TW, 1831: viii).

Jones (1986: 120) claims that her worries about publishing *Thaddeus* proved ungrounded, even with regard to the first volume, because according to critics, the portrayal of the military campaigns and political scheming was fascinating, intellectual, and truthful. Anessi confirms that Porter was the precursor of the style that Scott followed. He writes that the novel is particularly meaningful because “it helped initiate a trend in fiction, followed by Scott, towards using history as a foundation for the events of the plot, rather than merely a stage for them” (Anessi 1999: 3-4). And in *CCBR* one can read that albeit Sir Walter Scott is commended for the origin of the historical novel in English, “women charted the course to his success. There were three in particular: Maria Edgeworth, Jane Porter, and Sydney Owenson.” Then, “twenty pages further”, the companion adds to this list Jane’s sister, Anna Maria (*CCBR*, 1993: 191, 212).²⁹ At

²⁹ Maria Edgeworth (1767 – 1849) was an Anglo-Irish novelist, who was explicit about the fact that all her stories had a moral purpose behind them, usually pointing out the duty of members of the upper class toward their tenants. She was an active writer and worked strenuously for the relief of the famine-stricken Irish peasants during the Irish Potato Famine (1845-1849). She was an acquaintance of Lord Byron, Humphry Davy, and Walter Scott, with whom she entered into a long correspondence after the publication of *Waverley* in 1814 (“Maria Edgeworth”, 2008). Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson) (ca. 1776 – 1859)

the same time, it needs to be remembered that some writers object to making Porter the example to follow for Scott in the path of literature. George Saintsbury, for instance, wrote in *The English Novel* (1913: 203) that Jane claimed so only when Scott's *Waverley* earned "astonishing success."

As has been presented, Jane Porter's motives for authoring her romance were numerous. Being knowledgeable about Poland's turbulent history and the peril which the country faced (and her own motherland, as well) enabled the British writer to create a fairly precise and extremely passionate story about Kościuszko's homeland. The very fact that the Briton created four volumes about Poland and Poles, which was a rarity at the time, and that the book did not pass unnoticed by many an educated person, renders the work valuable, if not invaluable.

was an Irish novelist and one of the most vivid and hotly discussed literary figures of her generation. Her best novel, *O'Donnell*, deals with descriptions of the poorer classes, of whom she had a thorough knowledge. Appreciated by Lord Byron and Percy Shelley, she is said to have influenced some of the latter's own orientalist productions ("Lady Morgan", 2008).

Chapter 4: Virtue and glory or wrongdoing and shame? Poland in the eyes of Jane Porter

4.1. The Polish are virtuous

Three words would suffice to set forth the attributes of the Polish that dominate in the publication of Jane Porter: Poles are grand (though some villainous personality traits of Poles are also highlighted in the book). It matters not whether the author writes about the Polish king, Polish soldiers, Thaddeus of Warsaw – the key figure of the novel – and his family and ancestors, or even society in general. As has been noted in the introduction, the depiction of the lowest social stratum of the Poland of the 18th century is scarce; still, if it does appear, it praises this particular group of people, as well. Though not the central plot in the story, accounts of the Polish sovereign can be found every now and then in the book, and due to the fact that Stanisław August Poniatowski was the head of the country, it is worth first portraying this very figure.

After the second partition, when Polish troops are summoned by the king, Thaddeus's grandfather, the Palatine (Pol. *Wojewoda*) of Masovia (Pol. *Mazowsze*), and general Butzou (whom Thaddeus later in the novel finds in London and befriends till the general's death) both comment on serving under the monarch:

“How happy it ought to make you, my son,” observed Sobieski, “that you are called out to support such a sovereign! He is not merely a brave king, whom you would follow to battle, because he will lead you to honour; the hearts of his people acknowledge him in a superior light; they look on him as their patriarchal head, as being delegated of God to study what is their greatest good, to bestow it, and when it is attacked, to defend it. To preserve the life of such a sovereign, who would not sacrifice his own?” “Yes,” cried Butzou; “and how ought we to abhor those who threaten his life!” (TW, 1831: 22).

Some time after the above takes place, Thaddeus has a chance to talk to the king in private. In the book, the Kościuszko Insurrection is over and the resulting status quo proves tragic for the country. When all hope is lost, Thaddeus Sobieski verbalises how Polish nationals will act and in what regard they hold the king. “(...) and whilst there remains one man on earth, who has drawn his first breath in Poland, he will bear witness in all the lands through which he may be doomed to wander, that he has received from you the care and affection of a father” (TW, 1845).

However, of all the gallant personages depicted, it is Thaddeus Constantine Sobieski (Constantine is the middle name of the main hero, which he uses in England in order not to be recognised) who takes precedence in the novel. Despite the fact that he is a fictitious character, Jane Porter filled Thaddeus with the traits of a factual hero, that is to say, Tadeusz Kościuszko (see chapter three). In Porter’s volume, Kościuszko and Sobieski even fight arm in arm against the Russian usurpers. Since the period of the partitions was of the biggest interest to the author, the most striking quality embodied by Thaddeus is his patriotism. Subsequent accounts are given by an Englishman, Pembroke Somerset, who is first discovered by the reader to be Thaddeus’s enemy fighting for the Russians in the 1792 campaign (see synopsis of the book), and later a friend of Sobieski, after the latter saves the former on the battlefield, and finally, his half-brother, as Somerset’s father proves to be Sobieski’s, as well.

Thaddeus Sobieski is hardly one year my senior; but, good heaven! what has he not done? What has he not acquired? Whilst I abused the indulgence of my parents, and wasted my days in riding, shooting, and walking the streets, he was learning to act as became a man of rank and virtue; and by seizing every opportunity to serve the state, he has obtained a rich reward in the respect and admiration of his country (TW, 1831: 45).

Pembroke then recommends Thaddeus as an example to follow, as a man of high moral quality and extraordinary merit. His has a strong impact on others, leading most of the male noble youths to join the army. This, in combination with his bravery and uncommon talents on the battlefield, renders him an object of universal respect, and, in consequence, whoever sees him applauds him with acclamation. And “even at the appearance of his carriage in the streets, the passengers take off their hats and pray for him till he is out of sight” (TW, 1831: 48). When strolling together one day, Pembroke says to Thaddeus:

“It is this, my dear friend, which shields your heart against the arrows of love. You have no place for that passion; your mistress is glory, and she courts you.”

“My mistress is my country,” replied he; “at present I desire no other. For her I would die; for her only would I wish to live.” Whilst he spoke, the energy of his soul blazed in his eye. I smiled.

“You are an enthusiast, Thaddeus,” I said.

“Pembroke!” returned he, in a surprised and reproachful tone.

“I do not give you that name opprobriously,” resumed I, laughing; “but there are many in my country, who, hearing these sentiments, would not scruple to call you mad.”

“Then I pity them,” returned Thaddeus. “Men who cannot ardently feel, cannot taste supreme happiness. My grandfather educated me at the feet of patriotism; and when I forget his precepts and example, may my guardian angel forget me!”

“Happy, glorious Thaddeus!” cried I, grasping his hand; “how I envy you your destiny! – To live as you do, in the lap of honour; virtue and glory the aim and end of your existence!” (TW, 1831: 48).

Because these utterances come from an English nobleman and concern a foreigner, Porter indirectly instils patriotic feelings in her countrymen, who were in peril of a revolution like the one in France. This is why similar accounts are present throughout the romance. Just how patriotic Thaddeus is may also be inferred from a conversation between him and Lady Sara, who suggests that through her influence she could get Thaddeus a service under her father’s patronage. And these are the words the Polish hero speaks in reply: “Whilst I consider myself the subject of one king, though he be in a prison, I will not accept of any employment under another who is in alliance with his enemies” (TW, 1831: 189). A similar offer is proposed to him when he eventually meets Pembroke, who, discovering that his exiled friend is broke, wants Thaddeus to have a commission in the British army, so that he can serve a good purpose and earn a decent living. Because the situation takes place when allies and foes might change on a daily basis, and Great Britain often worked in concert with Prussia – Poland’s deadly enemy – Thaddeus’s answer cannot be other than this:

“I am resolved not to live a life of indolence: and I am resolved at this period not to enter the British army. No,” added he, emotion elevating his tone and manner; “rather would I toil for subsistence by the sweat of my brow, than be subjected to the necessity of acting in concert with those ravagers who destroyed my country! I cannot fight by the side of the allied powers who dismembered it! I cannot enlist under the allies! I will not be led out to devastation! Mine was, and ever shall be, a defensive sword; – and should danger threaten England, I would be as ready to withstand her enemies as I ardently, though ineffectually, opposed those of unhappy Poland” (TW, 1845).

Although Porter does not say it openly in this fragment, she seems to have been critical of Britain’s politics that led to an alliance with Prussia, all the more that such criticism comes from her idol’s mouth. Thaddeus Sobieski loves Poland and behaves here as

would his “prototype” – Tadeusz Kościuszko – who was taught by “one of the most enlightened and cultured representatives of the Polish aristocracy” (Zawadzki 2001: 17), that is, Prince Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, who once said the following words to his son George Adam: “Every Pole is under the obligation to the State to be a virtuous, zealous and educated subject” (Zawadzki 2001: 20). What is more, Thaddeus would defend England, so Porter’s message is plain: if a foreigner is ready to fight for Albion, every Englishman ought to be much readier to do so. Jane does not do all this through the “Polander” coincidentally; Thaddeus of Warsaw is, in fact, modelled directly on Kościuszko – a great hero perfectly known and admired on the Isles.

Many Poles, in particular after the first partition, believed, perhaps naively, that the whole world cared about Poland and would not let the three aggressors continue their terrible work, that the world would not be able to exist without Poland (Tazbir 1978: 140). Poles counted on British help, but it never came (Butterwick 2000: 119) though many in Britain wished Poland well. For example, Lord Eversley in an article wrote: “We may confidently hope that a reconstituted Poland will take its place again, if not with complete independence, at least as an assured nationality which, by unity and strength, will be able in the future to assert and defend its liberties” (Lord Eversley 1915a).

Further merits embraced by Thaddeus Sobieski include his intrepidity and readiness to protect and save others’ lives, even at the risk of his own. The fragment below again comes from the above-mentioned Pembroke Somerset and is about the time when the two soldiers served in opposing armies. After the Polish troops had gained victory over the Russians, one of the Polish soldiers attempts to lynch the Briton, but Thaddeus dissuades the vigilante:

Thaddeus Sobieski is the grandson of the palatine, and the sole heir of his illustrious race. It is to him that I owe the preservation of my life at Zieleme, and much of my happiness since; for he is not only the bravest but the most amiable young man in the kingdom; and he is my friend! (TW, 1831: 41).

Similarly, upon Thaddeus’s arrival in London (he left Poland just after the Kościuszko Uprising collapsed), the young Pole is walking through Piccadilly in the direction of Hyde Park when a loud cry reaches his ears. “He hurried along, and at a short distance perceived a delicate-looking woman struggling with a man, who was swearing and be-

having in a very brutal manner” (*TW*, 1831: 155-156). Wasting no time, “with one blow of his arm, Thaddeus sent the fellow reeling against the wall” (*TW*, 1831: 156).

Another example of Thaddeus being courageous and dedicated to others can be discovered in a scene at Tottenham Court Yard in London. Enjoying the day, the Pole unexpectedly notices a crowd standing before a house from which smoke and flames are bellowing. Among the gatherers is the mother of two children, who are still inside the burning building. Naturally, the Pole decides to rescue the victims of the fire without a moment’s hesitation: he darts through the open door neglecting the smoke and danger and makes his way to the room where, almost suffocated by the smoky cloud that surrounds him, he finds a child, but only one. He grabs hold of the one he has discovered and hastens down the stairs, when the cries of the other from a distant part of the building make him hesitate; “but thinking it better to secure one than to hazard both by lingering”, he runs into the street, where a carriage happens to stop. The carriage door being open, Thaddeus, seeing ladies in it, without saying a word, chucks the sleeping infant into their laps, and rushes back into the house, where he hopes to save the other child. “The flames have now made dreadful progress, his face, hands, and clothes are scorched by their fury as he flees from the room, because he expects the house to sink under his foot.” But all of a sudden, to his great joy, he sees the object of his search flying down a back staircase. The boy jumps into his arms, and Thaddeus, turning round, springs from one place to another, until he finds himself again in the street, surrounded by a crowd of people. He beholds the worried mother embrace this rescued child, and whilst the spectators are congratulating him, he vanishes unnoticed and walks home with warmth in his heart (*TW*, 1831: 211-212).

Stories like these are woven throughout Porter’s tale to show what kind of human being one ought to be. The Briton considered the values of her times to be decaying, which she voiced every now and then in her tome. This is why the Polish immigrant is put in situations where he can prove his bravery and lack of self-interest.

On a different occasion, still in Britain’s capital, Thaddeus strolls towards King’s Mews, accompanied by little William, whose grandmother is his landlady. Then a new peril emerges thanks to which the reader may admire the hero’s character:

At this moment one of the king’s carriages, pursued by a concourse of people, suddenly drove in at the Charing-Cross gate. The frightened child screamed, and fell. Thaddeus darted forward, and seizing the heads of the horses which were within a yard of the boy, stopped them; meanwhile, the mob gathering about, one of them raised William, who

continued his cries. The count now let go the reins, and for a few minutes tried to pacify his little charge; but finding that his alarm and shrieks were not to be quelled, and that his own figure, from its singularity of dress, (his high cap and feathers adding to its height) drew on him the whole attention of the people, he took the trembling child in his arms, and walking through the Mews, was followed by some of the bystanders to the very door of Mrs. Robson's shop. Seeing the people, and her grandson sobbing on the breast of her guest, she ran out, and hastily asked what had happened. Thaddeus simply answered, that the child had been frightened. But when they entered the house, and he had thrown himself exhausted on a seat, William, as he stood by his knee, told his grandmother that if Mr. Constantine had not stopped the horses, he must have been run over. The count was now obliged to relate the whole story, which ended with the blessings of the poor woman, for his goodness in risking his own life for the preservation of her darling child. Thaddeus in vain assured her the action deserved no thanks (*TW*, 1831: 118-119).

The lady's comment about the Pole is short but very evocative: "Well", cried she, "it is like yourself, Mr. Constantine; you think all your good deeds nothing, and yet any little odd thing that I can do out of pure love to serve you, you cry up to the skies" (*TW*, 1831: 119).

The ensuing quotation indicates that next to being brave the Polish nobleman is also depicted as being very humble. To say more, he feels uneasy (just as presented above) about being thanked for his extraordinary acts. To reinforce the image of Thaddeus being both intrepid and modest, Jane Porter paints another picture according to which the Polish aristocrat turns out to be thus. When Lady Tinemouth invites Thaddeus to express her appreciation for defending Miss Egerton against a ruffian in the park, she says that although he is a stranger, Lady Tinemouth trusts Thaddeus. And this is how he replies: "I hardly know in what words to express my sense of your ladyship's generous confidence in me; and that my character is not undeserving of such distinction, time, I trust, will prove" (*TW*, 1831: 167). This portrayal in reality is an emulation of Kościuszko: in his correspondence to Porter, he wrote: "In your book you mention my name with worship and honour. I am glad it was placed in a romance, as nobody will ever believe that I am so in reality" (Tadeusz Kościuszko [n.d.], as quoted in Gołębiowska 2001: 13). There is a stunning similarity between the humbleness in Porter's fiction and in Kościuszko's letter.

Generosity, as exemplified by Thaddeus, is yet another feature of character that Jane Porter most likely saw in the Polish aristocracy as such, as was benevolence. In the narrative, the writer uses William, Thaddeus's landlady's grandson, to show Sobieski's nature. The following are the author's words about the Polish hero, said when the child falls ill:

Thaddeus never saw either children, dogs, or even that poor slandered and abused animal, the cat, without showing them some spontaneous act of attention. Whatever of his affections he could spare from memory, the count lavished upon the little William. He hardly ever left his side, where he sat on a stool prattling about anything that came into his head; or, seated on his knee, followed with his eyes and playful fingers the hand of Thaddeus, as he sketched a horse or a soldier for his pretty companion (*TW*, 1831: 117-118).

“Children, affection, the 18th-century, Poland”. It would be hard to make a cohesive sentence out of these words, keeping their positive sense. Although there were exceptions (such as the above example of nobles similar to Thaddeus), children in Poland, and also in other parts of Europe, had no easy life, as they were treated as small adults, and few saw anything wrong in this. Even in 18th-century paintings, they look like miniatures of mature people with big, sad faces, and empty eyes. If they were sat at the table, they were the last to be serviced and ate scraps. At around the age of six, a considerable number of children of rich parents were back from education among strange governesses, and for many that was the first time they had seen their siblings. Feeling little attachment to their natural parents, they often preferred living with their educators (Brückner 1931: 262). Cuddling, toys, or fairy tales? Forget it. The trend in writing books for youth appeared only in the 19th century, with Jules Gabriel Verne (1828 – 1905) bearing the palm in this field (Rietbergen 2001: 393).

In Poland, unlike in Great Britain, a family was set up early, with brides as young as fourteen. The parents did not bother with asking their opinion while choosing the “right” partner for their children – this tendency was symptomatic of Britain as well – so true love was torn apart. Poniatowski and Czartoryska were in love with each other, but she was given to Lubomirski for political and materialistic reasons. Unhappy marriage provoked romance and divorce, the highest number of which were in the Catholic countries in Europe, maintains Brückner (1931: 262-263).

Ultimately, when the boy dies and Mrs Robson, his grandma, cannot pay Doctor Vincent for his assistance, Thaddeus, having no funds to help the grandmother, takes an oath that he will not leave the poor woman without help. He resolves to somehow pay the unmoved doctor, whom he calls a wretch:

“Rapacious wretch!” cried Thaddeus, rising indignantly from his chair, and for a moment forgetting how incapable he was to afford relief: “you shall not be indebted one instant to his mercy. I will pay him.” The words had passed his lips: he could not retreat, though conviction immediately followed, that he had not the means; and he would not have retracted even should he be necessitated to part with everything he most valued (*TW*, 1831: 131).

Afterwards, when the bereaved lady fears what might befall her living granddaughter should she pass away, Thaddeus vows not to forsake the child even in the worst-case scenario:

He considered what he had done as a fulfilment of a duty so indispensable, that it must have been accomplished even by the sacrifice of his uttermost farthing. Gratitude and distress held claims upon him which he never allowed his own necessities to transgress. All gifts of mere generosity were beyond his power, and, consequently, in a short time beyond his wish; but to the cry of want and wretchedness his hand and heart were ever open. Often has he given away to a starving child in the street that pittance which was to purchase his own scant meal; and he never felt such neglect of himself a privation (*TW*, 1831: 142).

In this excerpt, Porter would have us believe that if Poles of a noble heart did not help the needy, even if they themselves were impoverished, such selfishness would haunt them on their pillows. Because in her book she often mentions beggars in the streets of London, such passages can be read as Porter's call for more altruism on the part of Britons.

Then Mrs Robson states that Thaddeus is the noblest, most human gentleman in the world and the best gentleman she ever beheld (*TW*, 1831: 307). And at the end of the book, when the nobleman is a happy fiancé, he and his wife-to-be do not forget about her:

He hastened to St. Martin's Lane, where the good woman received him with open arms. Nanny hung, crying for joy, upon his hand, and sprung rapturously about his neck when he told her he was now a rich man, and that she and her grandmother should live with him forever. "I am going to be married, my dear Mrs. Robson," said he; "that ministering angel who visited you when I was in prison was sent to wipe away the tears from my eyes." Drying the cheek of his weeping landlady, while he spoke, with his own handkerchief, he continued: - "She commanded me not to leave you until you had assured me that you will brighten our happiness by taking possession of a pretty cottage close to her house in Kent. (...) "Blessed Mr. Constantine!" cried the worthy woman, pressing his hand; "myself, my Nanny, - we are yours; take us where you please, - for wherever you go, there will the Almighty's hand lead us, and there will his right hand hold us" (*TW*, 1831: 415-416).

Going "back in time" in the romance to before the Kościuszko Insurrection, the reader can find another example of Thaddeus's altruism during a moment of consternation, when the Polish king's treasury turns out to be empty, and the means of continuing the armed resistance to the invaders (after the second partition) cannot be found. When the news that "the last ducat had already been drained" (*TW*, 1831: 66) gets to Thaddeus, he rises from his seat, knowing what to do. He advances towards Stanislaus, takes off his

splendid jewels (it was customary to wear them in the presence of the king), kneels down, and puts them at the feet of his monarch, and, in a suppressed voice, utters the following:

“These are trifles; but such as they are, and all of the like kind which we possess, I am commanded by my grandfather to beseech your majesty to appropriate to the public service.”

“Noble young man!” cried the king, raising him from the ground; “you have indeed taught me a lesson. I accept these jewels with gratitude. (...) The palatine readily united with his grandson in the surrender of all their personal property for the benefit of their country; and, according to their example, the treasury was soon filled with gratuities from the nobles. The very artisans offered their services gratis; and all hands being employed to forward the preparations, the army was soon enabled to take the field, newly equipped and in high spirits (*TW*, 1831: 66).

One more time, the British “wordsmith” implies what should take precedence in the face of looming danger such as revolution. And one more time she does so using Kościuszko’s “imaginary double”, his family, and comrades.

“Seeing good in people” is something that may be attributed to Sobieski too. He does it as if by nature. If a person not knowing somebody else well has a “threefold” choice (i.e. he or she may have positive, negative, or neutral feelings about the stranger), then Thaddeus definitely has positive ones. During another peculiar encounter with the English aristocrat Lady Sara, Thaddeus, perhaps to some degree gullibly, does not suspect that a married noble woman would attempt to court a man other than her husband. After a talk with the lady, Thaddeus ponders on what has happened:

But on his pillow the same night, when he reflected on what he had felt on receiving so strange a look from a married woman, and one, too, whom he believed to be a virtuous one! he could not, he would not, suppose it meant anything to him; and ashamed of even the idea having entered his head, he crushed it at once, indignant at himself (*TW*, 1845).

Yet, Thaddeus should not be so astonished, because in Poland, as Brückner (1931: 265) would have us think, flirting, divorce, and general decline in morality, starting at the Saxon times, was visible and still is.

Another quality of the “Polander” could be demonstrated with regard to the better sex again. On this occasion, however, Thaddeus acts in accordance with the principles of chivalry when the good name of Lady Tinemouth is tarnished by an Englishman, Lord Harwold. The noble Pole cannot allow anybody to “injure” a lady’s good reputation (*TW*, 1831: 364-365).

The fictional person of Thaddeus Constantine Sobieski is also used by Jane Porter to make a Pole be seen as a man of honour. Robert Somerset, the father of Pembroke, hates Poland and her people so strongly that he forbids his son from making contact with Polish men and anything Polish. Pembroke begs his parent to let him be a companion to Thaddeus, who saved his life and has befriended him ever since. Sir Robert maintains his resolution but offers his son's benefactor a substantial sum of money as compensation for forsaking Pembroke. When the young Englishman reports to Thaddeus what his father has proposed, the Pole has to react. All the pride of his princely house rises at once in his breast. Though full of indignation at this insult by Sir Robert, he looks compassionately at his friend and rejects the degrading compromise in a firm manner:

"Tell your father," added he, addressing Pembroke, in a tone which even his affection could not soften from a command, "that my absence is not to be bought with money, nor my friendship so rewarded." Pembroke covered his burning face with his hands. This sight at once brought down the haughty spirit of Sobieski, who continued in gentler accents; "Whatever be the sentiments of Sir Robert Somerset, they shall meet with due attention from me. He is your father, therefore I respect him; but he has put it out of his power to oblige me; I cannot accept his bounty. Though your heart, my dearest Pembroke, is above all price, yet I will make it a sacrifice to your duty" (*TW*, 1831: 373).

The extract above is again a copy of Kościuszko's ideals. In *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, Sobieski's friendship cannot be bought and in real life Kościuszko's love was not for sale either. Porter makes this evident in her book by writing that the Polish commander was offered estates in Poland and a considerable share in her rule by the Russian tsar and by Napoleon, but he rejected both.

Towards the end of the book, it turns out that Pembroke's father, Sir Robert Somerset, is Thaddeus's, too. This sheds a new light on the story, and the reader now finds out that Somerset the elder abandoned Thaddeus and his mother even before his birth. When this becomes obvious, Thaddeus goes through a very difficult moment. Anyhow, when asked for forgiveness (Sir Robert says plainly: "Can you pardon me?"), the brave Pole has no doubt what his decision regarding the matter ought to be. Throwing himself on his father's bosom, he weeps profusely. Then he raises his father's clasped hands to his, "whilst his eloquent eyes seemed to search the heavens" and answers: "My dear, dear mother loved you to her latest hour; and I have all my mother's heart: whatever may have been his errors, I love my father" (*TW*, 1831: 390).

The British novelist also shows the Polish aristocrat's inexhaustible stamina and persistence (though this, of course, may also be concluded on the basis of the previous quotes). Even though his father is (at first) unknown, and he later loses his mother, grandfather and then his home, and even though his homeland is wiped from the map of Europe, and he is reduced to poverty in a foreign country and has to fight against all possible odds, Thaddeus prevails. These words uttered by Robert Somerset summarise the Polish nobleman's determination and courage:

Though deprived of the splendour of command; though the eager circle of friends no longer cluster round him; though a stranger in this country, and without a home; though, in place of an equipage and retinue, he is followed by calamity and neglect, yet, in my mind, I still see him in a car of triumph: I see not only the opposer of his nation's enemies, but the vanquisher of his own desires. I see the heir of a princely house, who, when mankind have deserted him, is yet encompassed by his virtues. I see him, though cast out from a hardened and unjust society, still surrounded by the lingering spirits of those who were called to better worlds! And this is the man, my dear father, (whom I am sure, had he been of any other country than Poland, you would have selected from all other men to be the friend and example of your son), - this is he whom you command me to thrust away (*TW*, 1831: 363).

The preceding fragment is very significant: Jane shows that it is worth being a staunch patriot and a loving son no matter what. She wants to persuade the reading audience that even though some people sometimes literally lose everything, being resilient pays – if not materialistically, then for sure at the moral level. And such men, writes Porter, are from no other country but Poland. She expresses these words to bring relief to the Poles buried in poverty and utmost misery.

Looking at the Polish hero, the reader may also put their confidence in Thaddeus's sensitivity and attachment to animals. When he is forced to leave for Great Britain, he finds he cannot take his dear horse on board. The instant this idea presents itself, it almost overcomes him. Had he not by force repelled them, tears would have welled up in his eyes:

"To part from my faithful Saladin," said he to himself, "that has borne me since I first could use a sword; that has carried me through so many dangers, and has come with me even into exile - it is painful, it is ungrateful!" He was in the stable when this thought assailed him; and as the reflections followed each other, he again turned to the stall. "But, my poor fellow, I will not barter your services for gold. I will seek for some master who may be kind to you, in pity to my misfortunes" (*TW*, 1831: 90).

The value of the next citation is twofold. First, it does not cover any particular dimension of Thaddeus's inner character but rather encapsulates his soul as a whole. The words of the next fragment taken from Porter's novel are said by Thaddeus's grandfather – the Palatine of Masovia. The comment is short but illustrative of what one could expect from *the* or maybe *a* Polish nobleman. Secondly, since it might be reckoned that one person's glory was not necessarily tendentious in 18th-century Poland, the author included instances of a family's greatness and uses the Sobieski house to point out the merits of the Polish aristocracy. As a result, the piece may also be looked at as a transition from highlighting the virtues of Poles by means of one person only to highlighting them by means of a family. Notwithstanding the fact that Thaddeus is a fictional character, the name Sobieski that he bears in the romance is a real one.

(...) you have the spirit of your ancestors, and I shall live to see you add glory to the name! (...) "And ever remember," said the palatine, raising his head, which had dropped on the bosom of his grandson, "that you are a Sobieski! it is my dying command that you never take any other name" (TW, 1831: 13, 70).

And Thaddeus does fulfil his grandfather's command. When he unites with his half-brother Pembroke and his father Sir Robert, whose family name is Somerset, the Pole has only one reservation:

"Had I even the inclination to act otherwise than right, my revered grandfather has put it out of my power to claim or to bear any other name than that of Sobieski. He made me swear never to change it; and, as I hope to meet him hereafter," added he, with solemnity, "I will obey him. Therefore, my beloved father, in secret only can I enjoy the conviction that I am your son, and Pembroke's brother. Yet the happiness I receive with the knowledge of being so will ever live here, will ever animate my heart with gratitude to Heaven and to you" (TW, 1831: 397).

The family name of Thaddeus is not coincidental. Some insight into the ending of the name Sobieski may turn out to be a work of culture for two reasons: First, Porter chose it because of the magnificence of the Polish king Jan III Sobieski; secondly, the suffixes *ski* and *cki* had been added, usually though not always, to nobles' names since the 15th century to make the upper classes appear distinct from the rest of society. Obviously, a whole mass of noblemen had different endings than *ski* or *cki* in their surnames, but a whole mass changed them into such. For example, Czajka became Czajkowski, Łapa – Łapiński, and so on, and so forth. Some Polish kings also had these suffixes: Wiśniowiecki, Sobieski, Leszczyński, and Poniatowski (Tazbir 1978: 30).

In *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, the superb idiosyncrasies of the Sobieski house are noticed and appreciated by King Poniatowski himself. Below are some of his remarks involving Thaddeus and his family. The dialogue between Stanisław Poniatowski and Thaddeus Sobieski takes place when the sovereign is about to be taken to Grodno as a prisoner. (Additionally, Thaddeus's part of the dialogue proves what has already been painted in the dissertation, that is to say, his patriotism and modesty). "Believe me, my dear count, (...) I know the treasure which your family has always been to this nation; I know your own individual merit. I know the wealth which you have sacrificed for me and my subjects, and I am powerless to express my gratitude":

"Had I done more than my duty in that," replied Thaddeus, "such words from your majesty would have been a reward adequate to any privation; but, alas! no. I have perhaps performed less than my duty; the blood of Sobieski ought not to have been spared one drop when the liberties of his country perished!" The voice of the venerable Stanislaus became fainter as he resumed, "Perhaps had a Sobieski reigned at this time, these horrors might not have been accomplished." (...) "Rise, my young friend, and take this ring. It contains my picture. Wear it in remembrance of a man who loves you; and who can never forget your worth or the loyalty and patriotism of your house" (TW, 1831: 86-87).

It must be intimated here that it is not only individuals such as the king or his subject Thaddeus who, according to Jane Porter, have elitist mannerisms. Nor is it a single family that deserves praise and honour. It is the Polish nobility in general. So far it has only been strongly speculated that Thaddeus is a pretext for Porter to present how Poles were in general, but this time the author is very explicit about it:

The friends of Sobieski were men of tried probity - men who at all times preferred their country's welfare before their own peculiar interest. Mr. Somerset day after day listened with deep attention to these virtuous and energetic noblemen. He saw them full of fire and personal courage when the affairs of Poland were discussed; and he beheld with admiration their perfect forgetfulness of themselves in their passion for the general good (TW, 1831: 39).

The many examples of Jane Porter thinking highly of the Polish noblemen in the army are scattered principally in the first volume of the narrative. These examples are devoted to a large extent to the portrayal of the soldiers' military skills evidenced between the years 1792 and 1794. Jane Porter's fuller stance on the army's value – its bravery, devotion, patriotism, endurance, eagerness, etc. – is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Thence, the following fragments are "torn out" of the numerous accounts of the Polish defenders' dauntlessness and impregnability in battle and show a decimated, hungry,

and exhausted bunch of patriots defending their homeland. The piece comes from a battle in 1792 after the Targowica Confederation had been formed, and it additionally shows that despite being invaded, the Polish commanders are so noble that they have mercy on their adversaries. In addition, the lines make it evident that Porter's talent for literary descriptions of battle scenes, which she had never beheld (only heard of), is undeniable. In order to introduce the essence of the soldiers' traits, I will indulge myself in citing in full the lengthy paragraphs the author penned about the defenders:

The fight recommenced. Thaddeus, at the head of his hussars, in full gallop bore down upon the enemy's right flank. They received the charge with firmness; but their young adversary, perceiving that extraordinary means were necessary to make the desired effect, calling on his men to follow him, put spurs to his horse and rushed into the thickest of the battle. His soldiers did not shrink; they pressed on, mowing down the foremost ranks, whilst he, by a lucky stroke of his sabre, disabled the sword-arm of the Russian standard-bearer and seized the colours. His own troops seeing the standard in his hand, with one accord, in loud and repeated cries, shouted victory. Part of the reserve of the enemy, alarmed at this outcry, gave ground, and retreating with precipitation, was soon followed by some of the rear ranks of the centre, to which Kosciusko had penetrated, while its commander, after a short but desperate resistance, was slain. The left flank next gave way, and though holding a brave stand at intervals, at length fairly turned about and fled across the country. (...) Heedless of anything but giving their enemy a complete defeat, the Poles went on, never looking to the left nor to the right, till at once they found themselves encompassed by two thousand Muscovite horse, several battalions of chasseurs, and in front of fourteen pieces of cannon, which this dreadful ambuscade opened upon them (*TW*, 1831: 27-28).

Next, the portrayal of the fight is focused mainly on the young Sobieski. He struggles in the midst of his countrymen, and prepares his soldiers for a desperate stand. He gives orders with an intrepid coolness that they must draw off towards the flank of the battery. The orders are given in great danger – under a shower of musketry and a cannonade which produces deaths in every nook and cranny. He does not think of himself; and in a few minutes the scattered Polish patriots “were consolidated into a close body, squared with pikemen, who stood like a grove of pines in a day of tempest, only moving their heads and arms. Many of the Russian horse impaled themselves on the sides of this little phalanx, which they vainly attempted to shake, although the ordnance was rapidly weakening its strength” (*TW*, 1831: 28). The Poles seem to be unbeatable:

File after file the men were swept down, their bodies making a horrid rampart for their resolute brothers in arms, who, however, rendered desperate, at last threw away their most cumbrous accoutrements, and crying to their leader, “Freedom or death!” followed him sword in hand, and bearing like a torrent upon the enemy's ranks, cut their way through the forest. The Russians, exasperated that their prey should not only escape, but escape by such dauntless valour, hung closely on their rear, goading them with musketry, whilst

they (like a wounded lion closely pressed by the hunters, retreats, yet stands proudly at bay) gradually retired towards the camp with a backward step, their faces towards the foe (TW, 1831: 28-29).

The following fragment pertains to the massacre of Praga in Warsaw, which was carried out in 1794. It also exhibits extreme bravery on the part of the Polish patriots, as they, outnumbered and weary, grapple in a good but lost cause.

The Polish works being gained, the Russians turned the cannon on its former masters; and as they rallied to the defence of what remained, swept them down by whole regiments. The noise of artillery thundered from all sides of the camp; the smoke was so great, that it was hardly possible to distinguish friends from foes; nevertheless, the spirits of the Poles flagged not a moment; as fast as one rampart was wrested from them, they threw themselves within another, which was as speedily taken by the help of hurdles, fascines, ladders, and a courage as resistless as it was ferocious, merciless, and sanguinary. Every spot of vantage position was at length lost; and yet the Poles fought like lions; quarter was neither offered to them nor required; they disputed every inch of ground, until they fell upon it in heaps, some lying before the parapets, others filling the ditches and the rest covering the earth, for the enemy to tread on as they cut their passage to the heart of the camp (TW, 1831: 78-79).

Among the many other positive idiosyncrasies of Thaddeus and other Poles, which can be ascribed to particular people rather than a whole nation, there is one feature typical of all Poles: patriotism. Throughout *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, this word frequently appears together with its various derivatives and “shades”. Just a reminder: Poniatowski “is not merely a brave king, whom you would follow to battle, because he will lead you to honour; the hearts of his people acknowledge him in a superior light; they look on him as their patriarchal head, as being delegated of God to study what is their greatest good, to bestow it, and when it is attacked, to de-fend it. To preserve the life of such a sovereign, who would not sacrifice his own?” On another occasion Thaddeus says: “My mistress is my country; at present I desire no other. For her I would die; for her only would I wish to live.” Then he resumes: “Men who cannot ardently feel, cannot taste supreme happiness. My grandfather educated me at the feet of patriotism; and when I forget his precepts and example, may my guardian angel forget me!” Another description of patriotic qualities does not come from Sobieski’s mouth, but it is about his men: “He saw them full of fire and personal courage when the affairs of Poland were discussed; and he beheld with admiration their perfect forgetfulness of themselves in their passion for the general good”, or: “the friends of Sobieski were men of tried probity – men who at all times preferred their country’s welfare before their own peculiar interest.” “Freedom or

death!” they cry in battle; “the spirits of the Poles flagged not a moment; as fast as one rampart was wrested from them, they threw themselves within another, which was as speedily taken by the help of hurdles, fascines, ladders, and a courage as resistless as it was ferocious, merciless, and sanguinary. Every spot of vantage position was at length lost; and yet the Poles fought like lions; quarter was neither offered to them nor required; they disputed every inch of ground, until they fell upon it in heaps (...)”, writes Porter. As shown, all Poles in Porter’s novel were definitely patriotic. But what does it mean to be patriotic at all? What did reality look like?

In the Middle Ages, patriotism equalled loyalty to the king.³⁰ However, looking this notion up in Polish dictionaries from before the 18th century would be fruitless, as it was not yet to be found there. In the 18th century, patriotism meant service to the nation. Political opposition to the crowned head was not necessarily traitorous, and if the monarch “tampered” with the nobility’s liberties, disobedience was referred to as a virtue. And, again, patriotism two centuries ago could mean something different than nowadays. In 1794, and thus at the time of the Kościuszko Insurgence, the priest Kazimierz Hoszkiewicz believed that the most important aspect in determining patriotism was fighting for independence (Tazbir 2004b: 62). Here Tazbir contradicts Porter, as he maintains the following: “Let us not believe the propaganda of the time, saying that a nobleman was always ready to die for his country; nationals went to battle only if they had to” (62). One also ought not to forget that in the times of the dismemberment a great many Polish soldiers preferred serving at foreign courts, and that even at home there were private armies of thousands of men that could challenge the king. The Alban Band (Pol. *Banda Albeńska*) – from the place “Alba” – of Prince Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł of Nieśwież, nicknamed “the darling Lord” (Pol. *Panie Kochanku*), was an example of such an army (Davies 2005: 175). Naturally, the crushing of Poland on the eve of the 18th century made it an absolute necessity for Poles to go to battle, but did everybody in the Commonwealth so mourn the country’s fate that they were ready to die for it, as Jane Porter holds? Some take a different stance. Sokrat Janowicz (2006: 17), a contemporary writer, says: “The downfall of *Rzeczpospolita* did not cause any general shock in Lithuanians as Adam Mickiewicz would have us believe in *Pan Tadeusz*.” Mickiewicz creates an atmosphere of lamentation evoked by the partitions; eve-

³⁰ This statement regards Poland and it cannot be used universally. In Highland Scotland, for instance, people had been loyal to their clans for over a millennium. The king meant less than the clan leader.

rybody awaits the end of the subjugation. An old Lithuanian was a respected legionnaire, a veteran who has left his family estates to resist the enemy (*Pan Tadeusz*, ([1834] 1990: 36).

On the other hand, there were those who sacrificed their lives without a moment's hesitation when their native soil was in peril; just not everybody and not always as many making a living from the pen, such as Jane Porter, seem to think. Besides, Polish patriotism was often close to nationalism, as it often boiled down to looking down on others. This issue looks even grimmer when we accept George Bernard Shaw's (1856 – 1950), the Irish playwright's, approach to this notion: "Patriotism is your conviction that this country is superior to all others because you were born in it" ("Patriotism", 2009), or Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749 – 1832), who lived in the period of interest of this study: "Patriotism ruins history" ("Patriotism", 2009). If we agree on such definitions of patriotism, it will be plain that being patriotic is wrong, that "it is maintained through a network of lies and falsehoods", that it is "a superstition that robs man of his self-respect and dignity, and increases his arrogance and conceit" ("Patriotism", 2009). Should we follow such an exegesis, we will end up having no difference between patriotism and nationalism, the latter being, in Fred Inglis's (1995: 207) words, murder: "All over the world, nationalism invents stories about how to turn homelessness into action, anomie into meaning."³¹ In order to *be* nationalism, it must do so by defining membership and naming (...) the enemy. Regularly that definition causes murder." As can be concluded, the Polish patriotism of the past (and today) is not black or white.

Throughout the romance there is one more merit of Sobieski that one can easily notice: his linguistic skills are well above average. His English is perfect and so seems his German, as he is a tutor of this language in London.

In Poland, generally speaking, practical knowledge of Latin was quite extensive. Daniel Defoe (1660 – 1731), the English writer, said, and N. Davies concurs, that what was good about Poles was that they were well educated. He was especially impressed by the currency of Latin culture in Poland. "A man who can speak Latin may travel from one end of Poland to another as familiarly as if he was born in the country. Bless us! What would a gentleman do that was to travel through England and could speak nothing but Latin... I must lament his condition" (Defoe 1890: 114, as quoted in Davies

³¹ Anomie is a state of relative normlessness.

2005: 183). Another language, next to Latin, “before” English was French. Lipoński explains: “the [English] language wasn’t well known, whereas French was. The first translations of Pope and Scott were from the French” (Lipoński 1975: 30). Learning English in the Commonwealth was reserved principally for the aristocracy. It was taught by private tutors from the start of the 18th century. The only Polish aristocratic family of that time that sent their children to study full-time in England were the Czartoryskis (2000a: 435). Prince George Adam Czartoryski, a very able observer and eulogist of Britain, spoke nine(!) languages (1978: 18). Between 1804 and 1806, he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the court of the Russian Tsar. He also produced works on British law and society. “It is not surprising then”, writes Lipoński “that he became a convinced proponent of the notion, which he all but carried out, of transferring English trade, institutions and ideas to Poland, anything in fact which had made England a material and intellectual power and which could lift Poland as well.” In general, for generations the *familia* had treated Great Britain as a model to follow (1975: 35). Finally, Prince George received the nickname “a perfect Englishman” and “one of the most prominent personages in Poland.” Next to familiarising himself with this country, he experienced Germany, Italy, and France (1978: 18) and it was him who urged Kościuszko to study in Paris. The studies included mathematics, military architecture, drawing, painting, and other subjects (Dihm 1969: 33). Following Czartoryski’s initiative, in Krzemieniec (today in Ukraine) the *Liceum Krzemienieckie* was set up. This institution functioned in the years 1805 – 1831 and 1922 – 1939 and was the first school in Poland where English was taught systematically (Lipoński 2000a: 435). Curiously, one of the institution’s aims was to stop francophilia among the future Polish intelligentsia (1978: 87). However, for the first regular course of English, students had to wait until 1809 (1997: 6-7). English became “welcome for good” in the late 1800s “when every second bourgeois had a smattering of French” (1975: 30). At this time, many English words enter the Polish language; for instance, the English *break* in Poland becomes *brek*, then *breczka*, and finally *bryczka* (1978: 94). Nearly as good as the Czartoryskis were king Stanisław August Poniatowski (Butterwick 2000: 167), Stanisław Zamoyski (1775 – 1856), and his sons Władysław (1853 – 1924) and Konstanty (1799 – 1866) (Lipoński 1978: 86), as well as Tadeusz Kościuszko. Consequently, making Thaddeus Sobieski – who is, *nota bene*, modelled on Kościuszko – have a strong command of English in its written and spoken forms by Porter seems to have reasonable grounds. It would be un-

wise, however, to think that in this period there were no more “Polanders” next to the aforementioned Poles who wandered overseas. England was also visited by aristocrats such as Adam Poniński (1732 or 1733 – 1798), August Sułkowski (1729 – 1786), Stanisław Kostka Potocki (1755 – 1821), Seweryn (1734 – 1802) and Jan (1761 – 1815) Potocki with wives, Izabela Czartoryska (1746 – 1835), Michał Radziwiłł (1702 – 1762), or Krystyn Lach Szyrma (1790 – 1866) (Butterwick 2000: 148).

The language of the “Sarmatians”, as Porter often names Poles, was Polish. It sounds like a truism, but one needs to consider the fact that in most European countries there was not a single language used by the whole nation (Rietbergen 2001: 181), and that Poles were just the largest group in the vast territories of the Polish Crown (Pol. *Korona*) and the Lithuanian Duchy (Pol. *Księstwo*). We should also not forget that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from before the partitions was the biggest melting pot on the continent. The languages spoken there included Polish, Latin, Lithuanian, German, Hebrew, Ruthenian (Pol. *ruski*), and Armenian. Nevertheless, with time, the *szlachta* spoke more and more Polish owing to the Lithuanians and Ruthenians becoming bilingual or polonized (Tazbir 1978: 25). As has been mentioned, Davies notes that this class was well educated and that a knowledge of Latin was common. This, plus the fact that the percentage of nobles in Poland was very high indicates that juxtaposition with other European countries in this respect would not be unfavourable.³² Yet, there is more behind Latin borrowings than just incrusting speeches; the nobility wished to sound dissimilar to other segments of society. Even one’s accent gave a person away and could mean that the person would be ostracised or ridiculed. There is every reason to surmise that not only in England did the accent one had affect a person’s social advancement (Tazbir 1978: 26). In England during Elisabeth I’s reign, for instance, the level of illiteracy among men was 80% and 95% among women. Around 1750, that figure indicated 40% and 60% respectively, and the situation did not change much until the late 19th century) (Rietbergen 2001: 217). No wonder Defoe admired a knowledge

³² At the beginning of the 18th century the level of illiteracy was as follows: petty nobility – 92% (!), middle nobility – 40%, magnates and very rich nobility – 28%, burghers – 40% (Zabieglik 1997b: 73). Tazbir (1978: 55) asserts that at the end of the 18th century there were around 10% of nobles in Poland. At that time in Europe the average number was 3% (in Spain – 6.5%, in France – 1%, in Russia – 2%, in Hungary – 4%). E. Rostworowski (1977: 90) gives slightly different statistics: 8% in Poland, 5% in Spain, 1.5% in France, 0.5% in Sweden.

of Latin – a commonly spoken foreign language in Poland – if his fellow countrymen did not have a full mastery over their own native language.

In *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, Porter also creates an air of Poles' being very well educated and not only in the field of languages, as presented above, but in general.

This [Zamoyski] family had ever been one of the noblest and most virtuous in Poland. (...) The royal Stanislaus's beneficent spirit moved in unison with that of Sobieski (...). Encircled by his happy tenantry, and within the bosom of his family, this illustrious man educated Thaddeus, the only male heir of his name, to the exercise of all the virtues which ennoble and endear the possessor (*TW*, 1845).

How did education in a broader sense look in the Poland of the 18th century? The Age of Enlightenment came to Poland in the late 18th century, so later than to West European countries. Empiricism had a bumpy road to go through in Poland. Scholastic teachings were still deeply rooted, as most scientists and philosophers were Roman Catholic clergymen, including the Jesuits, for whom defending Copernicus' principles was an act of bravery (Butterwick 2000: 213). Poland had two universities: one in Cracow (Pol. *Kraków*) and one in Vilnius (Pol. *Wilno*). The Commonwealth also had a number of elite schools: next to the aforementioned *Liceum Krzemienieckie* there were institutions such as the Collegium Nobilium, set up in 1740, or the Knights' School (Pol. *Szkoła Rycerska*). Founded by King Poniatowski in 1765, the latter school was the first secular one in the Kingdom, training future military and political leaders (Zabieglik 1997b: 73-74). In charge of the school was Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, who sponsored a library with 10,000 volumes. The king himself took part in the recruitment of professors and students, one of whom was Tadeusz Kościuszko. The students derived mainly from the middle nobility and were between the age of eight and twelve, that is, before they could be spoilt. The director was John Lind (1737 – 1781), a Scot from Edinburgh, so the system was semi-English/Scottish. The boys learnt Polish, Latin, German, arithmetic, history, geography, drawing, dancing, fencing, the basics of law, and militarism. Physical punishment was limited, and, following Locke (1632 – 1704) and Rousseau (1712 – 1778), Lind stressed understanding rather than memorising (Butterwick 2000: 224-225), a problem that cannot be fully overcome even in today's Poland. Another institution of high standing was the National Education Commission (Pol. *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej*). Created in 1773 (so in the face of political decay, as the first dismemberment had already been completed), it was the first ministry of education in Europe. It pro-

duced thousands of educated citizens for Poland (Zawadzki 2001: 17). Two years later, the Society for Elementary Books (Pol. *Towarzystwo do Ksiąg Elementarnych*) was established to deal with new textbooks. Stanisław Poniatowski was a staunch patron of science; the moment he learnt about a novelty he was keen on putting the invention into practice. For instance, upon finding out about Benjamin Franklin's (1706 – 1790) experiments with his new lightning conductor in 1784, he installed one in the Royal Castle (Pol. *Zamek Królewski*). In his Physics Study, the king kept plenty of models of English machines, astronomical and mathematical devices, most of which were prepared by optical firms from London. Moreover, Poniatowski sent young people to Great Britain to study, some of them to Oxford and Cambridge, and was zealous to hear from them about anything new in the field of education. It is not intended here to present all the contributions that the crowned head made to science; nonetheless, they were immense, especially if his limited funds and the political instability of the time are taken into consideration (Zabieglik 1997b: 74; Butterwick 2000: 218, 220).

To handle the Polish literature of the period in question in a telegraphic manner, it suffices to cite the words of Prof. Tazbir, who believes that were we in our literature to leave out writers of noble origin, then up until the 20th century its history would shrink to a little book. We would obtain the same result were we to withdraw the books whose plot happens in manors, beginning with *Pan Tadeusz* and finishing with *Warszawianka* by Wyspiański. The proprietor of the manor was a nobleman, and usually a freedom fighter; next to him was his servant, a comrade-in-arms and a veteran from the old times. A young lady was typically shown with slightly less glory but as a devoted supporter of the national cause and Catholicism. In such works, the atmosphere of moral righteousness prevailed, and even the cynical evildoer would find the right, redemptive path of serving the nation (Tazbir 2001: 108).

The first Polish anglophile newspapers appeared in Stanisławian Poland. Out of a whole range of titles, the following ones can be enumerated: In 1765, *Monitor* came out and was based on the British *Spectator*. It popularised education, reform in industry and agriculture, and stressed the betterment of peasants' existence. *Monitor* also fought superstitions and criticised the *szlachta*'s reluctance to learn (Rostworowski 1958: 54-55). In 1770, one could read *Zabawy Przyjemne i Pożyteczne* and, since 1782, *Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny*. *Magazyn Warszawski* appeared in 1784, followed three years later by *Wybór Wiadomości Gospodarczych*. *Zabawy Obywatelskie* came into existence

in 1793 (Butterwick 2000: 217-225). Generally speaking, these newspapers propagated foreign literature in Poland. In 1822, an unknown person under the pseudonym of Konstanty Sztek edited a journal entitled *Pustelnik Londyński z ulicy Pikadili* [The English Picadilly Hermit], in which free trade was presented as a threat to world order (Lipoński 1975: 32-33). If we want to establish the source due to which the Polish press in the years of the Enlightenment originated, Addison's *Spectator* bears the palm. The press had its share in enabling contacts between the British and Polish landed gentry, merchants, and industrialists, which, in turn, sparked off economic and social progress in Poland. A journal of special value here was *Magazyn Powszechny*. It tackled issues having to do with England on an unrivalled scale: no other country gained so much attention. In 1835, for instance, there were 82 articles about Britain in *Magazyn*, while, at the same time, there were 23 about France, 21 about Holland and Belgium, and some 20 concerning Germany (35-36). In his *Echoes of Britain*, Lipoński gives a sample of how England was popular in *Magazyn Powszechny*. He lists the titles of a few articles from the years 1834-1840 in which the word "England" appears: "Horses in England", "Rural Housing in England", "English Machines", "The Press in England", "Respect for Time in England". The phrase "in England" is constantly repeated. "It was like a sort of quality seal for the idea or object described", writes the professor and adds: "There is nothing like it when we come to France or Germany" (35).

As far as foreign literature in Poland goes, there was a multitude of literary collections in libraries. However, of biggest concern here are the British ones of the period in question. Up until the end of the 17th century, the literatures of Poland and Great Britain had little influence on one another. This trend changed with the coming of the Enlightenment era and has remained very important until today (2000a: 434). In Polish libraries, one could find translations of authors like John Locke (1632 – 1704), David Hume (1711 – 1776), Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671 – 1713), Jonathan Swift (1667 – 1745), James Cook (1728 – 1779), Henry Fielding (1707 – 1754), Daniel Defoe (1660 – 1731), Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744), E. Young, John Milton (1608 – 1674), John Grey, and many, many others (Butterwick 2000: 217-225). This long list of Butterwick is supplemented by Liliana Sikorska, who adds Ann Radcliffe (1764 – 1823), the pre-romantic author of the gothic novel *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (Sikorska 2007a: 178); and Lipoński, who mentions Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775 – 1818), the author of the novel *Monk*, the gothic writer Lawrence Sterne

(1713–1768), and George Byron (1788–1834), who is sometimes classed as a Scottish creator, because his mother was Scottish. In Poland the first translations of Byron were from French, and a total of 114 authors – the record in Poland – translated Byron’s works, Niemcewicz and Mickiewicz among them. Niemcewicz and Koźmian also translated Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s (1772–1834) literary output. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), John Keats (1795–1821), and from the later period Herbert George Wells (1866–1946) were popular in Poland, too (Lipoński 2000a: 434).³³ Admirable is the fact that Stanisław August Poniatowski, whom Porter in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* undeniably cherishes, was the first to translate Shakespeare’s works, and he was a precursor of the fashion for this author in Europe. Izabela Czartoryska was so enthusiastic about Shakespeare’s genius that when she was in Stratford, she bought two pieces of what was allegedly Shakespeare’s chair (Butterwick 2000: 94, 170). From non-English writers of the British Isles who found their place in Polish translations, one can touch upon two Scots: Robert Burns (1721–1784) and Walter Scott (1771–1832). The latter’s literary and philosophical achievements were presented by Szyrma. By 1830, 17 of Scott’s novels had been translated into Polish; he inspired such figures as Niemcewicz, Mickiewicz, and Sienkiewicz. Furthermore, Niemcewicz, Słowacki, and Mickiewicz also translated Irish works. The last of the three Poles translated *The Meeting of the Waters* by T. Moor (Lipoński 2000b: 460–461).

The lowest “rung” of the Polish society of the period in question was not omitted by the writer, either. It may be assumed that peasants too added to the greatness of Poland. Albeit the next two fragments (the first one being voiced by Jane Porter as a narrator – the other one by Robert Somerset) bear relevance not only for the peasants but, again, for the Sobieskis, it seems vital that the part about the Sobieskis be quoted, as it also shows the relationship between the “sons of the soil” and their masters:

The very sound of their title will create your respect; for we of the patrician order have a strange tenacity in our belief that virtue is hereditary, and in this instance our creed is duly honoured. Their patronymic is Sobieski; the family which bears it is the only remaining posterity of the great monarch of that name; and the count, who is at its head, is Palatine of Masovia; which, next to the throne, is the first dignity in the state. He is one of the warmest champions of his country’s rights; and though born to command, has so far transgressed the golden adage of despots, “*Ignorance and subjection*,” that throughout his

³³ A more thorough presentation of English-Polish, Celtic-Polish, and American-Polish literary links can be found in Lipoński’s in-depth analyses featured in *Literatura polska XX wieku: Przewodnik encyklopedyczny* [Polish Literature of the 20th Century: An Encyclopaedic Companion]. 2000. Vol. 2. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

territories every man is taught to worship his God with his heart as well as with his knees. The understandings of his peasants are opened to all useful knowledge. He does not put books of science and speculation into their hands, to consume their time in vain pursuits: he gives them the Bible, and implements of industry, to afford them the means of knowing and of practising their duty. All Masovia around his palace blooms like a garden. The cheerful faces of the farmers, and the blessings which I hear them implore on the family when I am walking in the fields (...) (TW, 1831: 40-41).

The idyllic presentation continues with the depiction of the Sobieskis' residence. The reader finds out that the palace is an asylum for the unfortunate. The clan is generous, as if by nature; whims never take precedence over fulfilling the needs of the villagers. "Their compassion and their purse were the substance and shadow of each other":

The poor of his country thronged from every part of the kingdom to receive pity and relief at his hands. With those houseless wanderers he peopled the new villages his grandfather had erected in the midst of lands which in former times were the haunts of wild beasts. Thaddeus participated in the happiness of his grateful tenants, and many were the old men whose eyes he had closed in thankfulness and peace. These honest peasants, even in their dying moments, wished to give up that life in his arms which he had rescued from misery. He visited their cottage; he smoothed their pillow; he joined in their prayers; and when their last sigh came to his ear, he raised the weeping family from the dust, and cheered them with pious exhortations and his kindest assurances of protection (TW, 1831: 104).

Though such a blissful illustration seems to be blown out of proportion, some of this "spotless atmosphere" appears to make sense to Porter, according to Anessi, who compares her view of the Polish post-feudal arrangement with that of the English tenant to landlord. He maintains that for the author of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, the Polish system differed from the English one in the sense that "the former isolates the nobility from the disruptive social forces of urbanization and industrialization underway in England at the time" (Anessi 1999: 36). Hence, the Polish gentry, as opposed to the British one, provides more political and material stability to the impoverished classes; the highborn protect traditions that provide for the social well-being of all levels of society. "In Poland, class division does not interfere with the establishment of social harmony, and does not imply that the lower classes are born with less ability" (36). This is why the young Sobieski illuminates the progressive aristocracy of agrarian Poland, "an idealized model of a post-feudal order" (37). This is dissimilar to the British upper classes, who in the novel "are often engaged in affairs related solely to commerce or government (and the landless French aristocracy)" (37-38). Consequently, according to Porter, the Polish post-feudal arrangement "provides the basis for a more moral 'partnership' between the aristocratic and labouring classes" (38). Brückner (1931: 199) is ready to accept this

view as accurate in the case of the positive examples among the aristocracy like Stanisław Poniąkowski, Andrzej Zamoyski, or Anna Jabłonowska, who protected and cared about their workers, but he is quick to add that such enlightened magnates (Pol. *magnateria*) who treated the plebs in a civilised manner were scarce. What is more, in Poland the lord was the master and decided about the scale of serfdom or punishment. For that matter, Frederick II of Prussia decided in 1750 to punish the landed gentry who maltreated the taxpayers, mainly field workers. The rest of Europe, with Poland at its head, was not so exemplary in this respect at that time, however (Rietbergen 2001: 330). Serfdom in Poland was disastrous for the peasant but so it was for the lord. Under compulsion, the serf did only as much as he had to and cheated whenever possible. He was cowed, numb, indifferent, blindly traditional, and distrustful of any change or modernity, as it smelt of new abuse. “Illiterate, backward and stupid, he thieved as much as he could” (Brückner 1939, 1: 166-167). In spite of such maltreatment, serfs eagerly joined fights against the oppressors, the Cracoviennes (Pol. *Krakowiacy*) in particular (Brückner 1931: 199). Rietbergen provides a broader context in relation to the peasantry, but he paints the actuality of the time in dismal colours, as well. First of all, it must be borne in mind that since the beginning of agriculture in Europe, circa 10,000 – 5000 BC (depending on the region) up until the end of the 18th century, around 80 per cent of people had lived in the countryside. When Porter worked on *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, there were some 20,000 towns and 160,000 villages on the continent. If we remember at the same time that the nobility in a given European country constituted 1 to 6 per cent of the population (with the exceptional 10 per cent in Poland), it becomes perfectly clear that the vast majority of Europeans were villagers. Their life was very harsh. Medical care, for instance, was not available to them, as most qualified doctors lived and worked in towns. As a result, the state of peasants’ health left much to be desired. Toiling on a par with slaves all day long for nearly nothing, they had no funds, time, or energy for fun, sport, to say nothing of travel (Rietbergen 2001: 168-169). When it comes to education, it is worth taking a closer look at the “peasant versus literacy” issue, because Jane Porter’s standpoint is that they read the Bible, for example. Did they? Rietbergen’s vision of this issue is that until the beginning of the 19th century even basic education was out of the question. Firstly, reading, writing, or arithmetic was unnecessary when the worker only had to be skilful at handling the plough and fork. Secondly, as already stated, they had neither time nor money to indulge themselves or their children in the

luxury of learning at school. In winter, they indeed had more hours at their disposal, but then transportation, or rather the lack of it, was an obstacle. Only richer peasants could afford a donkey or a horse, but these were too precious for work to be used as a means of transport. Going to school on foot would have meant walking a dozen kilometres both ways, as schools were only in towns or large villages. Those who overcame all these hardships and signed up for school were taught discipline and proper patterns of behaviour rather than reading and writing. And in the unlikely event of a peasant reading the Bible, we still cannot talk here about understanding the subtle aspects of Christianity (170, 180). This is all the more so given that the church did not want to change the status quo in order not to lose its privileged position (173); knowledge was, and still is, power. Why share it if you do not wish to and do not have to?

So why, one might ask, does the British novelist paint such a utopian picture? Why is her story of the peasants so biased, so one-sided, with peasants loving their masters and blessing their lords, with peasants who are prepared to give their lives up for their lord, who, in turn, is a protector rather than a master, who puts books in the peasants' hands, who smooths the poor creatures' pillows and prays together with them? Why do we see peasants who receive relief and pity at the master's hands, peasants who are honest, dedicated, cheerful, and literate? Is Davies (2005: 192) mistaken to state that there were few moments when the *szlachta* mixed freely with plebeians? Does Porter do it, because of the handful of magnates who were good too them? In fact, many other personae of literature did the same. Educated chroniclers saw the situation from their own limited perspective; the world of the peasants was adjusted to the world of the literate and was thus made more civilised and gentle. And there is one more thing that Rietbergen (2001: 279) points out here: it is very plausible that an affluent, say, Englishman and an affluent German understood each other better than a well-off Englishman understood a worker from his own country.

Who else toiled away for a Polish Lord (*Pan*) at the time in question? The size of retinues (Pol. *świta*) may seem inconceivable, but it was an obvious measure of wealth and status, so if one could afford it, one would keep a whole army of servants. Davies enumerates them in his *God's Playground*:

In the mid-seventeenth century, Hetman Stanisław Lubomirski of Wiśnicz, for instance, retained two Marshals, two chaplains, four secretaries, four sewers (Pol. *krajczy*), twenty chamberlains (Pol. *szambelani*), and sixty senior clients. In addition, there would have been a swarm of candidate clients (Pol. *aplikanty*), seneschals (Pol. *komorniki*), resident

advisers (Pol. *rezydenci*), treasurers (Pol. *podskarbi*), ostlers (Pol. *stajenni*), masters-of-robres (Pol. *szatni*), masters-of-horse (Pol. *koniuszy*), pages (Pol. *pokojowi*), messengers, military captains (Pol. *rotmistrzowie*), and, of course, a similar array of ladies-in-waiting (Pol. *damy dworu*) to serve in the female quarters. The non-noble personnel included the court physician, the surgeon, the artist, the ballet-master, the pastrycook, the gardener, the engineer, the architect, and the director of music (Davies 2005: 175-176, 1998a: 256-257).

Especially in the 18th century, there was also the position of the general manager (Pol. *zarządca*), a professional who took economic and technical decisions. They were very precise at the bookkeeping needed for the estate (Mączak 2003: 193). Next, there was an army of cooks, turnkeys (Pol. *oddźwierni*), carters (Pol. *woźnice*), carpenters, butlers, cellarers (Pol. *piwniczni*), and domestics (Pol. *szłużba domowa*). There was also an extraordinary tendency towards having jesters, foreigners, dwarfs, and historians, and, not infrequently, German barons at their courts. “The Tartar custom of carrying off human yasir into slavery was matched by the Polish custom of holding Tartar or Negro prisoners as personal slaves” (Davies 2005: 175-176, 1998a: 256-257).

Jane Porter, holding in high esteem the divergent worthiness of the Poles, perceived elements of Polish culture as dazzling. In a letter to his mother Pembroke Somerset relates his feelings towards Polish music and the palace of Wilanów at which he resides:

By the way, you cannot imagine anything more beautiful than the Polish music. It partakes of that delicious languor so distinguished in the Turkish airs, with a mingling of those wandering melodies which the now-forgotten composers must have caught from the Tartars. In short, whilst the countess is singing, I hardly suffer myself to breathe; and I feel just what our poetical friend William Scarsdale said a twelvemonth ago at a concert of yours, “I feel as if love sat upon my heart and flapped it with his wings” (TW, 1831: 41-42).

The best musicians in Poland at that time included Jakub Gołębek (1739 – 1789), Jan Kleczyński (1756 – 1833), a conductor for the Royal Orchestra in Vienna, and Feliks Janiewicz (1762 – 1848), a student of Haydn and later a violinist at Poniatowski’s court. On the British Isles, he co-founded the Royal Philharmonic Society and was one of the founders of the Edinburgh Festival. Lastly, there was Wojciech Bogusławski (1757 – 1829), whose operas are staged today with great success, especially *The Apparent Miracle, or the Cracoviennes and the Highlanders* (Pol. *Cud mniemany, czyli Krakowiacy i Górale*), written in the same year as the Kościuszko Uprising (Kolek 2002:

155). But the Englishman from *Thaddeus of Warsaw* most likely meant piano music to Polish national dances like polonaises, mazurkas, and krakowiaks.

Next to Polish music, the lyricist – by means of Pembroke Somerset's narration – endeavours to picture the region of Masovia (Pol. *Mazowsze*), its fields and landscapes, saying that the author of the utterances had a chance to visit the area. It says much for the beauty of Polish nature. It could be inferred from the passage that were it not for the three autocratic powers, existence in Poland would be blissful:

When we left Zieleme, and advanced into the province of Masovia, the country around Praga rose at every step in fresh beauty. The numberless chains of gently swelling hills which encompass it on each side of the Vistula were in some parts checkered with corn fields, meadows, and green pastures covered with sheep, whose soft bleatings thrilled in my ears and transported my senses into new regions, so different was my charmed and tranquillized mind from the tossing anxieties attendant on the horrors I had recently witnessed. Surely there is nothing in the world, short of the most undivided reciprocal attachment, that has such power over the workings of the human heart as the mild sweetness of nature. The most ruffled temper, when emerging from the town, will subside into a calm at the sight of a wide stretch of landscape reposing in the twilight of a fine evening (TW, 1831: 42-43).

Then, one more time, there are the peasants and a description, if slightly idyllic, of their drudgery turned into "a gentler duty":

Autumn seemed to be unfolding all her beauties to greet the return of the palatine. In one part the haymakers were mowing the hay and heaping it into stacks; in another, the reapers were gathering up the wheat, with a troop of rosy little gleaners behind them, each of whom might have tempted the proudest Palemon in Christendom to have changed her toil into "a gentler duty". Such a landscape intermingled with the little farms of these honest people, whom the philanthropy of Sobieski has rendered free (for it is a tract of his extensive domains I am describing), reminded me of Somerset. Villages repose in the green hollows of the vales, and cottages are seen peeping from amidst the thick umbrage of the woods which cover the face of the hills. The irregular forms and thatched roofs of these simple habitations, with their infant inhabitants playing at the doors, compose such lovely groups (TW, 1831: 43).

Later in the tale, the writer proceeds to the outlook of huts and, finally, the Palace of Wilanów itself, plus its rich architecture and dignity. (Again, this passage hints that the English must have taken interest in the matters of Poland). One again, the narrator of the story is the young English noble, who recalls having read accounts of the palace of Wilanów which were published in England. However, Pembroke claims that the pictures exhibited in the accounts are incomparable with their actuality:

The palace of Villanow, which is castellated, now burst upon my view. It rears its embattled head from the summit of a hill that gradually slopes down towards the Vistula, in full view to the south of the plain of Vola, a spot long famous for the election of the kings of Poland. On the north of the building, the earth is cut into natural ramparts, which rise in high succession until they reach the foundations of the palace, where they terminate in a noble terrace. These ramparts, covered with grass, overlook the stone outworks, and spread down to the bottom of the hill, which being clothed with fine trees and luxuriant underwood, forms such a rich and verdant base to the fortress as I have not language to describe: were I privileged to be poetical, I would say it reminds me of the God of war sleeping amid roses in the bower of love. Here the eye may wander over the gifts of bounteous Nature, arraying hill and dale in all the united treasures of spring and autumn. The forest stretches its yet unseared arms to the breeze; whilst that breeze comes laden with the fragrance of the tented hay, and the thousand sweets breathed from flowers, which in this delicious country weep honey (*TW*, 1831: 43-44).

Wherever Pembroke looks, his eyes find some object to excite his reflection. He even blushes at the very thought of the inglorious life he might have lived, were he not to have visited this house and its inhabitants. Yes, the place is so influential that the young man's life will be altered for the better.

Jane Porter is faithful in regards to the description of the Polish manor. The nobleman's residence is glamorous since it "certified" the rank of the owner. "Whether hovel or palace, it was easily distinguished from the homes of his non-noble neighbours – by the provision of the obligatory porch, courtyard, and gateway: by the display of ornamentation incorporating the owner's coat of arms, and by the characteristic luxury of the internal furnishings" (Davies 2005: 190). In the manor (Pol. *dwór*) one could usually find a one-storied timber construction, the roof of which was high and steep. The manor house was surrounded by household buildings that looked similar (190). The tradition of building magnificent pine or oaken houses, covered in complicated carving, was used even by affluent nobles and regardless of the danger of fire. "To the modern eye the happiest blend of styles occurred in Poland during the Renaissance period when the strength of turrets, battlements, and crenellations was complemented by the elegance of cupolas, arcades, and roofs, and by the exquisite details in the architraves of windows and doors (Pol. *ościeżnice*), and sculpted medallions and mouldings" (Davies 2005: 190).³⁴

³⁴ The palaces of the Leszczyński at Baranów and of the Krasicki at Krasiczyn are gems of their kind. In the eighteenth century, the more grandiose follies of aristocratic builders, each aspiring to his own Versailles, reflected foreign rather than native taste. Scattered throughout the broad Polish countryside, and surrounded by the thatched and wattled homesteads of their less affluent noble brothers, the Branicki at Białystok, the Ogiński at Słonim, the Poniatowski at Jabłonna, and above all the Czartoryski at Puławy, raised lasting monuments to the social supremacy of the magnatial oligarchy (Davies 2005: 190).

The picturesque and indeed poetical manner in which Porter, using the mouth of Somerset, “painted” the outside of the magnificent palace of Wilanów and its surroundings could be challenged by the sentimental, yet fascinating portrayal of the inside. It seems that the manor reflects the Poles; in a few words, it is dazzling, one of a kind; it is something everyone falls in love with the moment they experience it, something of which there can only be imitations, none of which is close to the original:

A magnificent flight of steps led us from the foot of the ramparts up to the gate of the palace. We entered it, and were presently surrounded by a train of attendants in such sumptuous liveries, then I found myself all at once carried back into the fifteenth century, and might have fancied myself within the courtly halls of our Tudors and Plantagenets. (...) I cannot move without meeting some vestige of that truly great monarch. I sleep in his bed chamber: there hangs his portrait, dressed in the robes of sovereignty; here are suspended the arms with which he saved the very kingdoms which have now met together to destroy his country. On one side is his library; on the other, the little chapel in which he used to pay his morning and evening devotions (TW, 1831: 44-45).

The interiors of the houses of the rich *szlachta* were extravagant but often disharmonious in decor. They were equipped with a colossal willow table, a few green-painted benches, a cupboard, and a chest of drawers. “Windows of green glass or waxed canvas kept out the weather; a candelabra of brass or horn hung from the carved ceiling; and a huge stove of rough earthenware, or even of porcelain or alabaster, provided warmth in winter. The decorations however, were elaborate. The walls were covered with Turkish or Persian tapestries, rugs, and gaudy Italian coltrine” (Davies 2005: 190). Gilded sofas in the style of Louis XV or XVI were mixed with mahogany English chairs and old-fashioned furnishings in the Danzig (Pol. *Gdańsk*) style (Butterwick 1998: 194). Bought or looted Persian and Turkish carpets were of considerable interest and so were weapons and stuffed animals, which were displayed. The rich possessed “oil paintings of the ancestors, mosaics, plaster ceilings, *objects d’art*, musical instruments, and materials of superior craftsmanship of every sort – silver, marble, rosewood, velvet, and cloth-of-gold (...)” (191).³⁵ Why such a mosaic? On the one hand, Polish noblemen looked to the West as culturally advanced and wanted a touch of it too; on the other, Poles went to

³⁵ Speaking generally about the “nobility’s” art, one could say that the *szlachta*’s aesthetic needs were fulfilled through direct contact with nature rather than traditional artistic works. The art of painting was treated in a utilitarian way; hence, it took the form of portraits, often of a self-confident and arrogant face, and religious images. Unique for Sarmatia was the so-called Baroque coffin portrait. These octagonal or hexagonal portraits were attached to the coffin so that the deceased person who, being a Christian with an immortal soul, was shown as alive, which consoled the mourners (Tazbir 1978: 43; “Coffin portrait”, 2008).

war in the East to fight with the Turks or Tartars (Pol. *Tatarzy*) and brought back plunder: weapons, attire, or furniture, and they were impacted by orientalism. (In fact, the impact worked in both directions) (Tazbir 2004a: 31). Most of all, everybody wanted to be seen in glamour and emphasise the owner's ambitions and cultural excellence.

Here Porter presents one more thing about the culture of the "Sarmatians", which is how and where the Polish nobility lived. (Sarmatians are alleged ancestors of the Poles, though many disagree, for instance Agnieszka Krzemińska (2008: 82) in the pages of "Polityka").³⁶ Polish nobles and magnates, as distinct from those from Western Europe, did not live around the king's court in the city but in the country. Cities, or rather – except Warsaw – towns, were looked at as hotbeds of vice, even in the Enlightenment era. The same tendency could be observed in other places; however, the scale of unwillingness towards the burgh in Poland was incomparable with any other state. And although Wilanów was splendid, the Polish did not sport a Windsor or Versailles in the capital; Warsaw was made the capital only at the end of the 18th century for the reasons of geographical convenience rather than historic importance and was outshone by the splendour emanating from the palaces of the Radziwiłł, Opaliński, or Sapieha clans. Still, an average nobleman's residence was far from being as lavish as those of the *magnateria*, who infrequently possessed hundreds of villages and dozens of towns. An ill-conceived picture of the situation was captured in paintings, probably to render the non-affluent nobles appear more prestigious. In fact, most of the nobility lived in wooded houses scattered over the vast territories of *Rzeczpospolita* (Tazbir 2001: 108).

³⁶ The Sarmatians (Old Iranian *Sarumatah*) were a people originally of Iranian stock. They migrated from Central Asia to the Ural Mountains around the 5th century BC and eventually settled in most of southern European Russia, Ukraine, and the eastern Balkans. Around the year 100 BC, Sarmatian land ranged from the Barents Sea or Baltic Sea to the tributary of the Vistula River. Sarmatians are alleged ancestors of the Poles. Sarmatia (Pol. *Sarmacja*) was the semi-legendary and poetic name of the Commonwealth, which was fashionable through the 18th century. This belief system was an important part of the *szlachta*'s culture, penetrating all aspects of its life, e.g. horseback riding, tradition, provincial rural life, peace and pacifism; championed oriental-inspired attire and served to integrate the multi-ethnic nobility by creating an almost nationalistic sense of unity and of pride in the *szlachta*'s Golden Freedoms. In time, however, it became distorted. Later, extreme Sarmatism turned this belief into bigotry, honesty into political naïveté, pride into arrogance, courage into stubbornness and freedom into anarchy ("Sarmatism", 2009; "Sarmatians", 2009; "Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth", 2009).

4.2. The Polish and the Almighty

Reading Jane Porter's romance, one may draw the conclusion that Polish people at the turn of the 18th century were very religious – at least this is how the writer portrays them. And if the religion is specified, it is nearly always Catholicism. Sometimes the author, not necessarily directly, calls them "papists". Regardless of age, social status, and gender, every single national of Poland presented in the book seems to be a staunch believer. Interestingly, God and his might are called for on many different occasions from grave to banal ones. Consequently, when hurt in battle, Thaddeus refers to the Almighty: "My injury is slight, my dear sir. I wish to Heaven that it were all the evil which has befallen us today! Look at the remnant of our brave comrades" (*TW*, 1831: 29). And when the fate of Poland is not yet a foregone conclusion (the news of victory in a skirmish had just arrived), Thaddeus asks the Deity for more time to struggle, more moments before the annihilation of the Polish Kingdom, and so does his king, thanking at the same time for the ones already given:

While he was yet upon his knees, petitioning the God of battles for a little longer respite from that doom which was to overwhelm devoted Poland, Thaddeus Sobieski, panting with heat and toil, flew into the room; and before he could speak a word, was clasped in the arms of the agitated Stanislaus.

"Are my people safe?" asked the king.

"And victorious!" returned Thaddeus. "The foreign guards are beaten from the palace; your own have resumed their station at the gates."

At this assurance tears of joy ran over the venerable cheeks of his majesty; and again embracing his young deliverer, he exclaimed, "I thank Heaven, my unhappy country is not bereft of all hope! Whilst a Kosciusko and a Sobieski live, she need not quite despair" (*TW*, 1831: 65).

Another fragment comes from after the battle of Brześć (in fact the Battle of Maciejowice), lost by the Polish. Sobieski sees his fellow soldiers, and one more time shows gratitude to Providence for sparing their lives: "My friends I thank God that you are come!" (*TW*, 1831: 70). Later, when Poland is no more, the sovereign of the ruined country wishes Thaddeus to have a better future in England and requests God to make it happen by saying: "Heaven may yet smile upon you in some distant nation" (*TW*, 1831: 87).

With the palace of Wilanów having been captured by the foes, Thaddeus is sure that God will act in a new role; the Pole knows that He will take revenge on the con-

querors: "Heaven will requite this sacrilege" (*TW*, 1831: 88). Still before leaving for England the young Sobieski thinks that the Creator is too harsh on him, as he asks:

"Father of mercy!" murmured he, in a suppressed voice, "what have I done to deserve this misery? Why have I been at one stroke deprived of all that rendered existence estimable? Two months ago, I had a mother, a more than father, to love and cherish me; I had a country, that looked up to them and to me with veneration and confidence. Now, I am bereft of all. I have neither father, mother, nor country, but am going to a land of utter strangers" (*TW*, 1831: 93).

Jane Porter, however, "does not let" him suffer in vain. She sees God's work behind the nobleman's grief. Here, the Almighty is not to be an avenger but a provider of relief. "Whilst affliction crushed him to the earth, and nature paid a few hard-wrung drops to his repeated bereavements, he contemned his tears, and raised his fixed and confiding eye to that Power which poured down its tempests on his head. Thaddeus felt as a man, but received consolation as a Christian" (*TW*, 1831: 93).

This time, already as an immigrant in London, the unfortunate Pole – friendless, penniless, and mourning for his devoured fatherland – still believes in His protection: "God is my only friend! and in any house of His I shall surely find shelter!" (*TW*, 1831: 100).

In the following fragment Thaddeus reflects upon how much he has been given throughout his entire life. He conjures up his family and thanks Providence for the ones he loves. Further on in the piece, his grandfather speaks about God working as a Being who predestines his beloved grandson's fate:

Heir to the first fortune in Poland, he scarcely knew the means by which he bestowed all these benefits; and with a soul as bounteous to others as Heaven had been munificent to him, wherever he moved he shed smiles and gifts around him. How frequently he had said to the palatine, when his carriage-wheels were chased by the thankful multitude, "O my father! how can I ever be sufficiently grateful to God for the happiness he hath allotted to me in making me the dispenser of so many blessings! The gratitude of these people overpowers and humbles me in my own eyes; what have I done to be so eminently favoured of Heaven? I tremble when I ask myself the question." "You may tremble, my dear boy," replied his grandfather, "for indeed the trial is a severe one. Prosperity, like adversity, is an ordeal of conduct. Two roads are before the rich man - vanity or virtue; you have chosen the latter, and the best; and may Heaven ever hold you in it! May Heaven ever keep your heart generous and pure! Go on, my dear Thaddeus, as you have commenced, and you will find that your Creator hath bestowed wealth upon you not for what you have done, but as the means of evincing how well you would prove yourself his faithful steward" (*TW*, 1831: 104-105).

Right after this conversation the narrator confirms the palatine's conviction and says: "This *was* the fortune of Thaddeus" (TW, 1831: 105). Additionally, just before the Palatine of Masovia gives his last breath, he pleads with the Lord that his grandson be directed and protected. However, the grandfather obliges Thaddeus to be faithful to the Almighty and his motherland, to which the young Pole agrees and prays to make it come true. The grandfather opens his eyes and a minute later recognizes that it is his grandson by his side. The palatine presses his hand, which is cold as ice: "the marble lips of Thaddeus could not move" when the old man addresses him with the words:

"My son," said the veteran, in a low voice, "Heaven hath led you hither, to receive the last sigh of your grandfather." Thaddeus trembled; the palatine continued: "Carry my blessing to your mother; and bid her seek comfort in the consolations of her God. May that God preserve you! ever remember that you are his servant; be obedient to him; and, as I have been, be faithful to your country."
"May God so bless me!" cried Thaddeus, looking up to heaven (TW, 1831: 69-70).

Also, in a trivial case such as the succeeding one, while walking in England's capital, the count is full of trust that nothing undesirable can befall him if God looks after him. "Ignorant of the town, and thanking Providence for having prepared him an asylum, he directed his course towards Charing-cross" (TW, 1831: 105).

During a more serious occurrence and a tragic one too, when the above-mentioned little William passes away and his grandma laments his leaving the world, the Pole presents the Father as omniscient, since He knows best what is right for the juvenile. Thaddeus goes on to explain to Mrs Robson that the youth's death renders him happier in Heaven than on earth. Besides, according to the immigrant, she needs to appreciate what she still has, namely her granddaughter, and she ought to take care of the remaining youngster. He then indicates that their meeting, i.e. Mrs Robson's and Sobieski's, has taken place because God wished so. What is more, in this touching passage, the Deity has the role of compensator, as the poor lady will gain for the loss of the boy in the future; moreover, because the woman invited the wandering Sobieski to her home and treated him as a family member, she will be rewarded for this altruistic deed by the Lord, too:

"Oh, Mr. Constantine!" cried she, "see how my supports, one after the other, are taken from me! first my son, and now his infant! To what shall I be reduced?"
"You have still, my good Mrs. Robson, a friend in Heaven, who will supply the place of all you have lost on earth."

“True, dear sir! I am a wicked creature to speak as I have done; but it is hard to suffer: it is hard to lose all we loved in the world!”

“It is,” returned the count, greatly affected by her grief. “But God, who is perfect wisdom as well as perfect love, chooseth rather to profit us than to please us in his dispensations. Our sweet William has gained by our loss: he is blessed in heaven, while we weakly lament him on earth. Besides, you are not yet deprived of all; you have a grand-daughter.” (...) “Mrs. Robson, the same Almighty Being that protected me, the last of my family, will protect the orphan offspring of a woman so like the revered Naomi!” (TW, 1831: 141).

Upon learning this, Mrs Robson lifts up her head for a second, since it is the first time he has uttered a sentence of his own story. As she remains still, her attention is completely captured by this “tender man”, as he goes on. He tells her a story of a man who within the short space of three months loses a grandfather, who has loved him as fondly as she loved William; he speaks of his mother, who had passed away before him, and whose sacred remains he had been compelled to leave in the hands of her killers. “Yes, Mrs. Robson, I have neither parents nor a home. *I was a stranger, and you took me in*; and Heaven will reward your family in kind.” Then, Mrs. Robson dropped on her knees and exclaimed: “May heaven in its mercy bless you!” (TW, 1831: 142).

Even in love God interferes, as Jane Porter puts it in her story. When the married coquette of Lady Sara falls helplessly in love with the count, and when she realizes that cheating on her husband even in thoughts is wrong, she is advised (by the Pole) to pray to the Maker for standing by her husband and being happy with him: “there is penitence and prayer to a better Parent in those words! Look up to Him, and He will save you from yourself, and bless you in your husband” (TW, 1845).³⁷

Last but not least, at the final moment of general Butzou’s existence (after the young Sobieski coincidentally meets his friend in the streets of London and takes him to Mrs Robson’s), the general delivers a brief speech with regard to the Divine Being. Curiously, the old man is assured that he would go to Heaven. And when Thaddeus again seems to break down and want to die, the general, just like the palatine previously, attempts to convince the nobleman that he has been chosen to live and serve the Lord.

“I am going, dear Sobieski,” continued the general, in a lower voice, “where I shall meet your noble grandfather, your mother, and my brave countrymen; and if Heaven grants me power, I will tell them by whose labour I have lived, on whose breast I have expired.” Thaddeus could no longer restrain his tears.

³⁷ This fragment cannot be found in the 1831 edition of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, as it was added to the later ones.

“Dear, dear general!” exclaimed he, grasping his hand, “my grandfather, my mother, my country! I lose them all again in thee! – O, would that the same summons took me hence!”

“Hush!” returned the dying man: “Heaven reserves you, my honoured lord, for wise purposes” (TW, 1831: 289).

And when the general’s breath ceases for good, the desolate Thaddeus contemplates the hard times in his own spiritual and touching way, one more time referring to the Power of Mercy. This is how the “wordsmith” seizes the moment:

Thaddeus entered his lonely room, and fell on his knees before the “ark of his strength,” – the Holy Book, that had been the gift of his mother. The first page he opened presented to him the very words which had poured consolation onto his sad heart, from the lips of the venerable clergyman when he met him on his entrance into the church-porch before the coffin of his friend! “I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.” After reading this, how truly did the young mourner feel that “Death had lost its sting – the grave its victory” (TW, 1845).

What seems odd about the “Polish and the Almighty”, specifically for a contemporary Polish reader, is that Jane Porter makes Thaddeus, his Polish mother, and grandmother Protestant. This becomes revealed when, at the end of the volume, Sobieski is about to marry Mary Beaufort, an English aristocrat. The celebration is to be performed in a village church, and the Reverend Dr Blackmore is to perform the holy rite. Jane Porter the narrator provides an explanation to the reader why “no adjunct of the Roman Catholic ceremony (then the national church of Poland) was needful fully to legalize it. Thaddeus from his infancy had been reared in the Protestant faith, the faith of his mother, whose own mother was a daughter of the staunch Hussite race of the princely Zamoiski [sic], who still professed that ancient, simple creed of their country” (TW, 1845).³⁸ As can be noticed, Jane Porter brackets her main character off from Catholicism. It is queer, as Kościuszko – Thaddeus’s model – was Catholic. One could speculate that she is prejudiced herself and there are other trails of this in the narrative, particularly if one thinks that Thaddeus’s landlady’s words or the doctor’s in the following anecdote are in fact Porter’s. When asked by doctor Vincent if Thaddeus is a Methodist – if so, he would think him demoniac – the old woman cries: “I don’t understand you, sir. He is a Christian (...) Alas! I believe he is most likely a papist; though they say

³⁸ This fragment cannot be found in the 1831 edition of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, as it was added to the later ones.

papists don't read the Bible, but worship images" (TW, 1831: 114). On the basis of this account Catholics are Christians but the Bible is unknown to them and they are gullibly superstitious. Moreover, in the section called "the author, to her friendly readers" of, for example, the 1845 edition of the novel, Porter comments on Scott's *Waverly* saying that this is a "most impressive historical picture of the last struggle of the papist, but gallant, branch of the Stuarts for the British throne" (TW, 1845). The expression "papist, but gallant" implies at the semantic level that what is Catholic is, by definition as if, negative. To exemplify the above logic, one could bring it to, let us say, Polish anti-Semitism, in which one says, for instance: "He's a Jew, but he's okay". This would naturally mean that normally Jews are not good people. Besides, one myth strengthened by Porter must be abolished from the start, all the more that it "feels at home" in Polish society even nowadays. Namely, Porter is wrong to think about 18th-century Poles as only Papists or Catholics (or even Christians), since they constituted less than a half of the Commonwealth's population. If we treat *Rzeczpospolita* as the Commonwealth of the Kingdom of Poland and the Duchy of Lithuania, as we should, then in the state in 1772, 43% of the citizens were Roman Catholics and 14% non-Christians. This is apparent if we glance at the following statistics provided by Davis (1998a: 188): Catholics – 43%, Uniates – 33%, Russian Orthodox – 10%, Jews – 9%, Protestants (mainly German Lutherans) – 4%, Armenians and Muslims – 1%.

Going back to the exchange of words between the doctor and the woman: if the words reflect Porter's mindset (Thaddeus is not a Methodist but a Christian), then the author treats Methodism as a non-Christian denomination. It needs to be explained here that in the 1845 version of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, Porter changed the word "Methodist" for "twaddler" – a derisive term used in the past to describe an empty, senseless, and silly person (*The Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth *OED*), 1998: 735). In the footnotes Porter develops the meaning of twaddler: "when speaking of eminently religious people" (TW, 1845). She may have changed the words because Methodism grew in strength in the 19th century, so too many readers could have felt offended. The word "twaddler", on the other hand, does not refer to any particular denomination and is thus safer for the author. Furthermore, by making Thaddeus (and *nota bene* Kościuszko) Protestant she may have wanted to make her tale more preferable for the reading audience in Britain, which, with the advent of the last crowned Tudor, was becoming more and more Protestant, and by the end of the 17th century Protestants had constituted a

vast majority in every stratum of society. Besides, throughout the book, Porter refers to Christianity as the prime and universal model of one's existence. Consequently, Porter does not pay so much attention to what religion one professes as to learning how to be righteous and kind to other beings. Jones (1986: 116) notes that such religious tones were very fashionable in Porter's times and anybody could refer to Heaven and God, but what differentiates Porter from many other authors was her being real in what she tried to convey, and she did so with "extraordinary ingenuity in finding variants to avoid monotony." It is no coincidence that Jane Porter made Thaddeus an example of Christian nobility, as writing for her, as well as Maria Porter, was a spiritual obligation. Jones (1986: 116) records the following account of Jane Porter:

When we began to write for publication, we regarded our works not as a pastime for ourselves, or a mere amusement for others, but as the use to be made of entrusted talent "given to us for a purpose:" and for every word we set down in our pages we believed we must be responsible to Heaven and to our country.

In a letter to her friend, Mr Pratt, she is even more serious about the spiritual role of literary publications. Turning writers' back on Christianity and forgetting the Holy Spirit is giving in to whims and losing morality. This walking away from Christianity is what made France "remote from Virtue, Liberty, and Happiness."

Unless Authors make the Christian religion, - that meek, yet dignified, model of action, - their standard of Virtue; unless they marshal all the Passions and Appetites, under the command of that Spirit, which is as pure as it is lovely; as powerful as it is benign; - the rising Generation, who study the principles; and copy the manners of Romance; will be as far to seek in the paths of Probity, Honour, and Decorum; as the apostate Syberites of France, are remote from Virtue, Liberty, and Happiness (Porter 1805, as quoted in Joukovsky 1990: 16-17).

A general picture of the aristocracy's religiousness can be presented in the way Davies does it: religious celebrations were strictly observed. In the age of faith, religion was thought of as the seal of the established order in society and the special position that the *szlachta* certainly enjoyed. "It was the most natural thing in the world for the nobleman to thank God for his good fortune in public, and, as was customary during the recital of the Creed, to stand with upraised sword in defence of the Faith" (Davies 2005: 191).

The *szlachta* participated in a whole range of religious festivities. Lady's Day (2 February) was held in high regard by Poles just like the cults of Saints Blaise (Pol.

Błażej) and Agatha (Pol. *Agata*), Whitsuntide, or the so-called Green Holiday (Pol. *Zielone Świątki*), and Corpus Christi (Pol. *Boże Ciało*). On Ascension Day (Pol. *Dzień Wniebowstąpienia*), the figure of Christ was attached to the Church steeple and an effigy of Satan was dropped. On Ash Wednesday (Pol. *Środa Popielcowa*), girls of marriageable age but who were still without a husband were fastened to a piece of log, shown in front of a crowd, and sold in a mock auction. On Corpus Christi, cannons, or at worst pistols, were fired off. Whitsuntide was seen as the festival of farmers and shepherds (Davies 2005: 191-192, 1998a: 280-281). On the Wednesday before Easter, people pretended to beat an effigy of Judas, burnt it, set it on fire, or drowned it in a village pond. Driven to a frenzy, they not infrequently chased after Jews, seeing in each of them Jesus' murderer. On Maundy Thursday (Pol. *Wielki Czwartek*), presents were given (Ferenc 2008: 177):

Easter Monday saw an annual battle of the sexes, at which men and women drenched each other with buckets of cold water. Pre-Christian festivals also survived. At the end of June, the countryside was ablaze with bonfires which were lit in honour of the Sun and of Love. This was one of the few occasions in the year when the *szlachta* mixed freely with the peasantry, and avoided holding their celebrations apart (Davies 2005: 192).

The religious holidays described were strictly connected with the nobility's entertainment, whose kinds were not many; they boiled down to chatting or celebrating church holidays, drinking, playing cards, or dancing. If a nobleman was affluent, it was different, as estate-management took most of the nobleman's time. Besides, relaxation was most commonly found in hunting. "Foxes and hares were coursed with greyhounds; bears were hunted with nets; wolves, which were regarded as vermin, were trapped in pits baited with a goose or a duck; bison were usually attacked by a ring of riders armed with bows and firearms" (Davies 2005: 192). In winter, a sleigh-party (Pol. *kulig*) was organised. "A train of sleighs, pulled by horses and filled with people bedecked in furs and finery, would set off through the snow on a tour of the district. Led by the bachelors of the party, with music playing from the leading sleigh and bells jingling in the crisp air, they would proceed from house to house" (195). Not surprisingly, at every doorstep they drank the host's health and talked the new party into accompanying them. After some time they threw an impromptu banquet, and late at night the revellers went back to their households (195).

Albeit seemingly having visitors over *per se* can hardly be linked with church festivities, all the more with God, in Poland it could, and traces of that are seen at the beginning of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. When Pembroke Somerset, the young English noble fighting on the Russian side in the 1792 war, is imprisoned, instead of being treated as a deadly enemy by Thaddeus Sobieski, he finds refuge and kindness and protection in the Pole's home. It sounds very unlikely to an inexperienced ear, but, after investigating the theme, it in fact could be looked at as typical of the Polish nobility.

The demonstration below has caused a problem in terms of which section it should go to: sometimes it touches on positive sides of Poles, on a different occasion negative ones, and then on neither of the two. However, it begins with true worship of God; moreover, the further part of the story is connected with free time during church holidays. Even if at times the reader may have the feeling that some information is not suitable for this section, this illustration is so fantastic – virtually, each sentence could be ended with ellipsis – that in order not to distort the picture, it is kept as a whole. The matter that will here be gone into is hospitality, and its depiction commences with the Polish proverb: *Gość w dom, Bóg w dom* (Adalberg 1894: 156).³⁹ But is this famous Polish hospitality not another myth? Does *Gość w dom, Bóg w dom* have any historical, solid basis? It does. Travellers from abroad, where an alien would be rather unlikely to be given a very warm welcome, had a chance to experience the goodness of the nobility's living in accordance with the Polish proverb. The abundance of food and time further strengthened the positive reception that wanderers in Poland met with. The strewn settlements of the *szlachta* must have spurred their open-handedness, because visitors from abroad served as sources of information to the news-thirsty Polish noblemen.

Hospitality had a lot of hype among ancient peoples, but, as Gloger ([1900-1903] 1972, 2: 207) informs, the actuality was different. In Egypt or Persia, a foreigner was seen as religiously impure; the Romans called such a person *hostis* – an enemy. For Greeks, an outsider was a barbarian, so of lower rank. In the East, genuine hospitality was restricted to the neighbourhood, beyond which the host could kill his guest. Among the ancient nations only the Israelites were really neighbourly. They would wash a wanderer's feet, feed him, and care about him and his animals. From among later periods only the Slavs were like the Israelites.

³⁹ This very famous Polish proverb denotes very kind hospitality and can be translated as: "A guest in my house is God in my house" (i.e. will be treated like God) [translation mine, ML].

The 6th-century emperor Mauritius, who visited the territories of present-day Poland, stated that the Slavs protected wanderers so much that if, for instance, one failed to hastily give directions to a stranger, his (the Slav's) house could be burnt by his neighbours, who deemed such a duty an honour.⁴⁰ Mauritius' contemporary, the Byzantine historian Prokop, wrote about Poles-to-be that they let prisoners free and rewarded them after some time of service, and they could then stay in the society as equals and friends. Five centuries later, Adam from Brema noted: "Although they live in paganism, you will not find a more hospitable, kind and generous nation" (4: 249). Helmold, the 12th-century German historian and priest, commented that idolatry among the Slavs was considerable but kind-heartedness even bigger, and they showed their parents more than due respect. One could not find a beggar or homeless person, and the diseased and old were dutifully and scrupulously assisted. Everybody was welcome and there was no need to look for a tavern. Should one not follow this custom, his neighbours were happy to foray into the "malefactor's" estate and expel him from the community (4: 249). Many later foreign observers, for example, William Coxe (1747 – 1828), a historian educated at Eton College and Oxford, noted the same thing: significant generosity and hospitality of the hosts (Coxe 1784: 213).⁴¹

Travellers, and it did not matter whether they were friends, relatives, or strangers, were often greeted with a speech right at the doorstep. The nobility attached great weight to the beauty of the language, and swearwords were generally rare. The hosts got into their "Sunday best" and the servants were ready to wait on the newcomers (Ferenc 2008: 159-160). In a Polish house, there was constantly homemade bread and salt on the table, with which guests were welcomed, that was immediately laid, a custom which is still cultivated in the 21st century in many Polish homes, in particular in Podlasie. The guest, even if a stranger, was taken care of regardless of the time of the day or year. The invited ones had the right to bring over a number of their own acquaintances and in this way provoke a party for dozens of participants, to the sincere joy of the owner. Sleeping

⁴⁰ The same Mauritius also wrote that "they easily bear cold, heat, wounds, and hunger, but in the next breath he added "they obey no orders and permanently argue" (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 4: 245).

⁴¹ In 1778 he embarked on a Grand Tour of Eastern and Northern Europe, noting his observations in *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark*. This British scholar spoke with King Poniatowski himself, who gave him a warm welcome; the conversation concerned, among others, the Polish constitution and the classes, and was carried out in English (Brückner 1931: 218-219).

on the floor was a minor obstacle with so much warm-heartedness of the crew. At the time of peace the gates used to be open in accordance with the well known motto:

“Brama na oścież otwarta przechodniom ogłasza,
Że gościna i innych w gošcinę zaprasza.”

The gate is wide open and announces
That hospitality welcomes passers-by [translation mine, ML] (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 2: 207-208).

In hindsight, it can be said that the *szlachta* (of the 18th century) never knew the notion “a waste of time”. What a contrast with modern times when nearly everybody makes haste and lacks “precious” time; in modern times, we less and less often pay visits to our families or friends from far away, not to mention sleeping over, which has been taken over by hotels.

It is not astonishing that Polish hospitality (Pol. *polska gošcinnošć*) meant the *szlachta*’s love for feasting, which is as old as the *szlachta* itself. Well into the 18th century, spicy and stodgy meals were preferred. Food was richly ornamented to make up for tastelessness. Hands were washed before dining, but the manner of eating still resembled that of the Middle Ages. Guests were positioned according to age and station, a process painstakingly and colourfully painted by Adam Mickiewicz in *Pan Tadeusz*. The table had a horseshoe pattern and was covered with cloth. There stood fascinating decoration there: figures of gods, nymphs, gardens, coats of arms, and even castles and palaces. The nobility drank from silver or glass cups of Venice or Czech origin, though the tableware was usually tin. The fork found its place on the Polish table after Italy but before France. Ornamented spoons were often engraved with a sentence and some carried them, together with forks, everywhere they went. In his memoirs, Poniatowski describes assistants with dirty hands snatching pieces of food from pots. Plates were unhygienically washed up in the same water. Women were rarely seen at the table, and if they were, mocking them was customary. The rich dined early, at ten in the morning, and time and again, prolonged the feast till evening, creating disorder similar to that on the battlefield due to drunkenness and fights (Brückner 1939, 2: 817-822). Such brawls sometimes resulted in deaths or at least scars; for example, many noblemen could be seen lacking a nose. The art of medicine was not brilliantly developed (Tazbir 2006b: 74); for instance, the standpoint of some doctors was that bathing was unhealthy. In-

deed, Britons journeying in Poland complained about drunk and aggressive Poles suspecting others of wicked intentions. “No feast ends without a squabble, and a traitor is he who says no to drinking”, wrote George Berkeley, the 18th-century philosopher. Foreigners warned their fellow countrymen against taking trips on Saturdays, since many drunkards took to the streets on that day. If he felt offended, the Polish vigilante, unlike in other counties, did not bother with any jurisdiction and did justice himself (1978: 36). (Apropos, has it changed so much by the 21st century, when sometimes it is enough to give somebody the “wrong” look in a pub in order to be beaten up?) Hospitality equalled feasts, feasts denoted drinking. Drinking, in turn, led to drunkenness, and indulging in alcohol to fights.

Until the 16th century, different kinds of beer and mead (Pol. *miód*) were drunk, and later wines, whereas water was used for washing (Brückner 1939, 2: 728-729). The Polish name *piwo* (beer) originated from before the establishment of Poland and comes from the fact that its *picie* (drinking) was so popular.⁴² The Polish monarch *Bolesław Chrobry* (967 – 1025) has, historically and formally speaking, a few names in English: Boleslaus the Brave, the Valiant, or the Great, but the Germans christened him *Trinkbier* (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 4: 28). Jan Długosz (1415 – 1480), the Polish priest, chronicler, diplomat, and soldier wrote about Leszek the White (Pol. *Leszek Biały*) (1186 – 1227), asking the pope to pardon him for not making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, because in Palestine there was neither beer nor mead. Only in the 18th century did booze or hooch (Pol. *gorzalka*) appear, later being called *wódka*.

Following the German mode, Poles drank to health, while to show kindness they smashed beer mugs, even wooden ones, on their own heads (Brückner 1939, 2: 729-730). The company drank to the health of His Majesty, the queen, the primate or bishop, and then the finest of the party (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 4: 367). Toasts were drunk standing, but they occurred so many times that once the party stood up, there was no point in sitting back down. The Polish word *nalej* (pour) was so “sacramental” that a visitor from Germany called one of the servants *Lieber Nalej*, thinking it must be the servant’s name. The honour of the host was in jeopardy should the guests not be as drunk as a lord (by the way, this saying did not enter the English language for nothing), and woe betide him who wanted to spill alcohol on the floor. George Berkeley wit-

⁴² The excise on spirits (Pol. *czopowe*) has been paid since 1466 (until today unluckily) and implemented to compensate for the wars with the Teutonic Order (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 1: 293).

nessed that a traitor is he who says no to drinking (4: 251). Nor was it imaginable to sleep drunk under the table, as servants, drunk themselves, were located there to pour more (Brückner 1939, 2: 732-733). Feast were finished with the toast *kochajmy się* – let’s love each other. But how mistaken is he who thinks the revelry was over once the party was outside. The last toast of the leaving guest took place while bestriding the horse, when the visitor’s leg was already in the stirrup (Pol. *strzemię*), hence this toast was called *strzemienne*. When this moment finally arrived, the crowd shouted:

“Wypił! wypił! Nic nie zostawił!
Bodaj go, bodaj go Bóg błogosławił.”

He’s drunk it! Drunk it! Left nothing!
May God, may God bless him! [translation mine, ML] (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 2: 367, 288).

Even here we can see reference to the Almighty. And the libations did not end here: *strzemienne* could be drunk several times, and sometimes, in order to keep the guests longer, the hosts tampered with the “runaways” carriages (Ferenc 2008: 159). This madness lessened a little only at the time of King Poniatowski, as French fashions did not allow such, to put it gently, overindulgence. This monarch introduced consuming less sumptuous meals and water instead of alcohol during his Thursday Dinners (Pol. *obiady czwartkowe*) (Brückner 1939, 2: 733). These were educational seminars – a synthesis of a poetry academy and the national theatre led by Bogusławski (Kolek 2002: 156). This novelty, however, did not enjoy much renown. Germans and Czechs, for instance, drank alcohol as well, but they, as opposed to the Poles, did not spend fortunes on drinking, did not reach for swords, did not cut off other revellers’ noses or ears, and did not a moment later in a surge of tenderness and friendship give away everything they had, including their clothes (Brückner 1939, 2: 822, 731). No wonder today’s Poles visiting the West grumble about or laugh at being entertained to salty sticks instead of a proper dinner. No surprise either that when reading in a broadsheet about what dosage of alcohol in the blood is lethal, one finds the caption: “it does not concern Poles and Russians.”

Whereas some of the behaviours of the Polish characters in connection with God are likely to have existed and seem natural for human beings regardless of the era, some appear very queer, and still others incredible. In the first category, one may include

thanking Heaven for the preservation of one's life and protection, praying for no more evil, complaining about one's strenuous existence, voicing gratitude for happiness, saying that the Creator hath bestowed wealth on one, stating that God is perfect wisdom and love, pleading for mercy, being taken to Heaven, etc.

The second would be called the "grotesque but real" category. What is meant by this is that some people, certainly not only Poles, think they possess knowledge of the Maker's intentions. When Wilanów is lost and in the hands of the oppressors, Thaddeus exclaims: "Heaven will requite this sacrilege." It is true that when somebody is bereft of so much, he or she does not act with perfect reasoning. Still, how does one know the Almighty's plan? Why are opposite armies facing each other on a battlefield – often only due to their greed and vanity – both sure that God is on their side? Certainly, the situation of Poland and the three usurpers is not parallel to this analysis, yet (Polish) history knows bounteous examples that are. Tazbir supports such a way of thinking by writing that both the king and the *szlachta*, being often in opposition, treated God as the advocate of their political aspirations (Tazbir 1978: 108). Is it just people's narrow-mindedness and vanity that make us think we are right with regard to God? The question remains open. Anyhow, God – in the holy writings of any religion – is against killing and no pretext can change it.

The third could be named the "not far from insane" category. The peculiarities that are going to be set forth did not appear in Porter's book but unluckily did so in reality. The perception of God, Heaven, Hell, saints, and religion as such often had hardly anything to do with the dogmas of Christianity. We are all used to seeing saints in paintings hung up in sanctuaries. But what if in the background we noticed the silhouette of the person who sponsored the painting? (106). Why anyone would do a thing like that is left for the reader to reflect upon individually, though one thought seems inescapable: if the images of such sponsors appeared next to saints in paintings, and no one protested against such vanity, the fact that in churches there were also artistic works showing battlefields where opponents of Christianity were defeated did not seem to be so disgraceful. Moreover, some of the *szlachta* were so much opinionated that they thought of themselves as equal to or even better than Jesus Christ. An extreme example of such a view comes from a 17th-century portrait of Jędrzej Szydłowski. In his mouth there is a long sash falling down with the following question on it: "Christ, my Lord, do you love me?" Jesus's response is as follows: "Surely, the most honourable Chancellor of Płock,

the most enlightened benefactor of the church in Płock, I love thee” (2008: 73).⁴³ What else was outrageous? After the 16th century, Catholicism in Poland turned national, if not nationalistic. The Poles more and more often worshipped Polish saints, forgetting about any foreign ones, as if the origin of a canonised person mattered. Saints were often polonized by being given Polish names, and the same happened with places of miracles (1978: 107). But there was something even more ridiculous than this, which proves the misunderstanding of religion and also the chauvinism of some Poles: Hell and its proprietors were polonized, too. Moreover, there existed a Polish devil by the name of Boruta, at least in the minds of the masses. He lived near Łęczycza and wore the Polish over-coat (*kontusz*). In the 17th century and especially during the partitions, the devil’s taste in fashion altered: he now preferred German gear. The Prussian authorities even had to officially announce that their officers wearing such clothes were not devils but German officials. *Nota bene* in the Netherlands, oppressed for years by the Spanish, the devil often put on Spanish dress (108). The Slavic name Boruta, explains Gloger (1845 – 1910), the Polish historian, archaeologist, and ethnographer, comes from the Polish word *bór* (forest), where an evil spirit resided, and so this spirit was named Boruta. The scholar says that it was 19th-century men of literary fiction who put into peasants’ mouth a legend that they themselves had not heard from their forefathers. The writers put the flared over-coat (Pol. *kontusz*) on Boruta to increase the effect of their work and in this way strengthened the myth (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 3: 189). The belief in superstitions was unbelievable. Brückner (1856 – 1939), the Polish philologist, Slavist, and historian, provides a multitude of fairy tales that people judged real. Here is just a sample: many, including some priests, quailed at the thought of spilling salt, women were burnt as witches, and one economist immersed women in water to cause rain (one of them died). Vampires, Grim Reapers, apparitions, and phantoms haunted Poland as well as Europe (Brückner 1939, 2: 282, 302).

Furthermore, the Virgin Mary was made Polish, as well. (It is hard to resist the feeling that many Poles still see Her like that). This assumption was intensified after the kingdom was annihilated; people wanted to believe that they were directly shielded by “Mary the Queen of Poland”. Some referred to Her as “Mary the Protector of the Sar-

⁴³ The original version in Polish: “Chryste Panie, czy kochasz mnie? A jakże, jaśnie wielmożny kanclerzu płocki, jaśnie oświecony dobrodzieju płockiego kościoła, Kocham cię” [translation mine, ML].

matians' Noble Liberties". In all likelihood, the Polish cult of a "Polish" Mary influenced the creation of the famous phrase in Poland "Mother Pole" (Pol. *matka Polka*) – a female patriot serving her nation and religion (Tazbir 1978: 111-112). Religious aspects were not merely polonized, but regionalised, too. There appeared a patron saint of an area, a neighbourhood, a profession (like St Florian), or a problem. Saint Apollonia, for example, looked after those with toothaches! Even the Blessed Virgin Mary was regionalised. Before the dismemberment of Poland, there were over 400 miraculous images of Jesus' mother. Each Mary embodies a different divine grace or skill. There was a lack of a "central" Mary or even God, who was replaced with the regionalised saints (Tazbir 1978: 117-118). Brückner, in *Encyklopedia staropolska* (1939, 2: 22-24), estimated the number of miraculous paintings of St Mary to be as high as 1050! These "miracles" were recognised – with the exceptions of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa or Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn (Pol. *Ostrobramska*) – only in a given parish. Such holy images have been known in Poland since the arrival of Christianity; as early as 1076 there was the marvellous statue of Korczew in the Kujavian diocese (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 3: 271).

Priest Andrzej Gołdonowski added that the thinking was so socially hermetic that some priests, of whom a number were also noblemen, went so far as to say that even in Hell there was some hierarchy (Tazbir 1978: 107-108), where, surely, the *szlachta* was the outstanding class. How was such utter folly possible? A glance at the division and the different names of just the nobility will make it easier to comprehend the scale of this hermetism. The categories are as follows:

1. *Magnateria* – magnates: the wealthiest class; owners of vast lands, towns, many villages, thousands of peasants. Considered by some to belong to a higher class than the nobility.

2. *Średnia szlachta* – middle nobility: owners of one or more villages, often having some official titles, or deputies to *sejmiks* (parliaments at the regional level) and even *sejm* (at the national level).

3. *Drobna szlachta* – lesser nobility: owners of a part of a village or of no land at all, often referred to by a variety of colourful terms such as:

szaraczkowa – grey nobility: from their grey, woollen, uncoloured, ankle-length house-smock (Pol. *żupan*),

okoliczna – nearby nobility: similar to *zaściankowa*,

zagrodowa – from *zagroda*, a farm, often like a peasant's dwelling,
zagonowa – from *zagon*, a small unit of land measure,
drążkowa – when they gathered, they had no comfortable chairs, so they had to sit on fences and the like,
cząstkowa – partial: owners of only part of a single village,
panek – little *pan*, i.e. lordling, a term used in the Kashubian region (Pol. *Kaszuby*), and also one of the legal terms for legally separated lower nobility in late medieval and early modern Poland,
hreczkosiej – buckwheat sowers: those who had to work their fields themselves,
zaściankowa – from *zaścianek*, a name for a plural nobility settlement, neighbourhood nobility. Just like *hreczkosiej*, *zaściankowa* nobility would have no peasants,
brukowa – cobble nobility: for those living in towns like townsfolk,
golota – naked nobility: i.e. the landless. *Golota* szlachta would be considered the “lowest of the low” (“Szlachta”, 2007).

Poland, to their understanding, was the best country and the *szlachta* the best of all the echelons of society; this is why they made every effort to prevent anybody from entering this society, a society which saw itself as virtuous by birth, as wise by birth, and as biologically better by birth. Because of this, intermarriage, for example, was implausible and thus misalliance was held up to scorn (Tazbir 1978: 27, 33). For 200 years until the collapse of the Polish Kingdom there had been only around 1000 cases of ennoblement (raising a person from the lower ranks to the nobility), whereas in France in the 18th century alone more than 15,000 (28).

Polish experts have a rather low opinion of the clergy then. “They declined morally just like the szlachta”, wrote Brückner in the pages of his *Dzieje kultury polskiej* [A History of Polish Culture] (1931 : 280). The Roman Curia knew they could not count on two-thirds of the Polish priests due to a lack of morality, greed, spending sprees, crawling to the Russians, and superstitions. Theological knowledge was rare outside of seminaries, and consummate priests were few and far between (283, 171-172). When the Saxon kings sat on the throne of Poland, there was a rhyme well fixed in the priests' minds; two lines of the “poem” go like this:

“Zawstydz kalwina, lutra, szyzmatyka,
 Niech dobrze wierzy, albo śmierć połyka.”

Shame on the calvinist, lutheran, schismatic,
May he believe well, or swallow death [translation mine, ML] (Brückner 1931: 278).

Sadly, when the Counter-Reformists proved victorious, the church was less and less preoccupied with realising the principles of the Decalogue. Let me quote Kamil Kantak's conviction: "the Polish church had a superb façade beside which the spiritual life pulsed less and less vigorously. Behind this colourful and splendid façade were hidden intellectual apathy, moral nothingness, litigiousness, greed, and indiscipline" [translation mine, ML] (Tazbir 1978: 115-116). This priest also maintained that the papacy *per se* never objected to the partitions and, following this line of logic, was disinterested in the fate of the annihilated Christian Polish state unless the interests of the church were in peril (121-122).

The Dutch cultural theorist Peter Rietbergen of the Catholic University of Nijmegen, Holland, shows the situation from a more general, European perspective. His stance is that the clergy, often only allegedly literate, did not want their flock to be educated, and their argument was that cosmic and theological divagations were needless or even perilous to the ordinary man. As the depositories of information, priests wished to maintain this exclusiveness (Rietbergen 2001: 172-173). In a world of illiterate masses, the monopoly of the clergy on writing and reading made them look like magicians, a situation that was very convenient for God's servants, wrote Erasmus of Rotterdam in his work *Anti-Barbari*. Instead of raising the level of culture, they hypocritically and ignorantly kept the people in backwardness and misery. On the other hand, the church was the only institution that interpreted the world, the sense of existence, everyday pain, or death (191, 175).

How did the British see religion in Poland? Most of the time as far from exemplary. The Polish were perceived as fundamentalists and bloodthirsty papists ever since the hyped Tumult of Thorn (Pol. *Tumult toruński*) in 1724 (Davies 1983: 80).⁴⁴ The

⁴⁴ During the Protestant Reformation, the mostly German-populated Royal Prussia with the city of Thorn adopted Protestantism in 1557, while the majority of the Kingdom of Poland remained Roman Catholic. In 1595, the Jesuits arrived to promote the Counter-Reformation, taking control of the Church of St. John. Protestant city officials tried to limit the influx of the Catholic population into the city, as Catholics (Jesuits and Dominican monks) already controlled most churches, leaving only St. Mary to the Protestant citizens. In the second half of the 17th century, tensions between Catholics and Protestants grew. In 1724, when the Jesuits held a procession, fights between pupils of the Jesuits and Lutheran inhabitants occurred as Jesuit pupils accused the gathered Lutherans of showing disrespect to the Holy Mary by not taking their hats off during the procession and not kneeling before her statue. Unrest between the Protestants and Catholics began. Several Jesuits were beaten, portraits of Catholic Saints were defiled, and the main altar

executions severely undermined the reputation of Poland in Protestant Europe and among the leading figures of the Age of the Enlightenment. The whole thing was referred to by Brandenburg-Prussia as evidence of Polish bigotry (Friedrich 2000: 187). The event on the continent hit the headlines in plenty of newspapers; publications covering the tumult amounted to more than 165. Half a century later, when it was visible to the naked eye that Poland was dying, François-Marie Arouet (1694 – 1778), otherwise known as Voltaire, voiced the punishing of Protestants as an example “of the religious intolerance of the Poles” (“Tumult of Thorn”, 2008). Davies claims that “it was the sole event for which the name of Copernicus’s birthplace was remembered in Protestant Europe” (Davies 2005: 141). To make matters worse for the perception of Poland-Lithuania’s tolerance outside the country, British travellers who visited the kingdom did not restrain from promulgating most sinister ideas. Among these individuals were, for example, the aforementioned British historian, William Coxe, the author Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall (1751 – 1831), the British Minister to Prussia and Ambassador to Russia, James Harris (Earl of Malmesbury) (1746 – 1820), (the way he saw Poland is presented in chapter 4.4), or Joseph Marshall, who once spoke of Polish fanaticism coming from “the furious zeal of the Roman Catholic bishops, who would never be satisfied without the total destruction of the Protestants and Greeks” (Marshall 1772: 263). Another unfavourable account of Poles’ piety comes from Daniel Defoe’s pen, who claimed that if you asked a Pole who he was, he would answer a gentleman of Poland. He would judge himself beyond any rules of honour, an excuse for doing the worst things, and expect permission from God just because of his title. At this point Defoe provides a story to confirm his words:

(...) an infamous wretch, a Captain Vratz, a Polander, who in cold blood assassinated an English gentlemen, *Thomas Thynne Esq^{re}*, shooting him into the body in his coach with a musqueteer loaded with 7 bullets; and who, the day before he was to be hanged for it, when he was spoken with by the minister to prepare himself for death, answered that he did not doubt but God would have some respect to him as a gentleman (Defoe 1890: 114, as quoted in Davies 2005: 183).

was partially destroyed. Afterwards, many books and paintings were thrown out into a pile and set on fire. After this event, both Jesuits and Dominicans tried to persuade the Prussian German Protestants who partook in the riots to convert to Roman Catholicism. They declined, and the supreme court sentenced the Protestants to death. King August, who had converted to Catholicism to be elected to the Polish throne, regretted not being in a position to pardon the convicts, two of whom converted to Catholicism and their life was spared (“Tumult of Thorn”, 2008).

By looking at the preceding paragraphs, one may conclude that toleration of others in terms of religion or class was not typical of the Polish nobility. Let us analyse the nobility's putting up with a dissimilar faith more closely. Was the *szlachta* tolerant or is it just an incongruous perception? It depends on how we look at the issue: the answer to the query is "yes, they were tolerant" if it mainly pertains to the times before the Counter-Reformation in Poland. At the Confederation of Warsaw in 1573, the *szlachta* (around half of the signatories were Catholics) obliged all citizens to protect religious freedom, thus creating the most tolerant act in Europe. This attracted religious dissenters from many parts of Europe who had been drowned in blood (Tazbir 2002: 114). The answer could be "no, it is a myth" if we consider later periods. Although the boundaries of Poland in the 17th century embraced much more land than nowadays, in 1616, for instance, there were over a thousand mosques in the Polish Realm, and in 1939 – sixteen. (Today most of them are in the area of Białystok) (Davies 1998a: 218). The situation began to deteriorate at the end of the 17th and start of the 18th centuries. Dissenters fled from Poland; now a "true" Pole became a Catholic. Being non-Catholic or converting to Protestantism equalled being non-Polish or at least non-patriotic (Tazbir 1978: 93). From the Union of Lublin in 1569 till the first partition in 1772 Roman Catholics were just a dominant minority; on the eve of the third partition, they were a clear majority. The Lutherans, Orthodox, and Arians had been got rid of; the Uniates and Calvinists greatly reduced (Davies 2005: 153). There were also witch trials in Poland, even thousands. Until 1776, there were approximately 20,000 victims in Silesia (Pol. *Śląsk*) and 10,000 in the Polish Kingdom (Pol. *Korona*). In the first quarter of the 18th century, 50% of those tried were burnt, which took place mostly in *Mazowsze* (152-153). Some noblemen used whole armies of would-be witches for their private business. Torture in witch-hunting was normal. Women were undressed, shaven all around, anointed with holy oil, and hung from the ceiling so that they, by means of touching the ground, could not summon the devil to help them. They were then interrogated by magistrates who, often sipping comfortably alcohol, urged them to confess (1998a: 224). In 1776, the open-minded faction of the MPs in the Sejm, in company with the enlightened clergy, unanimously resolved to forbid this brutal practice. At around the same time in Sweden, for instance, a commission of lawyers and priests designated by the king convicted 72 old women and 15 children of witchcraft and sentenced them to death (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 3: 268, 275).

The study heretofore has served, among other things, to set forth two knotty issues and put an end to two myths: one saying that Poland in the 18th century was a Catholic monolith, the other, that her nationals were at the same time very tolerant. Davies' words best shed light on why such folklore and, perhaps, wishful thinking has no solid basis. If Poland was the Heaven of Toleration, there must have been plenty of dissenters there (running from other countries from religious wars, for example); but if it had so numerous a dissenting community, the country cannot have been so Catholic (Davies 2005: 126).

Yet, something in defence of the church in Poland could be demonstrated: it must be admitted that the status quo was still far better than in France or Britain. There was nothing as violent as the infamous St Bartholomew's Eve⁴⁵, and no one such as the English (in)famous Puritan – the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell⁴⁶ (155), even though the foundations of the Confederation of Warsaw had been severely shaken. What is more, we should not forget that the principally very unfavourable picture of Poles in relation to religion that the British developed stemmed not only from the fact that reality in Poland was not perfect. Much of the hostility resulted from misconceptions created partly by the enemies of Poland-Lithuania (Prussian and Russian sources often disseminated false information to erode the Kingdom's international position) and partly by the preconditioned voyagers themselves, who were unable to counterbalance such impressions; they journeyed to Poland with preconceived ideas about the country, having not seen it before. Finally, the church in Poland, being persecuted itself by Prussians and Russians alike, did become an anchor of Polishness (Tazbir 1978: 121-122).

⁴⁵ The St Bartholomew's Day massacre (*Massacre de la Saint-Barthélemy*) was a wave of Catholic mob violence against the Huguenots (French Calvinist Protestants). The massacre took place six days after the wedding of the king's sister to the Protestant Henry of Navarre, an occasion for which many of the most wealthy and prominent Huguenots were in Paris, and two days after the attempted assassination of a Huguenot leader. Starting on 24 August 1572 (the feast of Bartholomew the Apostle) the massacres spread throughout Paris and later to other cities and the countryside, lasting for several months. The exact number of fatalities is not known, but it is estimated that anywhere from ten thousand to possibly one-hundred thousand Huguenots died in the violence throughout France ("St Bartholomew's Day massacre", 2010).

⁴⁶ Oliver Cromwell (1599 – 1658) was an English military and political leader best known for his involvement in making England a republican Commonwealth and for his later role as Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland. He was one of the commanders who defeated the royalists in the English Civil War. After the execution of King Charles I in 1649, Cromwell dominated the short-lived Commonwealth of England, conquered Ireland and Scotland, and ruled as Lord Protector from 1653 until his death in 1658. A religious conversion experience made an Independent style of Puritanism a core tenet of his life and actions. His measures against Irish Catholics have been characterised by some historians as genocidal or near-genocidal ("Oliver Cromwell", 2010).

To terminate the discussion on Poles' with regard to God and religiousness, the recipient of this disquisition ought to remember that British Catholics and members of Protestant sects who faced intolerance in Britain found refuge in Poland. The fact that Britain became more and more Protestant and Poland more Catholic caused a weakening of the relationship between the two countries. In both states, dissenters were portrayed as heretics (Butterwick 2000: 40-41). "God" instead of uniting the bonds loosened them. (Religious tolerance with particular reference to Jews is discussed in section 4.4).

4.3. The attire of the Poles and their physical appearance

Despite the fact that in the narrative there are rather few descriptions of what the Polish generally wore or looked like in the period in question, the ones that Jane Porter does provide the reader with are very revealing. Most of them touch upon the main character, Thaddeus Sobieski, and these are extremely important. The British author cannot have foreseen that, but the way she painted Thaddeus Sobieski – not only his features of character but his clothing as well – created a powerful effect on the Britons' perception of any Pole coming to Great Britain after the publication of her novel. Readers of Jane Porter's times of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* discovered how the Pole looked owing to the fact that Thaddeus's clothes were perceived as weird by the Englishmen that he encounters in the narrative. Let me remind Koźmian's lines on this supposition: The illustration of Porter's hero "stuck so strongly in the imagination and memory of the English that just like a considerable number of Frenchmen always imagined a Pole as Prince Józef [Poniatowski], the English confused the notion of a Pole with the dream image of Thaddeus of Warsaw, and even after the downfall of the November Uprising, they greeted Polish immigrants with a similar perception" [translation mine, ML] (Koźmian 1972: 90, as quoted in Gołębiowska 2001: 14).

Here is an account of an incident during which one learns about Thaddeus's garments and looks. Two British officers backbite the count, and, curiously, it turns out that the nobleman is the possessor of great legs and boots.

"By Heavens! Berrington," cried one, "it is the best shaped boot I ever beheld! I have a good mind to ask him whether it be English make."

“And if it be,” replied the other, “you must ask him who shaped his legs, that you may send yours to be mended.”
 “Who the devil can see my legs through that boot?”
 “Oh, if to hide them be your reason, pray ask him immediately.”
 “And so I will, for I think the boot perfection.”
 At these words, he was making towards Sobieski with two or three long strides, when his companion pulled him back.
 “Surely, Harwold, you will not be so ridiculous? He appears to be a foreigner of rank, and may take offence, and give you the length of his foot!”
 “Curse him and rank too; he is some paltry emigrant, I warrant! I care nothing about his foot or his legs, but I will know who made his boots!” (TW, 1831: 106).

The Polish soldier’s legs are admired at least one more time later in the narrative when, due to the warmth of the weather, he is seen without his boots. His limbs are wondered at by a Mr Lascelles.

(...) it being the first time the exquisite proportion of his figure had been so fully seen by any of the present company excepting Euphemia, Lascelles, bursting with an emotion (which he would not call envy), measured the count’s graceful limb with his scornful eyes; then declaring he was quite in a furnace, took the corner of his glove and waving it to and fro, half-muttered, “*Come gentle air*” (TW, 1831: 262).

“The best shaped boot”, “perfect boots”, “graceful limb”. These are “flashy” for the English persons around Thaddeus. This is what draws their attraction. Though these elements convey only Sobieski’s lower part of the body, they are enough to render him “a foreigner of rank”. So what is the reaction going to be if we behold more of him – his torso and physiognomy, and the rest of his outfit? The reader may experience this the moment the immigrant from Poland puts his foot on British soil. Whilst in London, he is frequently accosted by the locals he bumps into. When the exile asks for a chamber on his first day in the British Isles, he attracts lots of interest from the servants working in the place. Hence, thanks to the subsequent discussion, the author demonstrates not only the exile’s looks but also the tendency of the English to gossip. When the Pole is in a coffee room near his lodgings, the waiter, having received his orders, hastens into the kitchen to report them to the cook:

“Upon my soul, Betty,” cried he, “you must do your best to-night; for the chicken is for the finest-looking fellow you ever set eyes on. By heaven, I believe him to be some Russian nobleman; perhaps the great Suwarrow himself!”
 “A prince, you mean, Jenkins!” said a pretty girl who entered at that moment: “since I was borne I never see’d any English lord walk up and down the room with such an air; he looks like a king. For my part, I should not wonder if he is one of them there emigrant kings, for they say there is a power of them now wandering about the world.”
 “You talk like a fool, Sally,” cried the sapient waiter. “Don’t you see that his dress is military? Look at his black cap, with its long bag and great feather, and the monstrous

sword at his side; look at them, and then if you can, say I am mistaken in deciding that he is some great Russian commander, - most likely come over as ambassador!”

“But he came in a hackney-coach,” cried a little dirty boy in the corner. “As I was running up stairs with Colonel Leson’s shoes, I see’d the coachman bring in his portmanteau.”

“Well, Jack-a-napes, what of that?” cried Jenkins: “Is a nobleman always to carry his equipage about him, like a snail with its shell on its back?” (TW, 1831: 96-97).

Why are the hotel servants, certainly accustomed to extravagance in fashion, taken aback so much, if not shocked, by the Pole’s attire? Why do they call him a military commander, an ambassador? The more the speakers “contemplate” the Pole, the further they get carried away with their assumptions. They are now sure that Thaddeus is a foreign lord, or a prince, who is staying in the hotel till his own house is prepared for him. The gossipers have never seen such handsome blue eyes in their lives, and they admire his way of speaking, his movements, how he carries himself, the “air” he creates. Suddenly, they notice a glittering star on his breast, and now they believe Thaddeus to be a king!

Before attempting to establish what all this fascination with the Polish dress stemmed from, it is vital to emphasise, like Krajewska (2000: 96-97) does, that Jane Porter was not the only one to highlight Polish attire. By the time Porter was ready with *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803), actors had already been using Polish costumes in English melodramas. Astonishing is the fact that such components were worn even in plays not dealing with Poland and anything Polish. To illustrate this, in James Kenny’s *Ella Rosenberg*, some Prussian officers plus the Brandenburg Elector look Polish due to their dress. The heroes appeared wearing hussar uniforms, which were of special liking, long Polish robes resembling Turkish or Persian ones, swords, greatcoats, or black boots just like the ones of Thaddeus Sobieski. Their heads were covered with fur caps, very often with feathers. Porter wrote that Thaddeus “drew on him the whole attention of the people” because of “its singularity of dress (his high cap and feathers adding to its height)” (TW, 1831: 118). In a different fragment of the book, Thaddeus realises that at the theatre in London his greatcoat was “not admissible” (TW, 1831: 139). The servants from *Thaddeus of Warsaw* may have been astounded, because the styles of dress – as well as furniture, weapons, instruments, etc. – came to Poland, to a large extent, from the East through wars with Turks, Tartars, and Muscovites, so the looks of a nobleman were orientalist. Since the 17th century, such clothes had been worn very often in Poland, and during the partitions they were used on a national scale (Tazbir 2004a: 27). The

word “Tartar” (pol. *Tatar*) comes from Greek mythology and means “hell”. The fact that Europeans called Mongols this indicates that they appeared “a little oriental” (Cummins 2009: 41). But not all kinds of oriental-looking dress were imported from the East. The flared over-coat (Pol. *kontusz*) or the ankle-length house-smock (Pol. *żupan*), which totally covered the legs, were typically Polish (Davies 2005: 191). *Żupan*, whose beginnings Gloger ([1900-1903] 1972, 4: 519) traces back to the Middle Ages, was worn in many different colours and shades, of which darker tints were the most common. In summer, white was the dominant colour. When importing western textile became more often, town folks preferred yellow and other flashy hues. The poorer segments of noblemen had to be satisfied with gray, since it was the natural colour of wool, from which smocks were produced – no colorant meant that gray smocks were the least costly – and because of this colour the name “grey nobility” (Pol. *szlachta szaraczkowa*) appeared, as *szary* in Polish means “gray”. However, the most desirable and prestigious were *żupans* of crimson and red due to the fact that these were the colours of the *szlachta*, and they symbolised blood that the *szlachta* had to shed when the need arose (519-520). It was important that the nobleman and noblewoman should show off their taste and rank. Louis XIV, for instance, purposely forced the aristocracy to treat luxury as a matter of honour, thus making them get into debt and depended on him. This display caused the French nation to perceive the structural order as natural (Rietbergen 2001: 321). In Poland, in order to be seen as classy, men carried weapons even in the late 18th century. At nearly everybody’s belt there was a sabre when the man was outside and a dagger when he was inside the house (Davies 2005: 191). The 18th-century belt, made of cloth, was very wide and so long that a nobleman could wrap his waist a few times and then tie a knot (Brückner 1939, 1: 813). Another indicator of one’s “standing” was a bow, which was as well adopted from the East and was most coveted, because it cost a fortune. Thus, if a noble could afford them, he carried such symbols of wealth and prestige – such as his bow or at least his quiver (Pol. *kołczan*) – even in a church. One of the greatest bow-lovers was king John III Sobieski, who after the battle of Vienna brought a number of Turkish bows to the treasures of Częstochowa, where he made an offering of them (Krzemińska and Długosz 2008: 81).⁴⁷ What else characterised the looks of a typi-

⁴⁷ In 1683, King John III Sobieski, with a united army of Poles, Austrians, and Germans (81,000 troops), won a great victory at Vienna against 130,000 Turks led by Kara Mustafa. The Pope and other foreign dignitaries hailed this brilliant military commander as the “Savior of Vienna and Western European civilization”. Thanks to his action, which was much appreciated and admired in Britain, Poland’s standing

cal Polish noble? Just like in Porter's novel, a classic example constituted thigh-length leather boots, which were to demonstrate being a chivalrous man. "The close-fitting cap in Poland and the tall, fur cap (Pol. *kolpak*) in Lithuania provided the normal headgear. For the woman, floor-length robes were in fashion across the centuries" (Davies 2005: 191). It is also maintained that gold and gems were displayed in abundance as fastenings, pins, brooches, links, clusters, and as various forms of decoration. Even poor noblemen did everything they could to wear something glamorous. Contempt for underwear was noticeable, but it did not differentiate Poles from elsewhere in Europe (191). The richer a nobleman was, the more eastern he looked. At Vienna in 1683, Jan III Sobieski told his soldiers to wrap a piece of rope round their bodies, because they so closely resembled the invaders. The priests only scorned the turbans the enemies wore since in other aspects they looked so similar to the Poles (Tazbir 1978: 155). The growing territories of *Rzeczpospolita* and the Ottoman Empire influenced each other, and the Polish gear was a symbiosis between these two cultures. The acquiring of oriental elements was made still smoother by the fact that this country never invaded Poland successfully, so eastern culture was not associated with aggression or anything worse (or even negative). In consequence, the defender of the golden freedoms was a Polish nobleman who looked Turkish (2004a: 28).

Hair-styles, too, were adopted from Turkey and so tended to look exotic. In the 17th century, just as with the clothes, "the Tartar look" was fashionable in Poland: all the head was shaven but for one long tuft of hair in the middle. This particular trend originated in Turkey in the 15th century and first through Serbia and then Hungary finally reached Poland.⁴⁸ In effect, the hair was short and the clothes long unlike in the West of Europe. So vivid was such an image in Polish people's minds that even the Grim Reaper was bald except for a tuft of hair in the middle of the head (Besala 2008: 74). Extravagant powdered wigs on the German mode from the 18th century were never cultivated in Poland, except among courtiers (Davies 2005: 191) during the rule of Władysław IV, Jan Kazimierz, and Michał Korybut. This fact was ridiculed by Stefan Czarniecki, Jan III Sobieski, and the majority of the nation, because wigs, invented in

among the British was improved. Earlier, in 1649, after the execution of King Charles I, "the Polish Sejm voted a subsidy for the exiled Stuart dynasty, a move which did not meet with much approval in London" (Mizwa 1942: 103).

⁴⁸ Some, such as the 16th-century chronicler Maciej Strykowski, believed that the vogue for short hair came to Poland from Lithuania, where the Tartars harassed its citizens (Besala 2008: 74).

France for fear of baldness and aging, unlike helmets, were synonym of effeminacy (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 3: 335). Nor were, as opposed to the Muscovite habit, full-length beards too popular; a long handlebar moustache was, however. King Sobieski, for example, proudly possessed the handlebar whiskers, a custom eagerly followed by many of his subjects (Davies 2005: 191). Such looks frequently evoked negative feelings in many foreigners. An instance of this comes from the Prussian Frederick II, who called Poles “Savages” and “the Iroquois of the North”, both because of what was on their heads and inside them. Tsarina Catherine, in turn, wrote that on the Vistula “every head is a whirl that constantly revolves, and if it stops, it is accidental and never due to wisdom” (Besala 2008: 74).

Vogues were strictly connected with the fact that among the Polish noblemen there were many mercenaries (Davies 2005: 191). The appearance of the *szlachta* was copied by their servants, who further passed it on to other commoners (Tazbir 2001: 109). Nevertheless, we should not be under the mistaken notion that western fashion did not come to Poland at all. Frequent contacts with the West facilitated the borrowing of British or French styles (Kolek 2002: 158). Next to attire and hairstyles, a very wide assortment of English goods became trendy. Even during the times of Stanisław August Poniatowski, Warsaw shopping arcades offered an array of English products, from carriages and toothpicks, to beer (Schulz 1956: 82, as cited in Lipoński 1978: 94). Brückner (1939, 2: 813) confirms that western fashions were not infrequent in Poland: whereas Sobieski and Leszczyński wore Polish garments, Ladislaus Vasa (Pol. *Władysław Waza*) and both Saxon kings did so only when they wanted to adulate the *szlachta*. Poniatowski approved of the French style, as well, but during his reign and thanks to him uniforms for MPs were introduced in order to do away with dressing up.

Bearing in mind the above illustration, the next piece of information about Thaddeus Sobieski’s air should not look queer to the reader. It comes from a London pawnbroker’s shop where Thaddeus is forced to sell his precious stones, to which – their being his family souvenirs – he feels emotionally attached. The Jewish proprietor’s impression of the Polish aristocrat is reflected in the subsequent quote: “He had been accustomed to similar requests from the emigrant French *noblesse*: but there was a loftiness, and air of authority in the countenance and mien of this person which surprised and awed him; and with a respect which even the application could not counteract, he opened the case, and inquired of Thaddeus what was the price he affixed to it”

(TW, 1831: 122). The next passage does not set forth any concrete feature of the nobleman's appearance, but it shows that the Pole must both look attractive physically and be of good character. The lyricist shares such a thought about the Polander: "He was in an elegant apartment, he was in the company of two lovely and accomplished women, and he was the object of their entire attention and gratitude. He had been used to this in his days of happiness, when he was '*the expectancy and rose of the fair state, the glass of fashion and the mould of form, the observed of all observers!*'" (TW, 1831: 159). Nonetheless, a young English lady, Miss Sophia Egerton, unlike her predecessors, sees nothing elegant or worth complimenting in the count's outfit. More than that: she expresses sarcastic remarks to show that the way he is attired looks ridiculous: "Do, for Heaven's sake, my dear Don Quixote, (...) let us see you out of your rusty armour! I declare I am tired at the sight. And I cannot but think you would be merrier out of that *customary suit of solemn black!* (...) I expect you will do as I bid you now, and put on a Christian's coat against you next enter this house" (TW, 1831: 169-170). And when one day Sobieski listens to the advice and shows up in an English piece of garment, Miss Egerton exclaims: "I declare I have conquered! Look, Lady Tinemouth; look, Lady Sara! If Mr. Constantine does not better become this English dress than his Polish horrors, drown me for a false prophetess! (...) Now, you look like a Christian; before, you always reminded me of some stalking hero in a tragedy" (TW, 1831: 177). The Polish commander's reaction to the English aristocrat's impolite remarks is one of the best possible and leaves little room for arguing, as he cheerfully replies: "I knew not till you were so kind as to inform me that a man's temper depends on his clothes" (TW, 1831: 169).

It is very striking that in Jane Porter's publication descriptions of English attire take up less space than Polish attire. This is possibly because the authoress was British and garments of her country could have seemed to her perhaps not less important but less unusual than Polish ones, thus less stimulating to write about. Thaddeus of Warsaw, a Polish person, spurs wonder and sometimes controversy over his looks, and this may have been held by Porter as worth depicting. On the contrary, the English heroes existing in the same volumes do not look so peculiar to one another (and the writer) and hence are dealt with less often. Nonetheless, the bewilderment, often in the negative sense, of the English characters from *Thaddeus of Warsaw* caused by the Pole's dress seems to necessitate a presentation of what was mainly worn among the high classes in England in the period in question. A closer look at *English Costume From the Seven-*

teenth Through the Nineteenth Centuries by James Laver (text) and Iris Brooke (drawings) will provide the reader with more than the basics in this matter. The beginning of the 18th century in England saw an increase in trade with India thanks to the activity of the East India Company, which resulted in the popularity of Indian calicoes (Brooke and Laver 1931: 104). At the same time, similarly to other west European countries, French trends in fashion were strongly felt, though the previous century had been influenced by simple puritan clothing (Lipoński 2005: 374). Unlike in Poland, in England the craze for the loose and long *contouche* ended its heyday in the mid 1700s. “Instead, there was introduced a gown or *robe ronde*, which opened from the waist downwards to display an underdress of the same material. In morning attire the place of the *contouche* was taken by various kinds of powder-mantles or dressing-jackets” (Brooke and Laver 1931: 124). Another difference between Polish and English gear concerned the covering of the head. Rather than the fur cap (Pol. *kolpak*), the English chose the three-cornered hat, and in the last decades of the century the one similar to that of Napoleon (Lipoński 2005: 376), as the end of the Seven Years’ War let French modes cause a furore in England one more time. “French hairdressers, milliners, and modistes arrived in London in considerable numbers and found ready patrons among the wealthy English aristocracy. Englishmen and women began to pay visits to Paris and to bring new fashions with them on their return” (Brooke and Laver 1931: 138). However, the 1790s marked the predominance of English fashions over French ones once for all. “The ‘European dress’ established at the beginning of the century by the prestige of the French Court now gave place to a coat recognisably similar to that worn to-day in evening-dress” (160). In addition, one of the popular images of 18th-century English attire is that it was more formal and elaborate than nowadays. In fact, it was much simpler and one of the causes of its simplicity was sport – a very important pedagogical means in this country. One’s skills not bloodlines mattered in the playground; besides, clothes had to be manageable to ensure comfortable moves, and this, in turn, led to the democratization of gear as such (Lipoński 2005: 472-473).⁴⁹

⁴⁹ To find out more about the matter, the reader is advised to supplement such information in, for instance, *Dzieje kultury brytyjskiej* [A History of British Culture] (2005) by Lipoński. There, the Polish scholar tackles, among others, the issue of British garments of clothing. The intricate information stretches from coats, waistcoats, frock-coats, trousers, and skirts; through flounces, pockets, collars, various ornaments, footgear, and uniforms of different armed forces; ending in hats, wigs, and perfume. Moreover, the descriptions show how fashion altered over time, not neglecting the dress of women and children. Additionally, English clothing is compared with that of France (Lipoński 2005: 374-377), where

Owing to the disparity between typical Polish (elaborate) and English (simple) garments, Jane Porter makes a point when she shows her novel's English heroes admiring or mocking Thaddeus's gear. Polish oriental, extravagant, and rich uniforms of the day might have evoked ironic comments in the English viewer. As has been said, such attire was observed in plays staged in London, and so Porter's Thaddeus is called "a stalking hero in a tragedy", as some Britons, to put it bluntly, laughed at it. In the era of colonisation, anything Indian, Turkish, or Arab – or Polish, as Polish elements were classified as eastern ones – was often frowned upon (Tazbir 2004a: 28), proof of which is the above quotations.

But where did this laughing at somebody due to a different piece of clothing come from? It is worth answering this strenuous query, because, firstly, mocking someone owing to their attire, as communicated by Porter through the character of Miss Egerton, has been going on since the beginning of fashion, and secondly, because not many people seem to know the roots of it. The answer is the printing press and the need to be different. In 1520, a book for tailors was published in Seville and later reprinted in all of Europe. This was a time when Spain was culturally influential through its hegemony on the continent and in its colonies; its trends were copied elsewhere, a consequence of which was the birth of fashion in its modern sense. And because the elite classes wanted to be dissimilar to commoners, more and more rules relating to proper behaviour were invented. These rules were first accepted in rich and powerful circles and then written down and edited. "Do not eat with open mouth", "do not eat with your hands – use a knife and fork", "do not blow your nose without a handkerchief", and so on. All such codes were in vogue, because they were associated with high socio-cultural status. Since the start of the 16th century, and until now, people have been tightening the noose around their necks, creating more and more regulations, which have made us self-controlled. The standards imposed by the aristocracy and the affluent middle class were thought of as not only better, but essential, as well. Better, because they represent

the people were not as clean as those in England, adds Krystyn Lach Szyrma ([1828] 1981: 139), a Polish person who travelled through France to Britain exploring the myriad behaviours of the British. Such and other peculiarities may be found in his book entitled *Anglia i Szkocja: Przypomnienia z podróży roku 1820-1824 odbytej* [Reminiscences of a Journey Through England and Scotland Made in 1820-1824]. The work includes nearly all dimensions of life in Britain in the period, and as far as the attention devoted is concerned, England and Scotland are represented on equal terms. Another work dealing with lifestyles in England is, for example, Koźmian's *Anglia i Polska* [England and Poland] (1862).

“civilisation”, and essential, because “other” means “impossible to control” (Rietbergen 2001: 226-229).

4.4. The Polish and their shortcomings

Should one go through Porter’s book inattentively, one might gain a false impression that the Polish of “Thaddeus Sobieski’s era” were flawless. A more careful study will bear quite a divergent fruit, however. No one, or to be more precise, no nation is or ever was spotless. In order to develop this point in connection with Poland the fragment about the kidnapping of the Polish crowned head could be given. A group of Polish traitors “on a Sunday night, the 3rd of September, in the year 1771, (...) confederated together” against the king (*TW*, 1831: 15).⁵⁰ While it is true to say that these lines testify to the heroism of the already-mentioned general Butzou, who rescues the potentate, it is as well evident that there must have been some transgressors.

Amongst their numerous crimes, a plan was laid for surprising and taking the royal person. Casimir Pułaski was the most daring of their leaders; and, assisted by Lukawski, Strawenski, and Kosinski, three Poles unworthy of their names, he resolved to accomplish his design or perish. Accordingly, the three latter, in obedience to his orders, with forty other conspirators, met at Czetschokow, and, in the presence of their commander swore with the most horrid oaths to deliver Stanislaus, alive or dead, into his hands (*TW*, 1831: 15-16).

Presumably, the kidnapping of the king was the work of the Confederation of Bar. In order to judge whether these acts were contemptible or not, we need to attempt an analysis of what led to them and the turbulences it brought. The problematic situation of Poland in 1767 created by, among others, the acts of the constitutions enforced by the Russian tsarina and the cruelty of her country fellowmen led in 1768 to the formation of a confederation at the town of Bar in Podolia, today’s Ukraine. The confederates, including such persons as Kazimierz Pułaski (1746 – 1779) and the Potocki, Sapieha, and

⁵⁰ The king was kidnapped on November 3, 1771 in Warsaw but was freed the following day. Allegedly, the kidnappers were Pułaski and Krasieński, but some scholars say there is little evidence, and they see the kidnapping as a Russian plot carried out to discredit Pułaski and the Bar Confederacy. The Russians benefited from this deed, as it gave them a pretext for the first partition of Poland in 1772. Pułaski may have tacitly endorsed the endeavour due to his resentment towards the Poniatowskis and the fact that he wanted to drive the Russians away (and maybe the Russian-installed King too) (Byczkiewicz 2006: 1191; “Stanisław August Poniatowski”, 2009).

Kraśiński clans, wanted to end the Russian aggression and “the nadir of the Polish Anarchy” (Davies 1982: 519).⁵¹ The Polish king was at first inclined to negotiate between the Confederates and Russia, represented by Nikolay Repnin, but finding this impossible, he sent a force against them under Grand Hetman Franciszek Ksawery Branicki (1730 – 1819), who captured Bar (“Bar Confederation”, 2008).⁵² At the same time in Ukraine, an uprising of peasants and Cossacks (Pol. Kozacy) occurred, known as the Koliwshchyzna (Pol. Koliwsczyczna). During the rebellion, more than 20,000 Catholics and Jews were murdered, and it brought about severe retribution from the Poles and Russians. However, while chasing the confederates, the allied Russian and Polish troops crossed the Polish-Turkish border. This fact, as well as the unfulfilled promise of Russia to withdraw her troops from the territory of the Commonwealth, led the Ottoman Empire to declare war on Russia (Davies 1982: 519-520). The confederates under Ignacy Malczewski (ca. 1738 – 1782), Michał Pac (1754 – 1800), and Prince Karol Radziwiłł (1734 – 1790) won a few battles with the Russians, and finally, ignoring the king, sent envoys of their own to the main European powers. In 1770, the Council of Bar Confederation conducted diplomatic negotiations with France, Austria, and Turkey, hoping to create a league against Russia. (In 1771, Austria joined her traditional enemy Turkey, because Russia’s army had not retreated from Poland) (Rostworowski 1977: 687). Meanwhile, the Council of Bar Confederation proclaimed the king dethroned. While he was considering uniting with the Confederation, the monarch was kidnapped in unclear circumstances and “he thereupon reverted to the Russian faction, and the Confederation lost the interest of monarchist Europe” (Gieysztor and Kieniewicz 1968: 326). Nevertheless, its army was thoroughly reorganized by Charles François Dumouriez (1739 – 1723), who was sent to Poland by the court of Versailles to act as commander-in-chief

⁵¹ The term “anarchy” with regard to Poland is said to have been used for the first time by Peter the Great of Russia at the beginning of the 18th century. In the first volume of a French encyclopaedia the longest article under the letter “A” is titled “Anarchy” and is all about 18th-century Poland (Davies 1998a: 547; Tazbir 2000).

⁵² Repnin Nikolay Vasilyevich, Knyaz (Pol. *Kniaź*) (1734 – 1801) diplomat and military officer who served Catherine II the Great of Russia by greatly increasing Russia’s influence over Poland before the partitions. In 1762, he was transferred from Berlin to Warsaw, where he tried to assert Russia’s dominance over the weak Polish government. In 1768, with the aid of Russian troops and pro-Russian Polish nobles, he compelled the Sejm to accept the principle of Russia’s right to intervene in Polish internal affairs. Later, he was made supreme commander of the Russian armies in the Ottoman Empire. In 1775-76, he was ambassador to the Ottoman Empire and in 1794, governor-general of the Lithuanian provinces of Poland after the 2nd partition. Two years later, he was appointed field marshal (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (henceforth *NEB*), 1999: 1032-1033).

of the Confederates. He skilfully carried on with the hopeless struggle, the last traces of which did not cease until 1776 (“Bar Confederation”, 2008).

One can now see how difficult it is to be decided about who and what was righteous and who and what was not. The term “confederation” itself brings even more ambiguity, as this armed association was also a strange combination of elements of rebellion and legality (Zawadzki 2001: 13). There are certainly those who would contend that the actions of confederates were patriotic, because the Kingdom’s affairs were being steered by Petersburg. On the other hand, it must be said that a number of magnates joined the confederation principally to thwart Polish reformers in their attempts to limit the power and privileges of the magnates. Nevertheless, Jane Porter in her romance definitely asserts that the action of kidnapping the monarch, as well as those who carried it out were despicable. The following is how she saw the course of this incident (presented here in an abridged version). Both the preceding and the subsequent accounts come from Thaddeus’ grandfather:

About a month after this meeting, these noblemen of their country, at the head of their coadjutors, disguised as peasants, and concealing their arms in wagons of hay, which they drove before them, entered the suburbs of Warsaw undetected. It was about ten o’clock P. M., on the 3rd of September, as I have told you, they found an apt opportunity to execute their scheme. They placed themselves, under cover of the night, in those avenues, of the city through which they knew his majesty must pass in his way from Villanow, where he had been dining with me. His carriage was escorted by four of his own guards, besides myself and some of mine. We had scarcely lost sight of Villanow, when the conspirators rushed out and surrounded us, commanding the coachman to stop, and beating down the serving men with the butt ends of their muskets. Several shots were fired into the coach. One passed through my hat as I was getting out, sword in hand, the better to repel an attack the motive of which I could not then divine. A cut across my right leg with a sabre laid me under the wheels; and whilst in that situation, I heard the shot pouring into the coach like hail, and felt the villains stepping over my body to finish the murder of the king. (...) During the latter part of this outrageous scene, some of our affrighted people, who had fled, returned with a detachment, and seeing Butzou and me apparently lifeless, carried us to the royal palace, where all was commotion and distraction. But the footguards followed the track which the conspirators had taken. In one of the streets they found the king’s hat dyed in blood, and his pelisse also. This confirmed their apprehensions of his death; and they came back filling all Warsaw with dismay (TW, 1831: 16-17).

The following illustrates Porter’s growing contempt for the king’s “thieves”. In the 1831 version of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, when referring to the conspirators, as quoted previously, the British writer uses the words “these noblemen of their country”. In the 1845 edition, on the contrary, she calls them “these three parricides of their country” (TW, 1845). Also, some might be sceptical of Porter’s words about the king, already

mentioned in this section, which say: “the hearts of his people acknowledge him in a superior light; they look on him as their patriarchal head, as being delegated of God to study what is their greatest good.” Davies (1998a: 566-567) does not appear to agree with the view presented above. He says that the coronation of Stanisław August Poniatowski (lived 1732 – 1798, reigned 1764 – 1795) took place due to the fact that Prussia supported the choice: Frederick the Great (lived 1712 – 1786, reigned 1740 – 1786) wished to depose his Saxon rivals on the Polish throne. Secondly, Russia approved of Poniatowski because Catherine the Great (lived 1729 – 1796, reigned 1762 – 1796) believed that the new king would be her servant and realise her policies (Serczyk 1980: 11). Both Catherine and Frederick wanted to maintain the “Golden Freedom” of the Polish nobility – which in a word boiled down to their anarchic behaviour steered by private interests – to make it easy to control Poland’s fate. Thus, Russian troops together with members of the Czartoryski Familia encircled the Electoral Field and made sure that those nobles who had not already left the place “preferred” Poniatowski (Davies 1998a: 566-567).⁵³

In *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, during the Battle of Brześć, where heavy losses are inflicted on the “Polanders”, their bravery is put to the test. Fatigued, starved, decimated, and outnumbered, they might be excused for fleeing the battleground, but, as will be shown below, at least as related by the author, the orders are opposite to what the soldiers do.

Thaddeus with difficulty extricated himself from the bodies of the slain; and, fighting his way through the triumphant troops which pressed around him, amidst the smoke and confusion soon joined his terror-stricken comrades, who in the wildest despair were dispersing under a heavy fire, and flying like frightened deer. In vain he called to them - in vain he urged them to avenge Kosciusko; the panic was complete, and they fled (TW, 1831: 68-69).

The Polish soldiers are scared away and run away panic-stricken, ignoring their commander’s orders and losing the battle. Of course, few would question the Poles’, particularly the hussars’, fighting skills and readiness for battle, especially bearing in mind the state of the Polish army, which was, to put it gently, miserable. It was the Russian

⁵³ The Poland of the 18th century was left alone as long as her politics played into its neighbours’ hands. Consequently, one could describe Poland-Lithuania before the partitions as already not a completely sovereign state: in modern terms it would be rather a Russian satellite state, with Russian dictators effectively choosing the Polish kings. It was in this difficult political atmosphere that Poniatowski’s coronation took place (Davies 1998a: 566-567).

usurpers who made the decisions concerning the armed forces of Poland, in particular after the Silent Sejm (Pol. *Sejm Niemy*) (1717), so they rendered the country militarily impotent (though individual Polish soldiers were of great fighting capacity).⁵⁴ For instance, at the beginning of the 18th century, in spite of Poland's territory being nearly four times larger than today, with a population of 11 million, the army was as small as 12,000 men, though there were as many as 160,000 males who might have been conscripted into the army (Lord Eversley 1915b: 21). In 1788, it was enacted that the Polish army was to count 100,000 soldiers, but finances allowed for only 65,000 (Franaszek 2006: 336). During the reign of the Saxon kings in Poland, the Prussian army was 11 times stronger in terms of the number of troops than the Polish one, Austria had 17, and Russia 28 times more soldiers (Davies 1998a: 551). The powerful France of 1793, for example, had 1,000,000 men in the army (Żywczyński 1996: 96). No wonder then that the Polish army did not make a lasting stand against the enemy, but this shocking ratio must have resulted – next to the fierce militarisation of the Commonwealth's neighbours – from the fact that in the face of the extermination of Poland, her soldiers often preferred serving at magnates' courts than at the king's (Davies 1998a: 551).

Returning to *Thaddeus of Warsaw*: would it be possible that the pure, gallant, courageous, selfless, good-hearted, patriotic, and aristocratic Thaddeus Sobieski was a bit ethnocentric, nationalistic, or prejudiced, and maybe a bit nonchalant, or at least somebody who might look down on others? Although it cannot be stated without any doubt, in the passage below there is a great deal of such an air. The depiction has to do with a pawnbroker who is of Jewish origin. Thaddeus must pawn his jewellery to get by in England. Before the Pole sees the shop owner, he already has some preconceived idea about the Jew. In the first place, the palatine's grandson considers the man to be “not gentleman-like”. However, the mere appearance of the Jew, who proves to look “gentleman-like”, is enough for Thaddeus to direct his “not-so-nice thoughts” to a more

⁵⁴ Under the Silent Sejm of 1717, forced through by Prince Repnin, the Russian rulers were the only personages to introduce changes, and, not surprisingly, they often worked against the needs of Poland-Lithuania. The Russian demands included five “eternal and invariable” principles which Catherine vowed to “protect in the name of Poland's liberties”: the free election of kings, the right of liberum veto, the right to renounce allegiance to, and stage a rebellion against, the king (Pol. *rokosz*), the *szlachta*'s exclusive right to hold office and land, and the landowner's power of life and death over his peasants. Also, Repnin announced religious freedom for the Protestant and Orthodox Christians in Poland. The issue of religious tolerance often provided a pretext for Russia and Prussia to meddle in Polish domestic affairs. In fact, although the situation was not perfect in Poland, religious freedom in both Russia and Prussia left much more to be desired. The King and his supporters were left with little choice but to bow to the aforementioned demands, realising the superior Russian military force (Davies 1998a: 563).

“civil” track. Still, the Jew is a “low, sordid wretch” who makes people feel repugnant to him: “He was a gentleman-like man, and the count’s feelings took quite a different turn from those with which he had accosted the Jew, who, being a low, sordid wretch, looked upon the people with whom he trafficked as mere pieces of wood. Thaddeus felt little repugnance at bargaining with him” (*TW*, 1831: 122). One may wonder in whose mind the Jew is a low, sordid wretch: Sobieski’s or Porter’s. Nonetheless, in Porter’s piece of literature, it is the Pole who feels a “little repugnance” for having to deal with the pawnbroker, who treats him and everybody else with due respect. It is true, though, that it is hard to come across any other fragment that would throw such a negative light on Thaddeus. Therefore, having a look at the reality in reference to the toleration of Jews in Europe and in the Polish Kingdom seems worthwhile.

The subsequent sketch will be out of necessity rather general. When Jerusalem was captured and destroyed by the Roman Empire at the beginning of Anno Domini, the Jews ran away to the Mediterranean, a more and more Christian and hostile world. Whenever there was a conflict, they served as a scapegoat and were stigmatised as Christ’s murders (Rietbergen 2001: 264). In the same way the defenders of the Christian faith in Medieval Spain treated the Jews. Here, the process of their maltreatment, just like the Moors (Pol. *Maurowie*), could be boiled down to three points: demand for purity of language, demand for purity of religion, and demand for purity of race. When king Philip II expelled them from the Iberian kingdoms, many Jews wandered from place to place in countries such as Italy, Germany, or France, facing similar handling. Succour was given to them in North America and the Caribbean (231, 241). The victimised Jews found refuge in the Muslim world, too; they were as eagerly welcomed there as they were not welcomed in most of Christian Europe (164). In Poland, Jews arrived even before the Piast Dynasty as slave traders, but they had settled permanently since the 13th century, when they had escaped from the above-mentioned persecutions in Spain, France, and Germany. In 1264, against the objections of the clergy and nobility, Boleslaus the Pious (Pol. *Bolesław Pobożny*) granted them rights under the Kalisz Statute (Pol. *Przywilej Kaliski*) – including the freedom of religion and a guarantee of protection (Brückner 1939, 2: 1025-1028). One of the reasons for which Polish noblemen tolerated the Jewish was that the latter were entrusted with running the taverns of the former. This practise was very profitable for the *szlachta*, as alcohol sold in the taverns

came from the *szlachta*'s distilleries. Jankiel, the Jew from Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* ([1834] 1990: 107, 108), exemplifies such a situation:

“Żyd stary i powszechnie znany z pocziwości,
Od lat wielu dzierżawił karczmę, a nikt z włości,
Nikt ze szlachty nie zaniósł nań skargi do dworu:
O cóż skarżyć? miał trunki dobre do wyboru, (...)
On pierwszy zgodził klótnie, często nawet krwawe,
Między dwiema karczmami: obie wziął w dzierżawę.”

George Rapall Noyes' prose translation of this fragment (*Pan Tadeusz*, [1834] 1917: 97, 98) is as follows:

“The Jew was old, and famed everywhere for his probity; for many years he had been keeping the tavern, and no one either of the peasants or of the gentry had ever made complaint against him to his landlord. Of what should they complain? He had good drinks to choose from, (...) He was the first to bring to an end the quarrels between the two taverns, which had often led even to bloodshed, by leasing them both.”

Deterioration came together with usury (Pol. *lichwa*), forbidden for Christians but not alluded to in the Kalisz Statute, and so it flourished among Jews, which made them prosperous and which caused envy in Poles (Brückner 1939, 2: 1025-1028). The church cursed the Jews, calling them sinners and banning them from being buried in the cemeteries (1: 775). Such attacks, in turn, made the Jewish settle in enclaves such as Kazimierz in Kraków. Their family life was commendable: they took care of the diseased, old, and poor; yet, squeezed into their small, wooden, and poorly lit houses lived in unhygienic conditions. Anti-Semitism grew steadily and proportionally due to the envy aroused, for instance, by Jewish bankers (2: 1032-1036). They did their best to master the art of banking, because they could not possess land; Jews became a literate community among a mainly illiterate society (Rietbergen 2001: 143). With time, negative sayings and proverbs appeared, for example, Pol. *Żyda grześć* (to hide one's wrongdoing or crime) (Brückner 1939, 2: 1040). In Poland, together with such unfavourable phrases, various myths developed; for instance, it was believed that the Jewish were born blind and so needed the Host (Pol. *Hostia*) and Christian blood, which was, “naturally”, more expensive than Jewish blood (1931: 275). Anti-Semite literature was abundant, for example, priest Sebastian Miczyński's *Zwierciadło Korony Polskiej* [The Mirror of Poland] or Jan Achacy Kmita's pamphlets. What they called heaven for Jews abroad was

rather purgatory, though in other places of the continent it was not better (Brückner 1939, 1: 721). Hatred for Jews continued in spite of centuries of mutual existence. Brainless superstitions were not eradicated, as the Jewish lived in isolation. Suffering constant attacks and not infrequently being expelled from towns, they sought protection by supporting the strongest political powers, a fact which was known by Austria, Russia, and especially Prussia. They usually felt so alienated that they said they had no motherland at all (1931: 199-202). So it was in other parts of Europe, but in Poland, they constituted 10 per cent of the population, that is to say, over one million people (Grodziski 1999: 9). An apocalypse arrived with the Nazis in Germany, who used the prejudices against them, which had lurked in Europe for a thousand years (Rietbergen 2001: 410).

What was good about the *szlachta* in relation to toleration was that they treated one another with the same level of respect, but on condition that the person was of equal economic status. Unfortunately, lower down the scale, the situation was divergent; that is to say, if a high-born person shook hands with a commoner, it was a rarity, an honour for the one of “miserable” birth (Tazbir 1978: 26-27). Sadly, the betters in Poland were disdainful of the have-nots. Only towards the end of the Commonwealth’s existence were the *szlachta* willing to ennoble some townsmen (Rostworowski 1977: 93). If we remember this, along with the decrease in tolerance for Jews, Thaddeus’s first thoughts about the Jew, although still deserving criticism, no longer seem astounding.

There was something else about the Polish (but not exclusively) nobility that many would categorize as a shortcoming: something awkward, something peculiar, something incomprehensible today, and something to which most historians would pay little or no attention – though Tazbir does – namely a strong desire to be scarred, especially in the face. Some foreigners in Poland noticed that the more one’s face was carved up, the more he was regarded as respectable and masculine, even as late as the 19th century. Wounds “certified” the bearer’s intrepidity in battle, his eagerness to risk his life for his country. The owner did not have to prove his patriotism, since the scars spoke for themselves (Tazbir 2006b: 74-75). Literary records are full of verses dedicated to such scarring. There is a fragment by Władysław Bełza that, we can risk saying, every child in Poland knows (at least did in the recent past):

“Czym ta ziemia?
– Mą ojczyzną.

Czym zdobyta?
– Krwią i blizną” (Tazbir 2006b: 74-75).

The lines could be translated like this:

What is this land?
My native soil.
How was it (re)gained?
With blood and scar [translation mine, ML].

So what is wrong about hazarding one’s countenance if one defends his motherland? Is it a shortcoming in the first place? There would be nothing inappropriate in it; it would not be disadvantageous should it not derive, most of the time, from vanity. Vanity in the shape of the desire to be seen as scarred and thus brave, vanity connected with parties, feasts, being friendly with alcohol, quarrelsomeness, an improper perception of honour (Tazbir 2006b: 74-75). (None of these are described by Porter). Prussian and Austrian historians of the period called the Polish “Barben des Ostens” in order to justify the partitions (Korzon 1889: 31). A Scottish political writer Jan Barclay (1613) wrote this about the “Sarmatians”: “This is a violent nation, zealous for revelry and fights, full of insubordination that they call freedom. They believe more in themselves than in God” (Tazbir 1998). Mention could also be made of the French officer Dumouriez’ remark about the *szlachta*: “Characteristic of them is the Asian mentality, amazing lavishness, crazy expenses, and all day long banquets” (Korzon 1889: 33). How swaggering a Polish nobleman could be is exemplified by Tadeusz Kościuszko *per se*. In 1806, the French Minister Fouche on behalf of Bonaparte asked the “Polander” to mobilize his forces and get them ready for battle. The account might be freely put like this:

Kościuszko: “What will my nation get for this?”
Fouche: “It is improper to query like this, because the Emperor can order you, Sir, anything and take you wherever he wishes.”
Kościuszko: “True, because I am residing in his dominions. But may Napoleon not snub Poland, or else may Providence protect him!”
Fouche: “You may be sorry for your words, Sir.”
Kościuszko: “Tell Napoleon to treat Poland as a friend, as it is in his own interest” (Korzon 1894: 519-520).

Physical work (and it seems that mental work, too) according to representatives of this social stratum was shameful; hence, it was fitting merely for the lower classes. Tradesmen, for instance, were thought of as cheaters, making their fortunes at the cost of the

honest and easily-deceived landed gentry. Such an approach was symptomatic of the gentry in Britain as well, however (Tazbir 1978: 33). Agriculture was an exception, as it brought to the nobleman liberty, independence, stoical peace, and realised the ideal of being noble (16-19). As Kurdybacha (1938: 15) puts it, “*szlachcic* is happy since he works when he wishes, accepts nobody above him, and wears what he likes” [translation mine, ML].

Of course, Porter cannot be blamed for not presenting every single minus of Poles’ characteristics, as this was obviously not her aim. Still, it appears that too few are the evils pictured by her. For instance, Porter in the appendix to her book exhibits substantial familiarity with Polish history from as early as the Piasts, so in order to be more credible, she could have sketched an excerpt about, say, Ukrainians having been invaded by the Polish since Casimir the Great (Pol. *Kazimierz Wielki*) (lived 1310 – 1370, reigned 1333 – 1370) onwards (Davies 1998a: 109), or the fact that throughout the 17th and 18th centuries the *magnateria* of Poland and Lithuania – for their private purposes – managed to seize political, military, and economic power over the Union. They successfully torpedoed any reform which might enfranchise the lower and wretched classes, which constituted around 90% of society, and thus undermine the magnates’ highly privileged position. Porter did not seem to notice that many of them worried predominantly about their own lives, full of luxury, but neglected or misinterpreted their patriotic duties to their fatherland. The author of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* could have made the observation that a principal cause of the country’s downfall was the implementation of the *liberum veto*, which since 1652 had made it possible for any Sejm deputy to nullify all the legislative effort that had been put into law by that Sejm. Or that reform programmes frequently gave way to bribery, not rarely initiated by foreign powers such as Russia, Prussia, and Austria, which all benefited from the Commonwealth’s chaos and weakness (1998b: 707). There is nothing in the novel about other anomalous aspects of the nobility’s life. Murder, to give an example, was considered less serious than, for instance, rape, in particular when the transgressor was a commoner and the victim a noblewoman. In such cases, the rapist earned a death sentence. Being killed, as distinct from being raped, was merely considered a risk, as everybody carried a sword. However, a person who maliciously initiated a fraud (Pol. *nagana*) was punished in Poland with decapitation and in Lithuania by flogging” (2005: 182). The author of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, depicting the country’s virtues, omits plenty of other unpleasant facts about

the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. For example, she is very productive when showing the splendour of the Polish nobles, their character, education, hospitality, housing, the happiness of peasants, etc., but she does not disclose the other side of the coin: the horrid actuality that the majority had to face. Many of her counterparts in Britain do, however, because the Poland of the Stanisławian era saw an influx of foreigners: tourists, officials, scholars, chroniclers, and military men. The following is a report of town life, villages, and people in Poland, written by James Harris, the previously mentioned politician, when he crossed the German-Polish border: “Frauenstadt [(Pol. *Wschowa*)] bore, however, few marks of the blessings of liberty – bad houses, in ruins, great appearance of poverty, and crowds of Jews and beggars; and here I may say, once for all, that the few towns I passed through on the road are of the most pitiful sort” (Harris [1844] 2001: 9). In the villages in Harris’s *Diaries and Correspondence* the “greatest poverty reigns.” There are no houses, but merely huts accommodating a whole family in one gloomy chamber. The head of the family has a sort of mock bed; the rest must settle for a place on the floor, with the smallest children creeping into the oven. “The only comfort they seem to enjoy is, a thorough plenty of fuel; they being able to procure wood, merely for the pains of fetching it” (9-10). The earl then portrays the Polish *magnateria*, and as a representative he chooses Prince Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł of Nieśwież, nicknamed *Panie Kochanku* “the darling Lord”. According to Harris, the Prince, who was always seen wearing old-style Polish dress, was so great a sot that Repnin employed a colonel and sixty troops in his hotel to stop him from drinking. “I saw him myself”, reports the diarist, “the very day after the Diet was dissolved and the soldiers retired from his palace, come quick into Repnin’s and bluster that now he had a right so to do” (21-22):

He gave a masquerade on the Empress of Russia’s birthday to near three thousand masks; and they calculated that, besides other wines, there was drunk a thousand bottles of champagne. The profuse prodigality of all Polish feast is beyond comprehension. This Prince every day keeps an open house to so many people that his five-and-twenty cooks could scarce supply them. The two brothers Czartoriski [sic] likewise have public dinners and suppers every day for as many as please to come, and these two houses are the great resort of strangers; that of Prince Radzivil is quite a Polish one (Harris [1844] 2001: 22).

“Their great article of luxury is Hungary wine”, resumes the Lord Malmesbury, “which they have in greatest perfection, but pay an immense price.” The tables were greatly served in the French style, and the place possessed by the Prince could be regarded as a

town, as “there were in it all sorts of artificers, and a great ‘Seigneur’ never need send out of his own walls for anything.” Prince Czartoryski’s personal attendants and servants, informs the author, numbered up to 375. “The number of his country house is infinitely greater, besides his troops, which consist of three or four thousand men” (22).

The pen of Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall, also presented earlier, when sketching life in the country and town – this time in the capital – is as harsh as Malmesbury’s. In his *Memoirs of the Courts of Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw, and Vienna: In the Years 1777, 1778, and 1779*, he writes that he saw “no marks of opulence, cultivation, or luxury” that one would expect drawing near a capital. Warsaw itself appeared to him to be a combination of extremes: civilization and barbarism, magnificence and wretchedness, splendour and misery. However, he says, “unlike all other great cities of Europe, these extremes are not softened, approximated, and blended by any intermediate gradations” (Wraxall 1806: 3). The palaces of the affluent mix with the sheds of the have-nots on a scale that shows that Poland is very backward: “It is like an assemblage of nobles and slaves, of lords and vassals, such as the darkness of the middle ages, when feudal tyranny prevailed universally, might have exhibited; but which, happily for mankind, is now no where to be seen except in Poland. Even Constantinople is in this respect far less barbarous” (4). The judgements about the middle class in Poland expressed by this British explorer are very uncompromisingly uninviting, as well. Wraxall’s understanding of this stratum of society is such: “The middle orders of men who everywhere else form the most numerous class citizens, the most useful, and the most industrious appear hardly to have any existence here” (3-4). His descriptions of the interior of houses are as unappealing as Malmesbury’s, so very different from Porter’s, who devotes her energy to the Polish manors of the rich, rather than the slums of the poor. On the evening of his departure from Warsaw, the traveller, “more from necessity than choice”, had to stay over “in a wretched hovel inhabited by Jews.” He writes: “There I passed the night, stretched on dirty straw, among ducks, pigs, Poles, and Jewesses; devoured by vermin, and unable to sleep on account of the heat, as well as the smells which annoyed me” (137). This author’s opinion about the situation in Poland is in fact so low that in his *Memoirs* he reckons that due to the oppression and misery that lurk in every nook and cranny, Poland can be depopulated (2). In his accounts, he actually expresses surprise that “with such great opulence and disorder, with powerless, tyrannical, and uncontrollable nobility, with the impotence of the government, with people sunk in slavery, igno-

rance, oppression, and poverty, the natural death of Poland had not crept earlier” (12, 138).

Berkeley, for his part, describes Poles as a kind of “schizophrenic” nation, because next to their merit there is always something wrong about them. He writes that Poland is a brave nation, but eats immensely and likes laziness. The *szlachta* give precedence to liberty and equality, but they will not share them with the commoners. They love their country, but love wealth, as well. They love their kings, but spoil their laws. No feast ends without a squabble, and a traitor is he who refuses to drink. They live in slovenliness together with their cows and pigs. The inns are the worst and a traveller can hardly find bread there. Lords build splendid mansions, but then let them deteriorate. Their faith is strong, yet they do not like keeping their word (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 4: 250-251).

The world-famous British thinker and economist Adam Smith (1723 – 1790), in his work entitled *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* ([1776] 1999: 345-346), has no better vision of Poland’s economic strength, or rather weakness. From his standpoint, Poland is a country where the feudal system still exists, making it “as beggarly a country as it was before the discovery of America.” Even the two extremely impoverished countries in Western Europe, that is, Spain and Portugal, are, according to Smith, above Poland.

Others, such as William Coxe (1784: 201-202, 270), showed the situation under consideration as if they did not want to be outdone by the ones whose conceptions of Poles have already been elucidated. He was struck with the monotony of the landscape (“vast tracts of thick gloomy forests”), the large number of Jews, the poor state of the roads in the Lithuanian part of the Commonwealth, and the colossal discrepancy between the lavishness of the richest and misery of the poorest social strata.

Joseph Marshall (1772: 242), who travelled all round northern Europe with a view to learning the methods and techniques suitable for farming in climates similar to that in the new American colonies, made a Baltic tour in 1769 – 1770. He went to Denmark, Sweden, Lapland, Finland, and St Petersburg. Next, he made two long journeys across the territory of the Polish estates: the first in 1669 across Byelorussia, and a year later the second, from Courland (Pol. *Kurlandia*) to Silesia (Pol. *Śląsk*). He estimated that the condition of Polish labourers was worse than that of their Russian counterparts.

Notwithstanding this, one of the roughest estimation about Polish patricians being coarse was penned by Daniel Defoe.

In Poland this vanity of birth is carry'd up to such a monstrous extravagance that the name of gentleman and the title of a *Starost*, a *Palatine*, or a *Castollan* gives the man a superiority over all the vassals or common people, infinitely greater than that of King or Emperor, reigning over them with more absolute Power, and making them more miserable than the subjects either of the Grand Seignior or the Cham of Tartary, insomuch that they trample on the poorer people as dogs and frequently murder them: and when they do are accountable to nobody... For take the nobility and gentry of POLAND... as they appear in history; in the first place, they are the most haughty, imperious, insulting people in the world. A very valuable historian of our times sayes they are *proud, insolent, obstinate, passionate, furious*. These are indeed the born gentlemen... (Defoe 1890: 21, 29-31, as quoted in Davies 2005: 182).

Defoe's heavy literary bombardment of Poles does not cease with the above remarks. In *The Dyet of Poland. A Satyr* he launches yet another attack:

“The Land too happy would the People bless,
Could they agree to know their Happiness [...]
But Peopl'd with a hard'ned Thankless Race,
Whise crinmes add Horror to the milder place” (Defoe 1705: 2).

He sees in Polish people the tendency to quarrel, blindness, and the impossibility to appreciate their homeland. This English writer calls Poles a “thankless race” and accuses them of brutal dealings with the weak. Referring to the weak, or, using the author's exact wording “the milder place”, might have meant either the Polish neighbouring countries, assaulted by Poland at some point in history, or very well the lower ranks of the Polish social ladder. In another fragment of the same satire, Defoe compares the Poles' fury, thirst for blood, their lack of virtues, good manners, and pride to the weather. The climate is as rude and cold as the Polish themselves. It is also noticeable that for this satirist, next to the worthlessness of Poland, this country is remote, alienated, and forsaken by the rest of Europe.

“In Nortehrñ Climes where furious tempests blow,
And Men more furious raise worse storms below,
At Nature's Elbow, distant and remote
Happy for Europe had she been forgot [...]
Under the Arctic Circle of the Sky
Where vertues Streams run Low, and Natures high,
For heat of Clime too far, of Blood too nigh
Tempere'd for Plenty, plenteously supply'd,

With Men advanc'd in ev'ry Grace but Pride
A mighty Nation throngs the groaning Land,
Rude as the Climate, num'reous as the Sand" (Defoe 1705: 1).⁵⁵

It is difficult to balance such very negative visions of *Rzeczpospolita* and to console oneself that perhaps reality was not that bad. Because is it really consoling to hint that, next to the dismal picture demonstrated above, Brückner (1931: 155) – an expert on how travellers from abroad deemed Poland – wrote that life in, for example, Warsaw was in fact normal? That in his opinion foreigners visiting Poland's capital did not complain about immorality? (Rather about a life of excess and extravagance such as playing cards). Balls were flashy, he admits, but just like those in other countries. Is it comforting that Polish preachers and satirists, as this author sees it, exaggerated the wrongness of Poles? Or that the Stanisławian times saw the doubling of Warsaw's inhabitants, hotels, palaces, theatres, and hospitals? Is it soothing that crowds of visitors from all over Poland were attracted to bull, dog, bear, and wolf fights, dancing, picnics, circuses, dinners, hazard, sejms and what not? (Beauty contests were not there yet). That hospitality, luxurious dining and clothing of ladies, and openness were admired? (English, French, Italian, or German parties were seen as humble and stiff). Is it satisfactory that the evils of Warsaw were comparable to other European cities, with the difference that Warsaw did not hide it? What is the good of all this if on the negative side the same professor talks about quarrelling, drinking, flirting, and lack of morality? Little is "the good of all this" if "servants were many but hungry. The city was always dirty but expensive. In the provinces there was a shortage of taverns, and those existing were squalid" (265, 273-274). The villagers were impoverished and the landscape monotonous. Life was filled with divorce, mistresses, intrigues, card-sharping (Pol. *szulerstwo*), wastefulness, vanity, boastfulness, pride, and envy, from the king down to the *szlachta*. Shameful roads matched with equally shameful taverns, mostly in Jews' hands, which guaranteed three attractions: bugs, stink, and low quality drinks. Food did not necessarily appear on this list; consequently, the *szlachta* carried food with them, and did so with bed sheets. These were useful for inconvenient carriages and nights

⁵⁵ Both fragments of *The Dyet of Poland. A Satyr* were obtained by courtesy of prof. W. Lipoński, who provided me with the text scanned from original Defoe's satire. The untypical orthography and emphasis by capital letters is maintained as in the original text of Defoe. This text, although written personally by Defoe, was published under fictitious name Anglipoloski of Lithuaniae. Nevertheless, the real name of Defoe can be deciphered on the basis of the introduction to this satirical piece.

spent in barns because of the tragic state of the inns. The mighty stayed at their relatives' palaces or mansions and travelled grandiosely. For example, Stanisław Lubomirski (1772 – 1782) is said to have needed five days to set out on a journey: with guards on the first day, stablemen on the second, musicians on the third, then hunters, and finally the magnate with his glamorous court. Prince Adam Czartoryski needed 400 horses and 14 camels to transfer from Puławy to Volhynia (Pol. *Wołyń*). The costs of such expeditions must have been enormous. The whole commotion, which amazed foreigners, was often captured on drawings of famous artists (Brückner 1939, 2: 756-758). And hygiene? Foreigners, as could already be concluded, complained a lot about its condition. The level of it, as Brückner puts it, was lamentable, and as an example we have a Jewish surgeon who cut human bodies with his penknife. There were those who believed that pox was divine retribution (such people could be found today, too), and thus you need not do anything about it. This gave folk healers a chance to display their skills; for instance, they treated patients without even seeing them or made epileptics drink fresh blood. This “cure”, however, was not restricted only to Poland, and it was not the most absurd thing medicine offered. If somebody came down with a venereal disease, the poor thing was immersed to the head in... dung (Pol. *łajno*). In medical emergency services, drowning people were hung head down to get the water out. This and the previous show of medical excellence not rarely ended in death. King Poniatowski's surgeon De la Fontaine was petrified by the number of invalids and beggars. A general aversion to vaccines among the clergy and old practitioners, who called vaccinating charlatanism, prevented De la Fontaine from using this method, and many children fell victim as a result. Fortunately, bright people such as Hugo Kołłątaj and Michał Poniatowski forced town councils to press for changes, and so first hospitals appeared. The German press wrote about the Hospital of Baby Jesus (Pol. *Szpital Dzieciątka Jezus*) in 1771 (1931: 274-276).

Was the actuality that bad? Did the British (and others) harbour only antagonistic feelings for Poniatowski's motherland? Certainly, there were exceptions such as the mentioned head of the Knights' School and the author of *Letters Concerning the Present State of Poland* (1773), John Lind. He had lived in Warsaw and had served both as a teacher and as a British Minister; of all the commentators of that time he was probably the one who knew Poland most intimately (Davies 1983: 82). He coordinated the teach-

ing of many subjects in the Knights' School and, just like Locke and Rousseau, was against physical punishment for students) (Butterwick 2000: 224-225).

There was Horace Walpole (1719 – 1797), the English gothic writer and politician, who called the invading powers “the most impudent association of robbers that ever existed” and Frederick the Great “a pickpocket” (Davies 1983: 80).

There was the Scottish poet Thomas Campbell (1777 – 1844), the author of the extensive work entitled *The Pleasures of Hope* (Pol. *Rozkosz nadziei*) of 1797, in which the piece *The Downfall of Poland* (Pol. *Upadek Polski*) (1799) is included. Literature experts suggest that the poem was created, because the Scottish poet was inspired by Kościuszko's visit in England (Gołębiowska 2001: 8). Campbell wrote these lines in order to pay tribute to the Polish cause; many excerpts are dedicated to Kościuszko, his comrades-in-arms, and Poland, for instance:

“In vain, alas! in vain, ye gallant few!
From rank to rank your volley'd thunder flew;
Oh! bloodiest picture in the book of Time,
Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime;
Found not a generous friend, a pitying foe,
Strength in her arms, nor mercy in her woe!
Dropp'd from her nerveless grasp the shatter'd spear,
Clos'd her bright eye, and curb'd her high career;
Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,
And Freedom shriek'd... as Kosciusko fell!” (*The Pleasures of Hope*, 29).

The Downfall of Poland guaranteed Campbell fame, and the last two of the cited verses are said to have been known by nearly every Englishman and many Frenchmen. The translation of Koźmian (1861: 16) is given below:

“Nadzieja świata przestała być wróżką
I Wolność jęła, kiedy legł Kościuszko.”

Włodzimierz Lewik's rendition is different but as much emotional:

“Nadzieja już dobrą przestała być wróżką
I Wolność oniemiała – kiedy padł Kościuszko” (Grzegorzcyk 1961: 243).

Because of the fragments relating to Poland and Kościuszko, an edition of *The Pleasures of Hope* was banned from publishing by the court in Vienna (Irving 1981: 138). In 1831, in connection with the November Uprising, Campbell wrote *Lines on Poland*

(Pol. *Strofy Polskie* or *Do Polski*), where he heaps scorn on England for its passivity and on the tsar, whom he calls a murderer (Lipoński 2000b: 460). It should be reminded at this point that Campbell was the chairperson of the Literary Society of Friends of Poland (*Encyklopedia powszechna*, 1860: 838). It was there that the Polish immigrants and British polonophiles met, with prominent personae of literature, including women (Kozmian: 1862: 10).

Another exception to the general rule was definitely the Irish philosopher and politician Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797). In his *Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (1804), he dedicates a whole chapter to Poland's political situation. At first he admits that in this country there was a powerless monarch, defiant nobles, people without arts, industry, commerce, or liberty, and no productive public force, but then he adds that it was the fault of "a foreign force, which entered a naked country at will, and disposed of every thing at pleasure" (Burke 1804: 97). One might say that he knew what he was saying in 1804, as fourteen years earlier he had observed the disastrous developments in France at the beginning of the French Revolution. He was one of the first prominent figures on the British Isles to expressively animadvert upon the Revolution there. And although he makes no direct reference to Poland in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), his is as severely against the brute force in France as he is against it in the context of Poland's partitionists, which he voiced in the aforementioned *Works*. The latter piece is in fact an immense demonstration of his support for the Polish cause. He describes the changes that were happening in Poland under such unbelievably difficult circumstances.

In contemplating that change, humanity has everything to rejoice and to glory in: nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to suffer. So far as it has gone, it probably is the most pure and defecated public good which ever has been conferred on mankind. We have seen anarchy and servitude at once removed; a throne strengthened for the protection of the people, without trenching on their liberties; all foreign cabal banished, by changing the Crown from elective to hereditary (Burke 1804: 98).

Burke writes that the changes required no loss of life, nobody suffered degradation. Everybody from the king to the labourer was better off in their condition. It was, in Burke's opinion, a "happy wonder" an "unheard-of conjunction of wisdom and fortune", because:

Not one drop of blood was spilled; no treachery; no outrage; no system of slander more cruel than the sword; no studied insults on religion, morals, or manners, no spoil; no confiscation; no citizen beggared; none imprisoned; none exiled; the whole was effected with a policy, a discretion, an unanimity and secrecy, such as have never been before known on any occasion; but such wonderful conduct was reserved for this glorious conspiracy in favour of the true and genuine rights and interests of men (Burke 1804: 99-100).

Towards the end, the thinker makes an exclamatory wish for the citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: "Happy people, if they know to proceed as they have begun!" (100). Sadly, his wish did not come true.

What else may be added to Walpole's, Campbell's, Burke's, Lind's, and naturally Porter's stance in order to balance the many hostile accounts of Poland as such? Maybe that other British literary figures of high profile were engaged in Poland's freedom or at least in demonstrating a more positive picture of this country? Well, the addressee must be ready to have this mist of hope dispelled. None of the chief Romantic poets (except Campbell) took a serious interest in Polish themes: not Wordsworth, not Keats, not Shelley, not even Byron (Davies 1983: 84), who fought for Greece's liberty. Grzegorzczuk would not agree with Davies that Byron showed negligence and neither would Francis Zapatka. The latter also wrote that poets such as Coleridge, Keats, Southey as well as many novel writers like the Porter sisters, Maria Edgeworth, or Helen Williams all paid homage to Kościuszko (Zapatka 1985: 255). But that is the thing: they paid homage to Kościuszko because they loved him, but it does not automatically mean that they cared as much about his motherland or that they thought highly of it. In other words, they created sonnets or stories relating to Poland chiefly apropos of the Polish hero. Zapatka himself calls these writers' interest "the Kościuszko craze" (255). So, again, what may be said to even up the dismal picture of Poland in the eyes of Britons and their inaction? Perhaps that the first act of smothering Poland aroused a great deal of British interest, as the *Annual Register*, the *Gentleman's Magazine* (Davies 1983: 80), the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, the *Westminster Review*, and others commented on the events? (Jasiakiewicz 1997: 5). Perhaps that the British public unleashed a lot of discontent? Perhaps that the *Scot's Magazine* in Edinburgh published a song about the tyrants called *The Cannibals*? Or that King George III and his chief minister, Lord Suffolk, wrote critical memoranda? Or that a handful of Irish supporters with their insurrectionary heritage as well as some romantic Scottish polonophiles kept their fingers crossed for Poland? (Davies 1983: 80).

Maybe that the pro-Polish *Polonia*, the *Hull Polish Record*, or the *Metropolitan Magazine* expressed their sympathy for Poland's dire strait? Or that British charity organisations raised modest funds for Polish refugees and pressed the citizens for more? (Jasiakiewicz 1997: 4, 182-183). Surely, all this ought not to be passed over, but if we look closely at those who really did something to help Poland, we will discover that they were chiefly people of literature. (It is of lesser importance whether one treats them as "major" or not). But let us not be easily deceived; even though Poles were uplifted by the British printed word, they often provided fuel for entertainment, amusement, and rumour, which was avidly picked up by the press and in literature. British editors illustrated scrupulous descriptions of torture, patriotic acts in the bravado style, and heroism in Poland (182-183). In order to appeal to the reader, to captivate the audience, these editors and publishers placed elements of sensation and suspense. This is how they used them to first create and next maintain a kind of "Big Brother" relationship (though for this term we need to wait until Orwell's times).

In other aspects of life, such as politics, the dominant feeling, as Davies (1983: 80) holds it, was one of detachment, of condemnation without any profound sense of moral outrage:

The Tories stood coldly aloof from suspect Continental developments. Pitt only discussed Poland in terms of commercial pros and cons in the context of his ill-fated project 1790-91. The Whigs were divided between those who mildly approved and those who openly cheered the revolutionary changes, until in the course of the 1790s the entire argument was drowned by the patriotic emotions of the wars against France (Davies 1983: 84).

Lipoński (1975: 32) is of the same standpoint on the approach of British politicians to the matter: "Lord Liverpool's (1770 – 1828) Tory cabinet was not sympathetic to Poland – not surprisingly, seeing that Poland had been an ally of Napoleon's." Lipoński supplements Davies's outlook with the information that with time not much had altered: "At the Vienna Congress, Castlereagh (1769 –1822) torpedoed every proposal which aimed at rebuilding Poland."

Why the British politicians flouted the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its people is easy to answer. One does not have to go through the history of mankind to answer this; it is not even necessary to look at 20th-century conflicts, as the recent Georgian-Russian one of 2008 suffices. The weak are left all alone unless the strong have some economic, political, or military interest in their territory. "Political" and

“military” nearly always mean “economic”, anyway. Leaving aside current issues, I would like to return to the Poland of the period in question. Jasiakiewicz (1997: 182-183) explains straightforwardly: “The problem of the Polish looked exotic, even oriental, and their demands put forward to the British, from the latter’s perspective at least, were unrealistic” [translation mine, ML]. Jasiakiewicz believes that such Polish claims were to some degree unjustifiable or groundless, and that the Polish hopes of help from Britain or France were harboured against the most palpable historical facts. Many Polish scholars from the past share this view. Koźmian (1862: 10), for instance, expressed it very bluntly and vividly: “Oh inexhaustible resources in the Polish souls! How easily you become enlivened, even by defeat, treating every downfall as a guarantee of a new and safe victory, treating every sign of foreigners’ sympathy as a pledge of a long-lasting and unshakable alliance.”⁵⁶ Lipoński (2000a: 434) adds that English culture was xenophobic and the fact that the role of *Rzeczpospolita* in Britain’s interest was slight did not help either. Ultimately, Jasiakiewicz (2001: 201) cites the Hungarian poet Kálmán Tóth (1831 – 1891), also known as Boland Miska (Stupid Michael). Albeit the poet’s opinion concerns the January Uprising of 1863 in Poland, it can be used to encapsulate the situation at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. He said that: “To get to Heaven and be saved is as difficult as to be Polish and obtain help from an Englishman.”

But what about those who toured Poland? Why did eyewitnesses such as Wraxall or Malmesbury think of Poland what they did? Even positive remarks of little importance – like the latter’s saying that in Poland “the horses go quick, and one is more expeditiously served, though somewhat dearer, than in Brandenburg. I got in less time from Schmeigel [actually Schmiegel (Pol. *Śmigiel*)] to Warsaw, though almost double the distance, than from Berlin to Glogau [(Pol. *Głogów*)]” – were accompanied by negative ones, such as: “all there, who had any sort of pretensions to speak at all, always talked politics” (Harris [1844] 2001: 9-10). Why did many an educated Briton write chiefly about starving peasants, decaying villages, and the lavishness and anarchy of the rich? Were they lying or were they hostile to Poland or, at best, amateurish? Was Poland really a reflection of the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah? Finally, was the *szlachta*

⁵⁶ The original version in Polish: “O niewyczerpany zasobie nadziei w duszach polskich! Jakże się łatwo ożywasz, samą nawet wzmagasz klęską, mieniać każdy upadek zawiązkiem nowych coraz bezpieczniejszych rękojmi zwycięstwa [sic], biorąc każdą choćby najlżejszą oznakę życzliwości cudzoziemców za pewność trwałego, niezłomnego sojuszu!” [Translation mine, ML].

so terribly flawed? Of course, it would be very naive to answer light-heartedly “yes” or “no” or to make the issue black or white. It is impossible to unanimously establish whose literary record is more accurate: the idyllic ones of Porter and Burke or, for example, the morose ones of Defoe.

Before this challenge is taken up, let us reverse the situation and think about “Polanders” travelling to Britain. The historian Tazbir (1991: 9-10) claims that tourists from Poland, or any other country, went to Britain with stereotypes – very often unflattering ones – already fixed in their minds. Instead of confronting them and trying to discover the truth about the place, travellers sought a confirmation of their previously “installed” visions, in particular if they were uneducated or illiterate, living around their parish only. Not knowing the language only increased such a possibility. By looking down on an outsider, Polish citizens could feel better about themselves, especially that they idealised their self-perception, too. Now, can these lines not be paraphrased and referred to the inhabitants of Great Britain? They can. Rietbergen (2001: 281-282) communicates this by saying that spending time abroad was often merely a means of confirming one’s vision and stereotypes of and prejudices against the new place and people. Tour guides were full of warnings against certain (negative) behaviours and customs awaiting the voyager and which were indicative of a particular country. And the journey makers themselves were often impatient at having to abide by strange, at least for them, codes of behaviour and eccentricities. Therefore, unfortunately, journeys to foreign parts did not automatically mean that those who made them learnt too much. A banal example comes from the memoirs of Poniatowski from when he toured through England. In a Canterbury tavern, he noticed a gentleman holding a fork in the left hand, and thus, in the manner, thought the monarch-to-be, that the English ate. Because the man was English, and not French, he was deemed much better than could be expected. From that day on, Poniatowski remembered never to use his right hand to hold a fork when in England (Butterwick 2000: 121). Furthermore, Davies (1983: 83) suspects that the already quoted Marshall was a dilettante agriculturalist, who hardly saw a representative sample of peasant life in either Poland or Russia, but he did not refrain from concluding that, juxtaposed with the servitude in Poland, “the oppressed state of the Russian peasant is an absolute freedom.” And if we come back to “bad Warsaw”, we ought to remember that other European capitals seem to have been hardly better than the Polish main city. There was no sewage system in most foreign towns, either, and the roads were unpaved, just like in Poland (Rietbergen 2001: 179). In this respect, the London of

the late 18th century would be an exception, but considering the prostitution, crime, and other predicaments there (see chapter two), it is not easy to prove that Warsaw was generally a nightmare place to stay in.

When it comes to myths about Poland made by Poles themselves, these intensified in the 19th century after the Kingdom had been wiped off the political map of Europe and were placed in the historical novels of writers like Sienkiewicz or Krasiński. These were necessary for Poles to feel confident, to fight against complexes that derived from having been bereft of their motherland, and to get by somehow in their country, which had been thrown into turmoil. This created a specific kind of patriotism close to chauvinism. Contrary to this, many regarded themselves as doomed to be buried in hopelessness and helplessness, which caused a schizophrenic conception of themselves: of being better and at the same time worse than people of other nationalities (Tazbir 1991: 22-23). Do we not experience this also today? Well, even if we do not, which is doubtful, the Polish “high society” of the Enlightenment and the preceding eras certainly did.

Therefore, if one has merely a tenebrous picture of the *szlachta*, it should be remembered that it was mostly they who sacrificed their lives when it came to war, and it was they who preserved the country from ruin during the partitions. Mączak wrote that Polish patriotism was vital, in particular, around the year 1794. The Insurrection, the fights with Russians in the streets of the *Korona*'s and the Duchy's capitals, the defence of Warsaw during the Prussian siege, and the spirit of people like Wawrzecki after the Massacre of Praga are all deeds that could enrich the history of any civilised nation in the world (Korzon 1984: 31). Besides, many of the nobility were so poor that they were scarcely better off than the peasants, who, one may point out, seldom suffered from the hunger and misery of a commoner's existence (Rostworowski 1977: 90). In addition, it is nearly always the higher strata of society – not only in Poland but anywhere else – who take care of culture in its immense sense.⁵⁷

Should *Thaddeus of Warsaw* be looked at superficially, one might judge that the English characters provide only a background in the novel for the Polish heroes. In fact, it is not quite so, as, for instance, three out of four tomes of the story are set in England.

⁵⁷ Before his mind became frenzied, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900), in his biography in 1833, wrote that Poles were the ablest and the most chivalrous of all the Slavic peoples, and Slavic prowess was beyond the one of Germans. He even thought that Germans became mighty through the mixture of their blood with Slavs' blood (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 4: 251).

This fact alone suggests that the depictions of the typical features of English people of the time were one of Jane Porter's goals. However, because such a vast matter would require a separate study, the subsequent pages will only provide a synopsis of the issue and will be analogous to the preceding sections, i.e. they will treat of Britons' positive and negative aspects, and their relation with God. (English attire is presented in chap. 4.3).

If Jane Porter did wish to "smuggle" some positive mannerisms of the English aristocracy into her work, then the role of Mary Beaufort, an English lady who becomes the wife of Thaddeus Sobieski, is to be the embodiment of such mannerisms. Her personality traits as well as some of the English elite could be encapsulated by such keywords as piousness, intelligence, amiability, virtue, talent, shrewdness, delicacy, modesty, unshaken patience, sensibility, fairness, altruism, kind-heartedness, and wisdom. The laudable English personae penned by Porter have a mind filled with liberty and the rare idiosyncrasy of perceiving people as good by definition, by nature. They look for goodness in other human beings, even if it is not easily perceptible. Even when facing a genuine villain, Mary, and some other British aristocrats, would tend to explore the mind and soul of the person and find a grain of worth in that person. She would then treat the grain as a gem, never letting the gem pass unnoticed by the person. She is not spoilt by her affluence, social position, good looks, knowledge, and abilities, which, as Jane Porter puts it through the mouth of Thaddeus, is not common in other women. Other commendable features of character are represented by Lady Tinemouth. The baroness demonstrates her ingeniousness and gives the readership – even today – a lesson in judging others and making certain who deserves a person's heart. "(...) when you are disposed to believe that a man is as great as his titles and personal demands seem to assert, examine with a nice observance whether his pretensions be real or artificial. Imagine him disrobed of splendour and struggling with the world's inclemencies. If his character cannot stand this ordeal, he is only a vain pageant, inflated and garnished" (TW, 1831: 274). These emotive lines testify that Porter deserves a high profile in the world of moralistic authors. Her words resemble those of Adam Czartoryski, which require as little explanation as Porter's: "the meanest is a nobleman who is ill-natured, proud, perverse, merciless, and cruel" (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 3: 327).

In *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, the relationships between the masters and the pauperised in Britain are as whitewashed as they are in Poland. It is intriguing to read that the house of a British patrician hosts high-born citizens and have-nots alike, this being an

obligation of a British gentleman, and that the peasantry are full of virtue and smiles. This and similar pieces describe, if a little idyllically, the life around the villa being similar to that in Poland. “Whatever you may be, sir, a peasant or a prince, you will meet with British hospitality from the noble owner of this house. The magnificence of his spirit is equalled by the goodness of his heart” (TW, 1831: 386).

In fear of a revolution like the one in France, Porter stresses to the maximum the need to be a patriot, using also British characters. At this juncture, let us scan a confab between Thaddeus, who is paying for the medical treatment of his Polish friend, general Butzou, and doctor Cavendish.⁵⁸ Sobieski reaches for money:

“No, my dear sir (...) real patriotism is too much the idol of my heart to allow me to receive payment when I behold her face.”

“Sir, this generous conduct to stranger;”

“Generous to myself, Mr. Constantine, and not to strangers; I cannot consider you as such, for men who devote themselves to their country must find a brother in every honest breast (TW, 1831: 182).

The perception of God by the English characters “starring” in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is very much like that the one of their Polish counterparts, despite the fact that the former are Protestants and the latter Catholics. The two nations do not seem to differ when addressing God, which occurs in everyday situations. As with the Polish figures, the English who refer to the Creator constitute a cross-section of society, not excluding the authoress *per se*, who happens to disclose the following: “there remaineth yet a better life, and a better country for those who trust in the Lord of earth and heaven!” (TW, 1845). And after scrutinising the issue, it is plain that for many of the British the Bible passages are one thing, but their deeds are another. In her tome, Porter carries out a powerful and insightful attack on the vices of immoral people. The author virtually “clamps down” on the deprivation of the higher strata of the English society of her era. In *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, such citizens are represented by a doctor, Mr Vincent. Who is he? He is a Christian or rather pseudo-Christian. To begin with, the doctor is a nationalist disdainful of all French people and believing them to be “a swarm of filthy locusts”, thus prejudging them. In the second place, the man is greedy and “would rather see a fellow-creature perish than administer relief to him without a reward.” Thirdly, the phy-

⁵⁸ His real name, as Porter explains in a footnote of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, is Blackburne, “late of Cavendish Square; but who, since the above was written, has long retired from his profession, passing a revered old age in the beautiful neighbourhood of our old British classic scenes, the Abbey of Glastonbury (TW, 1831: 182).

sician appears to be philanthropic, because “when he had any broken victuals to spare, he desired that they might be divided amongst the poor.” But actually he is selfish, for he reproaches his “hussy” for “her extravagance, in giving away what ought to be eaten in the kitchen.” Mr Vincent partakes in the Eucharist, he listens to sermons and thinks of himself as pious. In reality, the masses, prayers, his religiousness, and obligations as a Christian are forgotten right after he closes the church gates behind him. It can easily be concluded that the “pious” person of Mr Vincent does not set a good example of Christ’s disciples, since it is “so difficult to make him comprehend who was his neighbour.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, this Englishman, affluent himself, is of the opinion that it is mad to take the meat from his children’s mouths and throw it to a swarm of wolves, the Frenchmen. Not sharing what you have with your neighbour is meanness; not understanding that poverty is “nationless” and classless, that it does not matter whether the needy come from Britain, France, or Bhutan, is simple-mindedness. At last, the doctor – and a vast number of people following in his footsteps, as Porter openly admits “it was with him as with many” – is a classic example of a creature that will respect you if you are well-off but “take away the splendid and thick robe of riches that conceals all blemishes and probably you would be treated worse than a criminal” (TW, 1831: 115-116). The moral degeneracy of the Britons that Porter portrays in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* reflects her real thought on how things looked, as she once admitted in her correspondence: “The Men, have forgotten the *real* meaning of the *word* which ought to rule their conduct: – And the Women, have ceased altogether to remember, that the *soul* of their *Purity* and *Estimation* ever had existence” (Porter 1805, as quoted in Joukovsky 1990: 17).

There is a real mass of negative facets of the British aristocracy, next to the above-mentioned misunderstanding of Jesus’ Scriptures, divulged to the addressee of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, and such portrayals are far from lapidary. Indeed, Porter unmask the meanness and simple-mindedness of her countrymen, as well as hubris, taunting and

⁵⁹ The English words “neighbour” or “fellow-creature” do not really convey the most subtle shades of meaning of the Polish equivalent *bliźni*. The closest meaning of neighbour to the Polish *bliźni* in WD (1993: 1514) is “a fellow-creature; esp. a human being” or “one that evidences true kindness and charity toward his fellowman.” So for non-Polish users of English the following definition of the word *bliźni* from *Słownik Nowego Testamentu* [Dictionary of the New Testament] (1975: 163) is provided: “(...) from the Hebrew noun *rea* meaning “different” so somebody who is not a brother because of ties of blood but desires to be his close friend or companion. Unlike a brother, with whom one is connected through physical relationship, *bliźni* does not belong to the family but gets closer to that family.” Naturally, there are even more elaborate definitions of the English “neighbour”, but the Polish *bliźni* is a separate and special term, especially in the biblical sense.

toying with others' feelings, homophobia, maliciousness, contemptuousness, impertinence, superficiality, vainglory, insolence, prudishness, faithlessness, the feeling of superiority, complacency, chauvinism, vindictiveness. This set can be further accompanied by being nosey, scandalous, melancholic, ephemeral, cunning, coquettish, frivolous, feather-brained, easily indignant, capricious, extravagant, villainous, pretentious, jealous, selfish, uncouth, and idle.

Therefore, how does Britain look in the eyes of Jane Porter: full of benevolence and shrewdness or shallowness and narrow-mindedness? It becomes stunningly evident that, unlike in the case of Poland, the English (or British) individuals who would fit into the category of "bad" outnumber the ones suiting the category of "good". In addition, if one lists from the work all the English upper (middle) class members who possess negative rather than positive features of character, it is tempting to presume that the fact that Thaddeus Sobieski goes to England and not any other place is a "cover-up" for exposing the faults of the English (British), and the "blue blooded" especially.⁶⁰ Confronting "Britishers" with "Polanders" brings to mind another thought that Porter in all likelihood wanted to install in people's minds: nobility and real worth in a person do not hinge on irrelevances such as one's outfit or biological descent. For the author education counts, not class; high standards of morality, not blood; the inside, not the clothes; finally, one's deeds, not words.

⁶⁰ The term "blue blood", from Spanish *sangre azul*, that is used in many European languages (in Polish *błękitna krew*) denotes an aristocratic origin. This notion, by some scholars regarded as chauvinistic or ethnocentric, developed during the colonisation of the Americas to show that white people were superior. The veins under a pale skin appear to be light blue, particularly in the hands not tainted with hard work, like in the case of many aristocrats (Gołębiowski 2005: 14).

Chapter 5: “Work of a genius”: The reception and historic importance of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in Great Britain

“England may truly pride herself on possessing an order of females to be found in no other land, who at once adorn the virtues and extend the renown of that nation to whose intelligence and felicity they so much contribute” (“Memoir of Miss Jane Porter”, 1815: 249). This bold, slightly chauvinistic, and for some provocative assumption does not surprise if one ponders over the content of the following chapter constructed mainly, but not only, from newspapers. If one additionally endeavoured to gather opinions about *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (not just of Porter’s contemporaries but present-day academics too) on their own and then – on the basis of these opinions – convey its style, meaningfulness, and “atmosphere”, it would be almost a compulsion to use such epithets as dazzling, impressive, extraordinary, splendid, amazing, compelling, magnificent, terrific, incredible, outstanding, inconceivable, and wonderful. The different commentators whose estimations are given in this chapter sometimes concentrate on different features of the narrative; nevertheless, one word spans all the evaluations, simply: “great”, and Porter herself is even called a celebrity (Skelton-Foord 2004: 109). There are so few critical lines written about the novel that the division into positive and negative judgments of the book would be pointless. It seems more plausible that the following sketch should highlight the views about the style and the value or meaning of the work in one section only, because sometimes one opinion of an author contains a combination of both: the style and value. What is meant by the word “value” is what the reader can learn from the novel; not only purely historical facts, but also moral standards. Additionally, many such opinions are further mixed with fragments talking about the genre of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. This convention has been used to divide chapter five, because

if one attempted to divide the chapter into style, value, and genre, the logical whole of many quotations might become distorted and their expression, harmony, and impact might be lost.

However, before we endeavour to present the style and value of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, it is critical for this study to establish the very literary period it belongs to.

5.1. *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as a (pre-)Romantic work of literature

The name given in the heading suggests that the novel's literary period is Romanticism. Before reasoning behind such a choice is provided, it is imperative that the addressee be aware of the fact that the British Romantic period is very complex and diverse (NAEL, 2000: 1), and that Romantic prose fiction, according to CCBR (1993: 196), "had and has an uncertain place in Romantic literature." Even the word "British" itself poses a difficulty in the discussion of the Romantic period, since, according to scholars, the movement began at the end of the 18th century, and Ireland officially joined the United Kingdom in 1801. In addition, the themes taken up in works of Romanticism were different from place to place. In Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, for example, the issue of independence sometimes appeared, whereas in England this problem did not even exist. Any discourse about Romanticism as such will be even more tangled if we have to refer to other countries. In Poland, which in this study is connected with England through the setting for the first part of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, the sovereignty question was omnipresent. As a result, the approach to, for instance, Napoleon's policies in Poland were dissimilar to those in England. Moreover, the issue of the liberty of the individual was more strongly felt in Poland than in England, because Poles had to face the repressive measures of the usurpers and their censorship (Lipoński 2005: 452-453). Furthermore, the American specialist A. Lovejoy has observed, and expressed perhaps slightly perversely, that the word "Romantic" "has come to mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing at all" (*The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (henceforth *PDLTLT*), 1999: 767). In the same source, Cuddon alleges that "the baffling and irritating part about anything to do with Romantic or Romanticism is

that it is vague and formless” (768).⁶¹ Hence, classifying certain works may pose a challenge. A simple definition of Romanticism could be formulated as follows: “Romanticism is a complex artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in the second half of the 18th century in Western Europe, and gained strength during the Industrial Revolution. It was partly a revolt against aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment and a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature, and was embodied most strongly in the visual arts, music, and literature” (“Romanticism”, 2010). In addition to the above characteristics, Sikorska (2007b: 310-311), notes that it was politically inspired by the French and American Revolutions and the turmoil in Poland, Spain, and Greece. It also often fought for the individual’s freedom against governments and institutions.

Examining some of the characteristics of Romanticism one by one in a more detailed way evidences that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* “meets the conditions” of this movement. The first keywords could be “the French Revolution”, because its ideologies and events laid the background from which Romanticism emerged. Initially, nearly all major representatives of this period from the Isles were staunch sympathisers with the Revolution (Burke was among the exceptions), but they “dropped off as the Revolution followed its increasingly grim and violent course” (NAEL, 2000: 2). This aspect of Romanticism is undeniably found in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, and the fact that the horrors of the French Revolution mightily predisposed Porter towards her novel is distinctly explained by the author herself in the preface.

There certainly were matters enough for the exhibition of all that human nature could suffer and endure, and, alas! perish under, in the nearly simultaneous but terrible regicidal revolution of France (...) It was a conflict in which no comparisons, as between man and man, could exist; and may God grant that so fearful a visitation may never be inflicted on this world again. May the nations of this world lay its warnings to their hearts! It sprung from a tree self-corrupted, which only could produce such fruits: the demon hierarchy of the French philosophers, who had long denied the being of that pure and Almighty God, and who, in the arrogance of their own deified reason, and while in utter subjection to the wildest desires of their passions, published their profane and polluted creed amongst all orders of the people, and the natural and terrible consequences ensued. Ignorant before, they became like unto their teachers, demons in their unbelief, – demons in one common envy and hatred of all degrees above them, or around them, whose existence seemed at all in the way of even their slightest gratification: mutual spoliation and destruction covered the country (TW, 1845).

⁶¹ The adjective “Romantic” is used here to denote relating to the period of Romanticism as opposed to its original meaning, namely relating to medieval romances. The thirteenth-century romance was almost any sort of adventure story, be it of chivalry or love, to entertain and sometimes educate (PDLTLT 1999: 758).

Right after heaping scorn on the Revolution and its executors, the novelist, perhaps not purposely, shows that her work fulfils requirement number two of a novel of Romanticism: patriotism, nationalism, revolution, and armed struggle for independence (“Romanticism”, 2010), and Poland proved to be a perfect choice for a romanticist:

Therefore, when I sought to represent the mental and moral contest of man with himself, or with his fellow-men, I did not look for their field amongst human monsters, but with natural and civilized man; inasmuch as he is seen to be influenced by the impulses of his selfish passions-ambition, covetousness, and the vanities of life, or, on the opposite side, by the generous amenities of true disinterestedness, in all its trying situations; and, as I have said, the recent struggle in Poland, to maintain her laws and loyal independence, against the combined aggressions of the three most powerful states in Europe, seemed to afford me the most suitable objects for my moral aim, to interest by sympathy, while it taught the responsible commission of human life (*TW*, 1845).

While many of the era turned their back on religion, seeing in it another measure of “human oppression” (Sikorska 2007b: 310), other writers experienced a religious awakening, a revival of beliefs, or at least a regard for religion, which was “the more remarkable when we contrast it with the external losses that religion had suffered during the preceding period” (Dawson 1937). This awakening was also incited by the French Revolution. Many in Great Britain interpreted the events in France in accordance with the apocalyptic prophecies found in the Hebrew and Christian traditions; they viewed these events as fulfilling the promise that a short period of retributive and cleansing violence would finally turn into universal peace and blissfulness with “a return of human beings to their lost Edenic felicity” (*NAEL*, 2000: 15). Whereas it is problematic that the above is how Porter saw these things; incontestably, spiritual matters play a cardinal role in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, to which chapter 4.2 of this study bears testimony. Porter portrays the spirituality of the English upper-class as being not far from a calamity; throughout the book the reader can feel that the aristocracy is “immersed” in an air of moving away from God, compassion, and kindness. Indeed, she seems to be trying to instil a religious awakening in her fellow countrymen. Exemplary here is a Mr Vincent, whom Porter paints in the subsequent way:

He was exhorted to be pious, and to pour wine and oil into the wounds of his neighbor; but it never once struck him that piety extended further than going to church, mumbling his prayers and forgetting the sermon, through most of which he generally slept; and his commentaries on the good Samaritan were not more extensive, for it was so difficult to make him comprehend who was his neighbor, that the subject of the argument might have been sick, dead and buried before he could be persuaded that he or she had any claims on his care (*TW*, 1845).

The next focal point of many works of Romanticism is placing emphasis on such emotions as trepidation, horror, and awe, often with regard to nature (*PDLTLT*, 1999: 769-770). While it must be admitted that Porter's production is nearly void of elaborate and lengthy descriptions of nature that would penetrate the reader, it is full of perilous and appalling moments that do keep the reading audience in dread. Crossfire in battle, murder, defending a lady from a villain, rescuing an innocent child from a house on fire, and many other parallel examples can be found in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. What is more, any list of characteristics of the literature of Romanticism elevates misunderstood, often suffering solitaires filled with subjectivity, individualism, and heroism (*PDLTLT*, 1999: 769-770) that can alter society. This prerequisite is fulfilled by the person of Thaddeus Sobieski and is evident the whole time in the novel. The Pole goes through the trauma of losing his mother, friends, and country; he feels isolated in a foreign country – a country where he is surrounded by many shallow and alien people. At times, he lives from hand to mouth. Yet, he perseveres in his pureness, remaining a man of high principles and setting an example for the way one ought to live. In addition, Romantics gave prominence to passion, love, and feeling rather than observation (Sikorska 2007b: 310). In truth, the heroes of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* are overflowing with feelings of deep love and mere infatuation, serious attempts to win a partner and coqueting or flirting. There is a lot of charm in them, but this very charm easily changes when personal whims or desires come into play. Next, folk elements and simplicity of existence are often glamorised in a Romantic work, to which *WD* (1993: 1970) refers as “an exaltation of the primitive and the common man.” These features are present in Porter's creation when it comes to both the Polish and English peasantry. There are ample instances in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* of the blissfulness of commoners, who are ennobled through their work and faithfulness to their lord, who is more of a friend than a master. It needs to be acknowledged that although Romanticism was also stimulated by the Industrial Revolution, with its problems such as urban sprawl, the unemployment and poverty of the working classes (Sikorska 2007b: 311), in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* such traits are rather elusive. In the end, the time when the story was written is indicative of its literary period. For *NAEL* (2000: 1) the temporal frames of this movement fall between the years 1785 and 1830. Sikorska establishes the beginning alongside the French Revolution (1789) and the end – the Treaty of Vienna (1815). “The period between 1815 and 1830 is sometimes labelled as the late Romantic or early Victorian” (Sikorska 2007b: 310). Although

the date of issue alone does not necessarily prove anything, together with the above-mentioned facts it hints that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) belongs to the Romantic period or, judging by the quote from *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* (1998: 791), to the pre-Romantic one. This source tells us, for instance, that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is one of the earliest examples of the historical novel, “though the setting was more romantic than the date.” And this brings us to the very name of this subsection, which reads “*Thaddeus of Warsaw* as a (pre-)Romantic work of literature.” The reason for the prefix “pre” is that there is every sign to surmise that the narrative has some features of the sentimental novel, which belongs to the time from before the Romantic period (Baldick 1990: 177). A sentimental novel, in turn, contains elements of sentimentalism and sensibility, which are similar but not the same in meaning. Sentimentalism began in the 18th century in reaction to the rationalism of the Augustan Age, to classicism, and to the belief in the world being harmonious. Sentimentalism emerged in opposition to the arrogance of that era’s science and philosophy, which claimed to understand the world; against the cynical global politics, with systems calculated to gain at the cost of the poor; against war, with its novel destructive techniques; against atheism, which drained people of spirituality; against flouting nature in industrialised cities, with little hygiene but a lot of crime (Lipoński 2005: 402). Along with these features, it included superficial emotion taking precedence over reason, so feeling over thinking, and it also included exaggerated postures of sorrow and suffering. “In literature it denotes overmuch use of pathetic efforts and attempts to arouse feeling by ‘pathetic’ indulgence” (PDLTLT, 1999: 809). Sensibility is different, not pejorative. There is not so much melancholy, naivety, mawkishness, insipidity, or swoons and spasms; it is not that mushy or moody. Sensibility stresses the perception of the emotions of and consideration for other people (Lipoński 2005: 403-404, 407), and it awards honour and moral behaviour, kindness and goodness (PDLTLT, 1999: 809). Jane Austin’s *Sense and Sensibility* (1796) serves as an example here. In *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, however, the reader will easily find an amplitude of traits of both sentimentalism and sensibility. Whatever the nuances and intricacies of these concepts, both of them were about understanding the world not only through knowledge and hard facts but through sensuality, feelings, human nature, shifts of mood, “the invisible”, etc., which are all part of one’s reality (Lipoński 2005: 403-404, 407). A number of authors are explicit on Porter’s tale being a sentimental one. For instance, Anessi’s words say: “the sentimental, Christian ethos that

pervades the novel”, Hook’s: “Sobieski’s sentimental adventures”, and Gołębiowska’s: “a sentimental romance” (Gołębiowska 2001: 11). And if any information on *Thaddeus of Warsaw* appears in an encyclopaedia, the epithet used is “sentimental”. Finally, grounds for the pre-Romantic classification of Porter’s novel come from Edwin Atkins Grozier (1859 – 1924), a journalist and the owner of the *Boston Post*: “The book (...) is of that sentimental school of old-time novelists who bring us to the realization that standards have shifted very vitally since the days when continual tears, swoons, and faintings were deemed a necessary and desirable accomplishment of heroes and heroines” (Grozier [1920] 2004). Bearing in mind these facts in combination with familiarising oneself with *Thaddeus of Warsaw* must produce an obvious conclusion: Porter’s novel may easily be regarded as a sentimental, pre-Romantic, or, as shown earlier, a Romantic one. Conclusively, when describing *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, theorists tend to use the word “Romantic” rather than “pre-Romantic”. This happens so because there is a general tendency to avoid the term “pre-Romanticism” and thus few scholars use it. *CCBR* (1993: 29) clarifies why it is like that: Pre-Romanticism is very diffused; “it is an unwitting and accidental by-product of other impulses, and hence radically different from the consciously worked out aims of the various Romantic writers, richly elaborated in a coherent body of work.” Yet, this literary guide stresses the point that pre-Romanticism, as a literary period, remains valuable (29), because its developments “prepared the ground for Romanticism in its full sense” (Baldick 1990: 177).

5.2. Opinions about the style and value of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*

As has been noted before, few and far between are unfavourable expressions about Porter’s style of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, and if they appear, they do not come from Porter’s times but from a century later or nowadays, when it is a lot easier to find every single inaccuracy. At the same time, it must be clarified that those who criticised Porter’s writing, in nearly every case could not resist from giving voice to something positive about it, as well. For this purpose, Grozier’s stance on the novel will now be presented again. He complains about the book’s sentimentalism, “continual tears, swoons, and fainting”, but in the next breath he asserts that it is “spirited and interesting” (Grozier [1920] 2004). Another such case can be evidenced in Hook’s article titled *Jane*

Porter, Sir Walter Scott, and the Historical Novel. Its lines say that Porter's novel has little to do with the serious historical novel. This author explained this in the following manner:

Thaddeus of Warsaw's deficiencies as an historical novel are obvious enough. Its most striking feature is the intensity with which it expresses feelings of patriotic nationalism, but Jane Porter fails to assimilate that romantic nationalism into character and event. Thaddeus is portrayed throughout as an ideal Christian gentleman, and after the first section of the novel, in which the suppression of Polish liberties by Russia and Prussia is described, his sentimental adventures in English society become the only subject (Hook 1976: 183).

While it is true to say that Hook voices his criticism, it is also visible that his critical comments do not concern the manner of writing as such; they merely talk about the book being "ahistorical" rather than historical. And then the same author in the same article, and even on the same page reveals that "Jane Porter did acquire something of a reputation as a pioneer of historical fiction" (Hook 1976: 183).⁶²

Another outlook on Porter's capability of writing that might be named "semi" or "quasi-negative" is brought to the reader by Wilbur Lucius Cross (1862 – 1948), professor of English in the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University. His opinion may be looked at as "semi-negative", because he, unlike Hook, does not object to *Thaddeus of Warsaw* being a historical work, and especially the first part of it. "The first of the four volumes of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) is almost wholly historical, having as subject those heartrending events that gather around the partition of Poland in 1793, and as hero Kosciuszko under another name" (Cross 1899: 112-113). He also believed that generally Porter's romances "were a great improvement over any imaginative treatment of history that had yet appeared." On the other hand, and here comes his disparagement of parts of Jane Porter's narrative, "the romance is spoiled in its last volumes by Wertherized domestic scenes." He then called *Thaddeus of Warsaw's* plot "amateurish and impossible" (113).

⁶² Anessi, in his article entitled *England's Future/Poland's Past: History and National Identity in 'Thaddeus of Warsaw'*, concludes that it is problematic to unequivocally establish the genre of the novel, because it constitutes "a hybrid of genres, beginning as a historical novel, with epic battles in Poland but moving to London in the first third of the novel, upon which it becomes a novel of manners." A novel of manners, as later in the narrative Porter focuses on the hero's outstanding character and compares it to the characters of the English. Thanks to this technique "the two halves share thematic unity and only together allow for Polish experiences to be mirrored against English ones" (Anessi 1999: 26).

Anyhow, the vast majority of authors see Jane Porter and her *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as excellent. Ann Jones, in a whole chapter dedicated to Porter in her *Ideas and Innovation*, proclaims that at the height of her career, Porter was undoubtedly “the most highly regarded historical novelist in the country (...) superior to earlier writers of historical romances” (Jones 1986: 132); unlike many other writers of the era, Porter escaped “vague settings”, faulty historical contexts, and other “outrageous improbabilities.”

Porter’s contemporaries were at least equally impressed; for example, this is the stance of the *Flowers of Literature* (1803):

A very interesting historical novel, which relates the wandering and unhappy fate of one of those Polish noblemen, banished from their native land on account of its dismemberment – “a dismemberment which,” as Dr. Ralph expresses himself, “has proved the greatest scourge which the modern world has known. It has proved, that men, in whose estimation force is every thing, and justice nothing, may with impunity play with the property of sovereigns, the oath of subjects, and the faith of tre[ati]es. (...) Miss PORTER, who will, we doubt not, by the deserved applause she has met with, be encouraged to farther exertions in this kind of writing, in which she has so eminently succeeded” (Blagdon and Provost 1803: 461).

Not differing much in its evaluation of Jane Porter’s masterpiece, the *Critical Review* in the same year appended that:

Miss Porter has availed herself of a very interesting period in history for the foundation of her tale. Often have we felt our heart rent by indignation and pity, at the dismemberment of Poland, and the cruel fate of Stanislaus. Truth and fiction are blended with much propriety in these volumes; and we have turned with sincere pleasure the pages that praise the valour of Kosciuszko; and recount, though but as a novel, the adventures of a Sobieski (“Porter, Jane”, 1803: 120).

Both judgments make it clear that the authors condemned the partitions; the latter introduces to the British reader the figures of the then most famous Polish people: Stanisław August Poniatowski and Tadeusz Kościuszko. Also, both reviews are very positive about the author and her novel.

A year later, the creators of the February issue of the *Monthly Review* also mentioned, among others, the historic(al) events in Poland. They contended further that one part of the book is “perhaps too deeply involved in bustle, and, in order to be understood, requires a larger portion of attention than the generality of novel readers are accustomed to bestow.” The fragment that the author means here is the first out of the four

volumes, where the history of Poland of the period of the partitions is illustrated, including the many battles fought at that time. This is very important, as one can deduce that those who read the novel got to know a lot of facts about Poland:

Many of the incidents in this novel partake much of the nature of romance: but it is founded on real events, and the scene of the first volume is laid almost entirely in Poland, at the time when that country and its unfortunate inhabitants became the prey of the ambition of the surrounding monarchs. This part is perhaps too deeply involved in bustle, and, in order to be understood, requires a larger portion of attention than the generality of novel readers are accustomed to bestow. The business of the other volumes is more connected, and our own country is chosen for the scene of action. Thaddeus Sobieski, after the fall of his devoted country and the ruin of all his hopes, flies to England for refuge; and the story, which the author has thus interwoven with historical fact, exhibits some situations of considerable interest. The meeting of two friends, between whom a misunderstanding had been created by the unworthy practices of an interested agent, is described with peculiar propriety; and dignity of character is well preserved in the immediate and unreserved credit with which the mutual explanations are received (Griffith 1804: 214).

Not surprisingly, what is disliked by some may be favoured by others. Ann H. Jones (1986: 119) maintains that the book was very popular with the reading public and was the biggest hit of 1803, because readers especially enjoyed the novelty of “the strong documentary element in the first part of the novel, the attempt to recreate events of great interest which had actually occurred, and in a foreign country at that.” The novel was so big a sensation that by the 1880s it had been reissued at least twenty five times (119).

Another paper, the *Monthly Mirror*, wrote in 1810:

In her first work, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, we find a new species of composition; an harmonious union between the heroic matter of ancient romance, and the domestic interest of a modern novel. The success of this work (evinced by its having gone through nine editions during the comparatively short time of its publication), has occasioned her many imitators. The narrative in *Thaddeus*, respecting the disasters in Poland, is given with so much truth and accuracy (...) (“Memoirs of Miss Porter”, 1810: 404).

The *Imperial Review* emphasised the interest that the book evokes in the reader. Here are the exact words of the paper:

It is (...) the indispensable duty of the reviewer to give his candid and cordial recommendation to every novel entitled to distinction and celebrity. And we have no hesitation in reporting well of that before us. It is one of the few which, once opened, could not pass unread. The attention is arrested by the first page, and never suffered to diverge till the final denouement (Review of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* by Jane Porter, 1804: 309-310).

Another opinion describing *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as highly commendable can be found in the *Annual Review, and History of Literature for 1803*. It said that “he who can read the exploits of a Kosciusko [sic] and a Sobieski, without feeling his bosom warmed with the generous emotions of patriotism, would hear the beat to arms in defence of his own shores with a cold and insensible heart.” The *Review* added that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* “could not have been more opportunely displayed than at this moment, when the alarm is revived of a mediated invasion from the most implacable and unmerciful of foes” (Aikin 1804: 604).

Furthermore, the *Monthly Mirror* of 1810 informs that Porter’s works, “are eagerly welcomed by parents and guardians, as true champions in the cause of moral and religious restraint, and of the beauty as well as propriety of woman’s modesty, and man’s adherence to the virtues” (“Memoirs of Miss Porter”, 1810: 405). Although the word “works” obviously does not refer just to *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, this very novel unquestionably constitutes the essence of these works.

Another opinion, this one from the *British Lady’s Magazine* from 1815, hails both the style and worth of the volumes in the following manner:

The age of chivalry is not past. Animated by the noble spirit of the age, “soaring upward,” Miss Porter has caught much of the virtue of the hero whose character she has contemplated with such admiration. Hence the high and magnanimous style of thinking and feeling which distinguish and dignify her works; hence, indeed, her writings at once soften and improve the heart, while they elevate and ennoble the mind. (...) It is gratifying to narrate the literary career of a lady whose volumes bear the uniform stamp of pure morality, sound sense, and just taste. Persevering in her amiable course, Miss Porter will have the satisfaction of reflecting that she has not lived in vain; and, what must be still dearer to such a mind, that she has employed with honour those talents for whose application she must hereafter be made accountable (“Memoir of Miss Jane Porter”, 1815: 250).

With every likelihood, this is one of the most favourable opinion about the British author and her tome. As can be seen from the comment, the style of writing is magnificent; it strengthens the mind. Pure morality which improves the reader’s soul is what characterises her work(s). Porter’s thinking and feeling are magnanimous, full of aesthetics. Jane’s life is meaningful and for the author of this comment it is an honour to follow Porter’s career. Actually, many commentators of literary events of that era presented Jane Porter’s success virtually in the form of advertisement; the one in the *Morning Chronicle*, for instance, looked as follows:

Thaddeus is a work of genius, and has nothing to fear at the candid bar of taste: he has to receive the precious meed of sympathy from every reader of unsophisticated sentiment and genuine feeling. (...) This work has more merit than can be ascribed to the crowd of productions of this class, and inculcated virtuous and magnanimous sentiments. It is inscribed to Sir Sydney Smith, in a very neat and well managed address (Newspaper advertisement. *The Morning Chronicle*, 1804).

Between 1804 and 1805, this statement appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, in the *Imperial Review*, the *Monthly Review*, the *Star*, the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, and the *Anti-Jacobin Review*. Going through British newspapers of the early 19th century, one might say such highly commendable phrases were omnipresent in the British press. The fact that so many sources reprinted the same publication proves that the critics of that era thought about the book in the superlative.

Another commentary on *Thaddeus of Warsaw* can be found in the 1803 issue of the *Imperial Review*. It first briefly describes what the book is about, and then says that “it is not invariably correct, nor universally excellent: some little inaccuracies and redundancies are discernible.” Nonetheless, should the reader prepare for an act of censure, he or she would be disappointed, because then the author goes on to say that “the mere mannerist in literature is not liable to commit such inaccuracies and redundancies.” Now the praise only increases, as the writer actually recommends the work by saying that it does not require any recommendation, culminating in calling *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, just like the *Morning Chronicle* did, “a work of genius”:

But sacred be the secrets of love! and sacrilegious it that pen which presumes to expose its elegant mysteries. Tho’ Reviewers are a description of literary gossips to whom custom has sometimes permitted the impertinence of anticipating the reader’s curiosity, we have too much respect for his independence. And too sincere a regard for his pleasures, to claim a privilege which might interfere with the interests of our unfortunate foreigner, or impugn the rights of our amiable countrywoman. Over the fates of Thaddeus, then we drop the curtain of suspense, not without observing that Miss Porter has given us, in Thaddeus Sobieski, not merely a model of magnanimity, but a true hero – a man never above the feelings of humanity – a noble of nature, formed to enjoy and to dispense felicity, fitted to endure and surmount adversity. After the extracts we have given, a recommendation of the work would be superfluous: enough has been disclosed to excite an interest in its favour – enough concealed to leave the reader the pleasures of discovery. Thaddeus is a work of genius. It (...) has nothing to fear at the candid bar taste: he has to receive the precious meed [sic] of sympathy from every reader of unsophisticated sentiment and genuine feeling (Review of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, 1804: 313-314).

The British diarist and correspondent to the *Times* Henry Crabb Robinson (1775 – 1867) seems to confirm the high level of the novel’s mode, too. In 1814 he noted that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* was a novel of enormous significance. “It has raised my ideas of

Miss Porter's talents. This novel places Miss Porter higher in the list of female novel writers" (Robinson 1938: 146-147). Another contemporary of Porter's, Robert Gillies, a British writer and translator, wrote that before the publication of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* the world was more "owlish and obtuse". In the same account, the Scotsman added: "*Thaddeus of Warsaw* conquered even the sarcastic coldness of wise, wicked John Clerk; for I recollect his recommending and praising it very seriously as the best new romance that he had met with for many a day" (Gillies: 1851: 213).⁶³

DNB (1968: 182) also praises the Briton's writing skills; her romance about a Polish exile, asserts the dictionary, is "an exciting but carefully written story." Right after the manuscript was presented to an old acquaintance of Porter's, Owen Rees (of the firm of Longman & Co.), he proposed to publish it, and, as *DNB* maintains, the four volumes "had a rapid success."

The next valuable thought comes from Homer Watt in the pages of *DEL* (1945: 225). He lets readers know that although Scott's *Waverley Novels* proved very good, the work "did not totally eclipse Jane's *Thaddeus of Warsaw*." *OCEL* (1975: 659) (edited by P. Harvey) simply but authoritatively states the same in connection with Porter's novels: they were successful.

According to Porter, Sir Walter Scott himself, as aforementioned, expressed his approval and did Jane "the honour to adopt the style or class of novel of which *Thaddeus of Warsaw* was the first, – a class which, uniting the personages and facts of real history or biography with a combining and illustrative machinery of the imagination, formed a new species of writing in that day" (TW, 1845). *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* (1835: 404) undeniably agreed with such a view: "It is to her fame that she began the system of historical novel-writing, which attained the climax of its renown in the hands of Sir Walter Scott; and no light praise it is that she has thus pioneered the way for the greatest exhibition of genius of our time."

Thomas McLean, a contemporary British essayist, remains in correspondence with *Fraser's Magazine's* opinion and printed the following: "Porter's novel (...) is part of a genealogy that stretches back at least to Shakespeare's history plays. I do believe that Porter's significance in the development of the historical novel and national tale has been seriously undervalued" (McLean 2007: 98).

⁶³ Sir John Clerk of Eldin (1728-1812), a figure in the Scottish Enlightenment, artist, author of *An Essay on Naval Tactics* ("John Clerk", 2008).

One could assume on the basis of the above expressions that Jane Porter constituted a prelude to or a herald of a new literary era – an era of historical fiction; all the more, if we do not forget that the British ambassador at the court of King Poniatowski, General Gardiner, was also very fond of Porter's presenting facts. He could not believe that anybody was capable of presenting military actions in such a detailed manner without being present on the battlefields (see chap. 3). It is of necessity here to remind the reader, as Jones does, that "Kościuszko himself, a participant in the events described, was so delighted with the book that he wrote to the authoress to thank her" (Jones 1986: 120).

Ultimately, the author's own evaluation should be revealed. The significance of the following judgement of the book ought to be multiplied if one remembers that Porter was a very humble writer. "Though the written portraiture be imperfectly sketched, yet its author has been gratified by the sympathy of readers, not only of her own country, but of that of her hero. The work having gone through so many editions, prove that she did not aspire quite in vain" (*TW*, 1831: iii).

Indeed, Jane Porter was famous for at least two decades of the 19th century, and sometimes it was hard to get a copy of *Thaddeus* from the library, because it was constantly out, as Thomas Carlyle's letters suggest (Sanders 1970: 42). *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, but other works of the British author too, were republished many times. Later on, the light of the glory grew dimmer and dimmer, and publishers' need for Porter's literary gift was reduced to articles, poetry, and short stories, many of which appeared anonymously; in the end, Porter was reduced to "a literary Nobody", as McLean (2007: 91) puts it.

One may rightly wonder what had become of the novel's popularity and high esteem later in the 19th and in the 20th centuries, let alone today, as scarcely anybody has heard of the work. Why was *Thaddeus of Warsaw* – and other productions of the British author – as *CCBR* (1993: 196) puts it, "the novel of *the* [emphasis mine, ML] day?" In other words, what had become of its or their recognition? (Perhaps "their" is a better word, because *The Scottish Chiefs*, for instance, underwent the same process of neglect, and by 1822 this book had had at least twenty editions (Jones 1986: 131)). Eighty years after the first edition of Porter's fiction, Samuel Carter Hall (1800 – 1889), an Irish journalist, reporter, and editor, in his memoirs expressed his thought about the shrinking readership and the style of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in the following manner: "Who knows

even by name *Thaddeus of Warsaw*? or who can talk about *The Pastor's Fireside*? Yet seventy years ago those works were of such account that (...) Napoleon, on political grounds, paid Jane Porter the high compliment of prohibiting the circulation of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in France” (Hall 1883: 144). Jones, in the chapter *The Nineteenth-Century Reputation of the Authors in the Study, as Indicated by Their Inclusion in General Studies of the Novel of the Period of her Ideas and Innovations* (1986: 257-264), makes it clear that she concurred with this mindset. She shows that towards the end of the 19th century, when Sir Walter Scott had been unequivocally pronounced to be the father of the English historical novel, the author of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* was more often listed as an unimportant literary figure. Really, the glamour of the author's overall literary production, and therefore of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as well, was further evaporating in the closing years of the 19th century. “The sentimental, Christian ethos that pervades the novel and its hero yield an aesthetic that was hailed in its time as a moral alternative to most novels, but one that did not survive the Victorian era” (Anessi 1999: 27).

So why did it happen? Because late “Victorian and Edwardian aesthetic priorities” and usefulness took the place of those of the Romantic era. Consequently, Romanticism, sentimentalism, “religious didacticism” and the “Christian ethos” that characterised the heroes of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* were rendered obsolete. Jones (1986: 117) believes that the main hero was too unrealistic, too impeccable, a “little short of saintly”, and thus impossible to emulate.

Another interesting explanation is provided by Anne Mellor in her publication *A Novel of Their Own: Romantic Women's Fiction, 1790-1830*, in which she holds the view that at the beginning of the 19th century it was mainly women who were accomplished fiction writers – with the Porter sisters being among the most popular. She puts it bluntly: “In the opening decades of the nineteenth century, women dominated both the production and the consumption of novels” (Mellor 1994: 328). After Scott's *Waverly* came out (1814) though, males monopolized this field of literature, as there came the masculinity of labour and production of any sort, including book writing. The cultural structure of the good lady required her to remain modest, confined, discrete, and not in the public but in the private, domestic boundaries. While many Romantic female novel writers contested “the political domination of patriarch”, many acted accordingly (328-331).

In the final century of the previous millennium, the narrative was overshadowed for pretty much the same reasons as in the last decades of the 19th century. “With the advent of modernism and its attendant aesthetic concerns that conflicted with Porter’s sentimental characters and simple narrative techniques, her works were banished to obscurity” (Anessi 1999: 14, 15-16). Agreeing with Anessi’s reasoning, McLean adds his explanation which says that Porter fails the “authenticity” test: she was Irish from her father’s side and English from mother’s, her childhood years coincided with Scotland but career years in London. And, as McLean (2007: 91) sees it, “for all our paeans to hybridity and interstitial figures, we still prefer only Irish writers to write of Ireland, Scottish writers to describe Scotland.” Besides, the plots of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and of many other works of hers take place in a whole range of countries such as Poland, England, Germany, Spain, or Persia, which poses a difficulty for the reader in identifying themselves with a concrete place (91).

As has been argued, in as early as the 1930s the work had already been forgotten and Porter and her works were only remarked upon as the precursors of the literary style that Sir Walter Scott had adopted. It virtually looked as if 20th-century critics put a label on the book that read “biohazard” or “do not touch – high voltage.”

Nowadays, sadly, the novel and its author continue to sink into oblivion. McLean (2007: 93) states that in spite of latest academic engagement in the historical novel and works with national overtones, Jane Porter has not witnessed the due critical attention paid to other Romantic-era creators, such as Sir Walter Scott, Maria Edgeworth, or Lady Morgan. Perhaps one of the reasons for this “forgetfulness” is that with time Polish affairs have become wearisome to the British reading audience. Every time Poland was in danger of an invasion, her eyes were set on Great Britain, with World War II as a “showcase” example. One could compare the situation to several dozen others at present; let us take Chechnya, for that matter. The country’s dire straits evoked the deepest feelings of sympathy and international aid, and it used to be on everybody’s lips back in the 1990s. We could risk saying that it was in to talk about this poor nation. How it is today leaves little room for doubt: their affairs are heard of nearly exclusively apropos of a bomb detonated in one of the crowded streets of Moscow. For example, if Poland today disappeared from the map of Europe like it did over 200 years ago, and a Porter wrote a novel about a Kościuszko, such a book would become a bestseller in no

time. Half a century later, however, few would be passionate about it, and life would go on as if nothing had happened.

Furthermore, the Romantic poetics for many 21st-century people seems, to put it delicately, out of date, and the language itself is sometimes difficult to follow, since many words from the book are now archaic. Another thing is that in today's "fast" world, people, especially young ones, appear to read less, understand less, and care less; in the internet era, they are deluged with information and have less time, energy, will, or even ability to go into details and comprehend intricacies. And to understand a book such as *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, one needs at least some basic knowledge of history. For many students, for example, a book of, say, three hundred pages is redundant drudgery, for some a nightmare, and for still others a complete waste of time. So why read Porter's several hundred pages? Sorrowfully, this is a global phenomenon, and it seems to be exacerbating.

However, a ray of hope seems to be looming into view, owing to a handful of academics such as Gołębiowska. She shares her view on the reception of the novel with the literary professionals of Porter's epoch. Her appraisal of the novel's value is doubly crucial, because it demonstrates how the novel was received in the USA, and, more importantly, in Poland. In her work entitled *Jane Porter – angielska admiratorka Tadeusza Kościuszki* [Jane Porter – an English Admirer of Tadeusz Kościuszko] (2001: 12) the Polish intellectual says that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* had a very warm welcome in the USA and had many impressions in New York and Philadelphia.⁶⁴ To communicate their appreciation and gratitude for Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and *The Scottish Chiefs* some of the books' fans in the USA in 1844 offered the author an armchair made of rose wood. Then, Gołębiowska lets the reader know that the romance became so widely read in other countries, because it was translated into French and German. This boosted the development of the countries' own fiction connected with the theme of fighting for the independence of Poland (12). The citizens in Poland learnt about the new editions of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* from the press. Some, such as the Zamoyskis and Czartoryskis, possessed originals of the book in their collections.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ A catalog of books represented by Library of Congress registers the editions of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* from the years: 1860, 1868, 1881, 1882, 1884, 1886, 1898, and from the beginning of the 20th century (Gołębiowska 2001: 12).

⁶⁵ This information comes, according to Gołębiowska (2001: 12), from the following sources: Indeks do katalogu biblioteki puławskiej zawierający książki obce [A card index of the catalogue of the library of

Prior to the above comment, the learned Polish woman in her work wrote: “Jane Porter, ‘having immersed her pen in Poles’ tears’, sketched with tremendous eagerness, anxiety, and indignation with the partitioners as well as Europe indifferently looking at it, the picture of still fresh historic(al) tragedy, thus finding an effective way to the hearts and thoughts of many contemporaries. It is evidenced by the huge reading success of the novel, which until 1880 had earned in England at least 17 impressions” [translation mine, ML] (Gołębiowska 2001: 11).⁶⁶ She herself calls the narrative “a very successful literary debut” (9).

Anessi’s work brings an important outlook on the assessment of Porter’s novel’s worth as well. This author tries to convince the reading public that Porter’s *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is an example of a “usable history”; that is to say, a history that gives the reader either didactic or aesthetic value. “Porter puts the historical events in Eastern Europe into the service as both ‘real’ and ‘usable’ history, much as Scott would do later” (Anessi 1999: 4-5). The question arises: in what sense can the work be usable or valuable for the reader (at present or at any time in history)? The answer comes in Anessi’s article. The means by which Porter constructs her story helps people comprehend how the globe and its nations are the way they are. The functioning of the world is shown on the basis of the differences between Poland’s and England’s peoples. “Porter’s novel provided English readers with historical and political contexts through which, following in the tradition of ‘female writing’, English society could be ‘politely’ analyzed and critiqued” (5, 27). Thanks to this comparison, writes Anessi, the book “waves the yellow flag of caution at home.” It does so by placing the hero of Thaddeus Sobieski in Britain. He introduces the fate of Poland to the British aristocracy and this “flag of caution” is supposed to awake the feel of patriotism and commitment in Britons and to make them realise that in order to preserve their liberty, they should follow in the Pole’s (Thaddeus Sobieski’s) footsteps. In connection with the devotion and faithfulness of the

Puławy containing foreign books]. MS 2461. Kraków: Biblioteka Czartoryskich; Gołębiowska, Zofia. 2000. *W kręgu Czartoryskich: Wpływy angielskie w Puławach na przełomie XVIII i XIX wieku* [In the circle of the Czartoryskis: English influences in Puławy at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries]. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej: 170; Michalewicz, M. (ed.). 1827. *Rozmaitości* [Sundries]. Pismo dodatkowe do *Gazety Lwowskiej* 7, 16 Feb. 1827: 60.

⁶⁶ The Polish version: Jane Porter, „zanurzywszy swe pióro we łzach Polaków”, kreśliła z ogromnym zapalem, przejęciem i oburzeniem na zaborców, a także obojętnie przypatrującą się Europę, obraz świeżego jeszcze w pamięci wszystkich dramatu dziejowego, znajdując skuteczną drogę do serc i myśli wielu współczesnych. Świadczy o tym ogromny sukces czytelniczy powieści, która do 1880 r. doczekała się w Anglii co najmniej 17 wydań.

Polish to their homeland, the author of *England's Future/Poland's Past: History and National Identity in 'Thaddeus of Warsaw'* hits the reader, actually of any epoch and country, with the following invitation to reflection: "Readers can judge for themselves if their culture is as motivated to defend itself or as stable as the one from which the young Pole was forced to flee" (41).

It ought to be stated firmly that Porter's tome is a significant piece of work. If Scott's commendation does not convince the sceptic, perhaps the editions of the book should, as they reached a two-digit number. And of course no publishing house would have reedited *Thaddeus of Warsaw* were it not a valuable source. The plentiful articles in the press authenticate its worth as well, hailing the book, and the author, as fantastic. The word "genius" in relation to Porter was virtually omnipresent. Her production is "interesting", exciting", "carefully written", deserving applause". It "softens and improves the heart and ennobles the mind." A further piece of opinion is that thanks to *Thaddeus of Warsaw* "English society could be politely analyzed and critiqued." And all these – and indeed many more – positive points of view come from journalists, literary critics, famed writers, or authors of encyclopaedias, which makes it even more lamentable that the book should be forgotten. This gross negligence or, to use a little pathos, criminal negligence was aggravated by the "Polish theme" getting more and more tiresome for the British. In the end, the flying time – the book of the British writer was written more than two hundred years ago – made the tome look unattractive to the present-day reader, who appears to have only a slight interest in literature, even of the modern kind.

Conclusion

After an analysis of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and of this study, it can effortlessly be concluded that Jane Porter's volumes are a principal piece in the broad field of Polish-British cultural relations. The British female's biography shows the author's fascination with the issues of the two countries, but, above all, their people. She presents the Poles as close to perfect: great patriots, genuine friends, and noble people, who rather than having preconceived – in the negative sense – ideas about others, delve into a person's soul in order to dig out a mite of something good from there. They are so pure that they are astounded that a married woman may want to seduce a man different than her husband. Thaddeus Sobieski represents an honourable, proud, and righteous nation; he rejects the comfort of serving in the British army or abandoning a friend for money. The Poles in the book are intrepid, forgiving, and respectful towards the elders.

Regrettably, and this word “heralds” another conclusion, Porter seems to be neglectful of the dark side of the Polish aristocracy's and nobility's lifestyle. In the opinion of many historians, it was destructive due to the culture of excess. “It was marked by ‘wealth without welfare’ and represented in Waclaw Potocki's striking phrase, *bogata nędza* – ‘rich poverty’” (Davies 2005: 195).⁶⁷ It preferred showiness to substance, good form to good actions. Indeed, some possessed diamonds and other riches, whereas the masses existed on the margins of society. Moreover, the situation deteriorated, as has been said, not only due to a handful of magnates, but thanks to a great many petty nobility, as well. They, in defence of their status, were in a state of preparedness for being abused, defamed, and for forsaking their morals. As Davis sees it: “It

⁶⁷ Waclaw Potocki (1621 – 1696) the Polish, Arian poet, satirist, and moralist of the baroque period, was for reforming the Polish Commonwealth and for hereditary monarchy (*WEP*, 1967: 332).

had many redeeming qualities; but cannot be dissociated entirely from the growth of rigid political conservatism, from economic stagnation, from the misery of the other estates, nor from the consumptive weakness of the noble Republic as a whole” (195-196). Together with this privacy, jobbery, nepotism, careerism, and opportunism, one could enlist the nobility’s sumptuousness, drunkenness, illiteracy, parochialism, or litigiousness. (With this set of improprieties, it becomes less ambiguous why the Kingdom fell). Veracity is also blurred to some extent by the author imparting an atmosphere of bliss to the peasants’ existence. In the narrative, they all appear to love their masters; in spite of this, one cannot overlook the fact that hardly any peasant had a life better than a slave’s. Porter is not careful either to have written that the “pitiable” stratum of society examine the bible, with an overwhelming majority of the nationals illiterate. Besides, according to the novelist, Poles, despite being “papist”, as she calls them, were staunch believers – God’s best friends, one could assume. Unequivocally many were, then again, there is virtually nothing in the book about the hypocrisy and other misdemeanours of the Catholic church in Poland. Bigots spoke to Providence – who commands people to treat everybody justly, with affection, and reverence – only to, for instance, show indifference towards the needy. The understanding of many of the nobility as being equal to the Deity speaks for itself. Of course, reality was not one-sided: many noble patriots, often poor themselves, sacrificed their lives before, during, and after the partitions. And the deeds of many suffice to “enrich the history of any civilised nation in the world”, as Mączak assures us. The thing is that Porter sets forth the positive side of the coin, hardly touching upon the reverse one. Such inappropriateness for the part of the lyricist may have been the upshot of four factors. In the first place, a good deal of Porter’s knowledge of Poles came from Polish immigrants – soldiers fleeing the calamity of their homeland – and most of these, with every likelihood, were unparalleled citizens, just the way Porter portrays them. Secondly, the writer could have sketched the Poles as almost spotless to publicise or at least present their cause to the British (and European) reader and to raise their (the Poles’) spirits, just like Henryk Sienkiewicz (1813 – 1896) did it in his works. She must have known about some of the weaknesses of the Polish nobility (she placed only a couple of lines about it in the appendix of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*), but, possibly, did not want to “scare anybody away”. When it comes to the reasons why she paints the plebs’ lives as so harmonious and pleasurable, one may speculate that Porter, albeit she lived in reduced circumstances herself, in fact belonged to the

upper, or at least middle-upper, echelons of society. Accordingly, there is a possibility that she subconsciously misjudged the economic well-being of the paupers and their relations with the prosperous. Ultimately, Porter may have whitewashed the Poles in order to contrast the maliciousness of the British, whom she must have known more profoundly. This conclusion could be drawn from the fact that she is much more critical of and demanding with the British high society than that of Poland. Undoubtedly, she believed that the British aristocracy with their privileges did too little to fulfil their duties to protect the nation with its citizens. It is the Polish with Thaddeus Sobieski that set an example for the British in this respect. Furthermore, For Porter Poland offers a model of a fairly advanced political system – “the nearest to Britain’s in Europe – but grounded in a more stable social and economic culture.” Next to putting forward the Polish Kingdom as a political and social “sample” to follow, the novelist further urges that the British aristocracy be “inspired and morally-upright if the nation is to remain above barbarism” (Anessi 1999: 41, 30). Jane Porter through her book wished to strengthen the national identity of Britons and make them aware that they should do everything in order to avoid the sorrowful fate of the Poles. By contrasting the British with the Polish, she also lets the addressee know that although Poland had no physical borders, her people’s patriotism thrived.

There is every cause to think that the novelist sees the British as prejudiced, mostly against the French. The aristocracy of Great Britain in Porter’s version disregard the have-nots, backbite whoever is not in the immediate vicinity, and demonstrate their superiority, or, speaking more precisely, feeling of superiority, by possessing goods rather than a better mind and soul. Thence, the cover is given more meaning and value than the book. Emblematic of them is being erratic and fickle; they bow down to temporary whims instead of working on building a strong personality. Many of the British highborn persons from the book are blasé, coquettish, and pampered, and sometimes Porter in her work discloses some of the vices in no uncertain terms by stating, for example: “such were the moral tactics for human conduct at the commencement of this [the 19th] century” (*TW*, 1845).

Jane Porter’s critique, severe as it is, is not void of positive features of the British. There are truly noble characters, filled with charity, compassion, generosity, munificence, modesty, piety, tact, and good judgement. Reading the book, one is almost bound to have an impression that the “bounteous hospitality” offered by an English gen-

tleman to high and low, whether neighbours or strangers, was very common. Not dissimilar views appear when the creator of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* portrays her country as the land of the free. In the story, Thaddeus's mother beseeches him: "go to England: that is a free country; and I have been told that the people are kind to the unfortunate" (TW, 1831: 81). One can see here a parallel to Adam Czartoryski's mother, Izabela Czartoryska, who once wrote to her son: "I want to send you to England, because I don't know a country in which it would be more handsome for a Pole to reside" (Izabela Czartoryska 1891, as quoted in Lipoński 1978: 16). He himself later stated that "from all the countries on this globe, England is considered a country where a citizen experiences the biggest number of liberties, which determine one's happiness" (Jerzy Adam Czartoryski MS 725, as quoted in Lipoński 1978: 60). On a different occasion the Polish Prince surmised: "Britain may not have an ideal, but the best of the then available political and social models" (Jerzy Adam Czartoryski MS 995, as quoted in Lipoński 1978: 28). Yet, in relation to the wretched in Britain – although it is hard to negate that many Britons did feel free – it is devastatingly easy to see that the working classes were exploited, and overseas millions of people could not throw off the shackles of slavery and colonial rule.

The assessment of the book by the British recipient of Porter's era, which, too, was one of the aims of this disquisition, leaves no room for speculation: the book and the author's style were hailed as truthful, captivating, outstanding, and by many historical. In this light, it is hard to understand why *Thaddeus of Warsaw* has never been translated into Polish (Kościuszko himself probably read it in German), all the more that, for instance, Jane Austin's or Walter Scott's productions "had no difficulty" finding a translator. Maybe for a potential translator Poland was presented too naively as a guiltless sufferer only, with the main hero close to spotless. We cannot exclude a hypothesis saying that the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian "conquistadores" blocked a translation, as they did not want to raise the spirit of freedom in Poland. Also, maybe the publishers demanded too much money for the rights, or perhaps it was Porter who blocked this venture for some reason. The true rationale behind this poignant fact may remain unverifiable, but *Thaddeus of Warsaw* certainly deserves a thorough translation. Hopefully, this will soon happen, and the saying "things done cannot be undone" with regard to Porter's tome will sound "things undone can be done."

How much awareness and attention were there in Great Britain in reference to Poland? In the narrative, different characters from the Isles mention that Poland was the subject of debate. For example, Somerset's mother knows about the palace of Wilanów, the hotel servants talk about the Kingdom's affairs, and the pawnbroker easily recognises the image of the Polish king Poniatowski on a medal. So how was it in reality? What do the leading anglicists have to say on the matter? Tazbir, in his article *Europa, ale ta gorsza* [Europe but the Worse One] (1998), agrees that there have been plenty of opinions on Poland and Poles formed in many European countries over the centuries but is quick to add that in no epoch was the interest of Britons in Poland considerable. Davies's view is even grimmer: "Anglo-Polish relations have rarely generated much enthusiasm, either from the participants or from those disposed to study them" (Davies 1983: 79). He writes that the level of British interest in and knowledge of the Polish affairs in the 18th century was low, because at that time Eastern Europe was of less value to the British than India, Africa, North America, or the West Indies. When British thoughts did concentrate on Eastern Europe, one of three main issues were usually under consideration: the Protestant cause, maritime trade, and the balance of power. "For none of these issues did the ancient Republic of Poland-Lithuania have much relevance." Poland had no chance to win British interest, as its invaders competed more effectively. In the spheres of science, education, militarism, administration, industry, and historiography Prussia was the dominant power. Russia "reserved" the right for maximum attention since Europe was fearful of its might. Austria was the object of growing anxiety as the last hope for counterbalancing the rise of Prussia and Russia. Besides, Poland's destruction by its neighbours did not stop Great Britain from trading with the usurpers. (History repeats, they say). "In contrast, the Poles had little to offer but trouble" (80, 89). What is more, Poland and the regions east and south of the country were deliberately portrayed as oriental, Asian, and backward to effectively make Western Europe look as better civilised. Voltaire was one of many such presenters. Of course, the countries of the East were economically weaker, but Poland had a great contribution to humanism and Renaissance. Yet, the feature regarded as vital in any civilisation in Poland was gone, and this feature was sovereignty. This is how Europe was mentally divided, and the interest of the West in Poland was lost (Rietbergen 2001: 388).

As for literature, according to Davies (1983: 84-85), none of prime Romantic poets, but for Campbell, showed too much interest in Poland; not Wordsworth, not Keats, not Shelley, not even Byron. However, Krajewska (2000: 83) does not go along with this view, explaining that from the time of Sobieski's victory, the English were evidently more and more engrossed in Poland. The situation in Poland was highlighted in the monthly *Historical & Political Mercury*, and later in the periodicals the *Historical Register*, *Historical Detail*, *Annual Register*, and *Review of Public Affairs*. At the turn of the 18th century the *Times* and the *Observer* as well as the quarterly *Edinburgh Review* informed about current events in Warsaw. "The initial indifference of the English towards the partition of Poland changed entirely in 1814", writes Krajewska, "one of the first signs of which was the article by Lord Brougham in the *Edinburgh Review* in which he severely criticised the attitude of his countrymen and called for support of the Polish nation's bid for freedom." Poniatowski's stay in England was reported on too. Also, in the 18th century a number of memoirs of journeys as well as histories of Poland appeared, but it did not work just one way: British merchants, diplomats and writers travelled to Poland and their accounts were read by many (83-84). Lipoński (2000c: 236-237) concurs with Krajewska, especially as far as the first decades of the 19th century go: Polish national uprisings triggered off a wave of popular literature in the West. In France, Germany, England, and even in the distant United States, there appeared numerous dramas with Polish subject matter. It is estimated that several dozen theatrical plays raised the Polish question in the first half of the nineteenth century. He also points out that at the same time a reverse situation took place, that is to say, a lot of attention was drawn to English studies in Poland. (The first translations from English were made through French, which had been popular with the Polish elite much earlier) (1997: 6).

Regardless of the extent of how much the British literati were engaged in Poland as such, and the other way round, one should not turn a deaf ear to what people of politics thought about Poland's status quo. Briefly speaking, 200 years ago, as Tazbir (1998) would have us believe, unfavourable stances were more often adopted than positive ones. The subjects of George III often had lots of compassion and sympathy for the Polish Kingdom; still, the aid they offered boiled down to accepting immigrants. "If the government were not prepared to intervene, the press and literature were certainly on the side of Poland" (Krajewska: 2000: 83). Surely, literary or cultural links were much stronger than political or economic ones.

Looking at the issue more broadly, nowadays, following Lipoński's mindset, it is unambiguous that "the tendency to show Poland negatively is obvious." He cites a standpoint expressed by a group of authors and critical readers from different American, Canadian, and European universities, including Oxford. A fragment from *Civilization. Past and Present* from 1965 says that Poland's nobility was corrupt, quarrelsome, and paralysed the central government. Because the monarchy was elective, the most powerful families proposed their candidates, and strife accompanied the choice of a king. "The central Diet was completely impotent... This was not government but anarchy in political dress..." (Lipoński 1994: 87). Showing only one side of the coin is not fair and can be dangerous; half-truths may be close to lies... (Chapter four of this study demonstrates the complexity of Poland's dire straits and why it was reduced to ruin). Obviously, today there are more international authors, for instance the previously-quoted Norman Davis, who have a more balanced opinion. Nonetheless, the intellectual weight given to British culture in Poland and Polish in Britain is disproportional. If measured by the number of entries in an encyclopaedia, the ratio is striking: *The Great Polish Encyclopaedia* in 13 volumes has about 2,000 entries on the culture of the British Isles. *The World Book Encyclopaedia* (of similar size) devoted fewer than thirty(!) entries on Poland (89). Naturally, the influence of British culture on the world is much greater than the one of Poland but 70 times greater? Then, what about the historical (and historic) experiences, as Lipoński continues, by which one can judge the importance of a country, as well? The extremely strenuous years of Poland's dismemberment should alone render Polish culture more valuable in Britain and anywhere else.

Another purpose of this exegesis is to convince the reader that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and the person of Jane Porter are invaluable for all those involved in the branch of culture called "Polish-British relationships". The number of pages, the passion of the British author, the inspiration in the form of Kościuszko and the Polish nation, the love for and genuine absorption in Poland, and the aforementioned passages all render Porter and her work a vital part of the field of interest. We should also remember about the fact that the image of Thaddeus Sobieski had a colossal impact on the way the British saw Poles. More significantly, through Thaddeus's mixed ancestry – he is half-Polish and half-English – Porter indicates that "heredity and blood are shown to be a false determiner of national identity." Thaddeus, with English and Polish bloodlines swirling together, "links the nations in a joint heredity" (Anessi 1999: 32).

The least important factor in creating national identity is heredity, at least in the sense of a genetic inheritance of birthright. For Porter, upbringing and class privilege, not blood, determine whether one is noble or not, or if one is Polish or English. Throughout the novel mixed bloodlines and deceptive appearances underscore that neither genetic ancestry nor superficial customs, such as dress, are sufficient means to constitute a national identity (Anessi 1999: 5-6).

“Triviality, everyone knows that”, one could say about the above fragment. But in the world where we follow appearances so much, where the cover takes precedence over the book, there is never too much of reminding what is really important in life.

Moreover, Jane’s work greatly contributed to popularising the vanquished *Rzeczpospolita* in Europe and prompted a lot of interest in the partitions of Poland on the continent. Though no direct help came, at least the truth, scrupulously manipulated and falsified by the usurpers, leaked out to other peoples and not only European ones. And for a country suffering near total damage inflicted by the attackers, this fact could have been priceless.

This is why I harbour great hopes that my thesis will reach a wider audience and will render them conduct research into the field in question, Jane Porter, and her production. Just a reminder from the former chapters: His Majesty George IV *per se* ordered Porter to write for him, and not less renowned figure of Napoleon forbade reading *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, fearing it might awake the peoples he had been conquering! (Not bad for one flouted romance). So one of the inescapable conclusions is that it is too valuable a source to “lie fallow” and it should be “doubly ploughed”, using Lipoński’s metaphor. I also wish the reading public both in Poland and in Great Britain – but elsewhere as well – would break with stereotypical thinking and looking at nations, or problems in general, in black and white colours, particularly without context. It may not be easy, because stereotypes and clichés are very convenient and reassuring: convenient, because they require little or no cognitive effort (who can afford to dissipate their precious time today?), and reassuring, since thanks to them we can complacently see ourselves as knowing something. Fortunately, studying *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and other examples of cultural connections between (the) countries helps to get on the right track.

Through her novel, Porter teaches us something else. Something timeless, something that should never be undervalued, something that Prince Adam Czartoryski had first learnt himself and then taught it to others and included in his *Katechizm moralny* [Moral Catechism]: “Nobility without virtue is fault. A good-natured, doughty, benevo-

lent, and merciful man deserves the greatest respect, whereas the meanest is a nobleman who is ill-natured, proud, perverse, merciless, and cruel. To boast about one's nobility or despise those who were not born into a high class is the foulest thing of all" [translation mine, ML] (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 3: 327).⁶⁸

Lastly, let us look at some ideas expressed by Katarzyna Gmerek (2005: 26). Despite the fact that they have been used to encapsulate a different work, her words sound appropriate to finalise this one as well: she stresses the import of getting closer to whom/what we regard as divergent – in this context people of different countries and cultures – as owing to this, we will gain knowledge not only of the other (people and cultures) but of ourselves and the world we live in. Possessing this value cannot be overestimated.

Jane Porter and *Thaddeus of Warsaw* have lain fallow far too long; let us doubly plough them. And should one still think that the Polish-British cultural links are weak or unimportant, please *dig in* Jane Porter's fascinating novel. As the Polish cultural historian and encyclopaedist Zygmunt Gloger once said: "Obce rzeczy wiedzieć dobrze jest – swoje, obowiązek." "Foreign things is good to know – your own ones, a duty."⁶⁹

⁶⁸ The original version in Polish: "Szlachectwo zaś bez cnót i przymiotów ustawnym jest zarzutem. Jako człowiek poczciwy, mężny, dobroczynny, litościwy, największego wart szacunku, tak najpodlejszem jest stworzeniem szlachciec niepoczciwy, dumny, przewrotny, okrutny, nielitościwy. Chęć się ze szlachectwa lub gardzić tymi, którzy szlachtą się nie urodzili, a osobliwie wyrzucać im to na oczy, ostatnią jest podłością."

⁶⁹ The words come from the following source: (Gloger [1900-1903] 1972, 1: front page). [Translation into English mine, ML]

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Summary in Polish

Niniejsza rozprawa poświęcona jest brytyjskiej autorce Jane Porter i jej czterotomowej powieści pt. *Tadeusz z Warszawy* z r. 1803. Powieść ta jest romansem ilustrującym fikcyjną postać Tadeusza Sobieskiego, która wzorowana jest na Tadeuszu Kościuszcze. Dzieło Porter, mimo że napisane zostało ponad dwa stulecia temu, nigdy nie doczekało się tłumaczenia na język polski, a jest to rzecz traktująca w ogromnej mierze o Polsce i Polakach. Część pierwsza tejże książki opisuje niespokojne czasy zaborów w Polsce, a w szczególności kampanie militarne i patriotyczne oddanie polskich obrońców. Okazuje się, że Porter była tak doskonałą znawczynią pola bitewnego, iż wielu sądziło, że Brytyjka była naocznym świadkiem potyczek, które opisała. Pozostałe trzy części to przedstawienie w ujęciu sentymentalnym perypetii Tadeusza Sobieskiego jako imigranta w Londynie, dokąd ów zostaje zmuszony udać się po zamordowaniu Rzeczypospolitej. Dzięki takiemu zabiegowi Porter porównuje idealnego wręcz Polaka z angielską/brytyjską arystokracją, której znaczna część wg Porter pozostawia wiele do życzenia, i ukazuje swoim rodakom jaką powinno się przyjąć postawę w obliczu zagrożenia. Porter pisała *Tadeusza z Warszawy* w momencie zawieruchy rewolucyjnej we Francji, więc był to czas, w którym poważnie obawiano się, iż podobny chaos może się przedostać na północ od kanału La Manche.

W mojej pracy próbuję rzucić nowe światło na wagę stosunków polsko-brytyjskich na podst. książki Porter. Nakreślam na przykład stereotypy, które panowały wśród ówczesnych Brytyjczyków na tematy związane z Polską i z Polakami oraz jak się one miały do rzeczywistości. Zestawiam również Polaków w oczach autorki z wizją ówczesnych i obecnych polskich i brytyjskich uczonych. I tu wychodzi na to, że Porter w swym utworze wybiela naród znad Wisły, czyniąc niemalże wszystkich tak wzorco-

wymi jak jej idol – Kościuszko. Dzieje się tak prawdopodobnie dlatego, że autorka chciała, między innymi, pisać „ku pokrzepieniu serc”, jak robił to po niej Henryk Sienkiewicz.

W powyższej pracy dokonuję także egzegezy „kulisów” produkcji *Tadeusza z Warszawy*, w szczególności zaś bodźców, które „pchnęły” pannę Jane do napisania tego utworu literackiego. Bodźcami tymi okazali się, oprócz serca pisarki wrażliwego na niedolę ludzką, szlachetni obywatele polscy, z Tadeuszem Kościuszką na czele, którego Porter literalnie czciła. Kolejnym czynnikiem, który ułatwił pisarce stworzenie tomów była jej rozległa wiedza ogólna związana z Polską, dowód czego stanowi załącznik do *Tadeusza z Warszawy*, którego fragmenty zostały zawarte w tej pracy.

W rozprawie nie zabrakło też miejsca na krótką biografię brytyjskiej autorki i jej rodziny, gdyż informacje o niej, nawet w dobie Internetu, są raczej zdawkowe i często nieprecyzyjne. Moje wysiłki zostały też ukierunkowane na ustalenie tego, jak przyjęto Porter i jej książkę na Wyspach 200 lat temu i jednoznacznie można stwierdzić, że przyjęcie to okazało się wspaniałym. Dysertacja wskazuje również na to, że na stylu Porter wzorował się sam Sir Walter Scott, a sama powieść ma cechy, które każą zakładać, iż należy ona do epoki literackiej romantyzmu.

Ponadto, aby *Tadeusz z Warszawy* nie był analizowany w oderwaniu od kontekstu historyczno-kulturowego, czytelnik w rozprawie znajdzie zarys turbulentnego wieku osiemnastego i dziewiętnastego w obu krajach, wraz z opiniami Brytyjczyków z tamtego okresu na temat sytuacji w Polsce.

Gdyby trzeba było streścić niniejszą pracę w jednym zdaniu, to można by pokusić się o następujące: Ponieważ Porter i jej dzieło ulegli zapomnieniu, moja dysertacja jest hołdem złożonym osobie, która swoim piórem naświetliła sprawę unicestwionej Polski, walnie przyczyniając się do wzbogacenia szeroko pojętych stosunków między Polską a Wielką Brytanią.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Synopsis of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*

The story takes place in the grim era of history when the kingdom of Poland was attacked by Russia and Austria, and, having been defeated under the leadership of Kosciusko, was forced to sign the ignominious treaty of partition that gave her territory to the conquerors and wiped her name off the role of free nations.

Thaddeus of Warsaw is an illustrious Polander, a descendant of the house of Sobieski, and grandson of Constantine, the Palatine of Masovia. The mother of Thaddeus, Therese Sobieski, had in early youth attended her father to Florence, and there had formed a clandestine marriage with an Englishman of the name of Sackville, by whom she was suddenly and mysteriously deserted. Overwhelmed with sorrow and remorse, she reveals her union to the Count, receives his pardon, and returns with him to the paternal palace of Villanow, near Warsaw, avowedly the widowed mother of Thaddeus. Thaddeus, distressed by his English father's dishonourable conduct, resolves to forget him. The young hero is introduced to us in 1792, on the eve of his departure with his grandfather for the Polish camp. On the way he is told a story by his grandfather about how he and General Butzou saved their sovereign from the plot of noble conspirators. The King's carriage was ambushed and the two soldiers fought to protect him. He was carried off, despite their efforts, but persuaded one of the assassins to aid him. Thaddeus then begins the fight for his country.

The soul of Thaddeus bears the stamp of virtue, and the principles which he had imbibed from the Palatine are developed in a series of actions, munificent, generous, and humane. In the course of the campaign, which, with entering on military details, the authoress makes subordinate to the interest of her narration, Thaddeus saves the life of a young Englishman, who, stimulated by the zeal of a vain tutor, and his own impetuosity, had served in the Russian army; but who, during his residence with Thaddeus, not as a prisoner, but a friend, becomes enthusiastically devoted to the family of Sobieski, and the cause of Poland. Pembroke Somerset, for so he is called, is soon summoned by his tutor to Danzig; he parts from his Polish hosts with keenest regrets, and with the eager plea that when the war is over Thaddeus shall visit him in London. That Poland will be the winner in the present struggle, and a victorious peace soon be concluded when the friends shall be reunited, neither doubts. But no such fortunate result comes out of the war.

The eventful era of 1793 succeeds, when, 'compressed to one-fourth of her dimensions, within the lines of demarcation drawn by her enemies, Poland was stripped of her rank in Europe, the lands of her nobles given to strangers, and her citizens left to starve for want of bread.' Another year elapses, during which the expiring liberty of Poland is sustained by the heroism and valour of Kosciuszko and the two Sobieski's. On the tenth of October is fought the desperate conflict of Ferfen, when the Poles sustain a total defeat, and the venerable Palatine receives a mortal wound. Scarcely has Thaddeus consecrated the remains of Palatine with tears than the Russians, still advancing in the career of their victory, surround Warsaw, and the destroying demons devote its fated walls to horror and destruction. In this moment of anguish Thaddeus seeks his mother, who predicts that she at least, shall not survive her country's ruin.

No alternative now remains for him but to say farewell to his native land and, in exile, hasten his flight to England. All his property is gone. The riches the family possessed have been sacrificed to aid in equipping the Polish army. In consequence, the young Thaddeus leaves home carrying with him nothing but a few trinkets he chanced to have upon his person. One hope, however, cheers him in his loneliness and despair. He will soon be with Pembroke Somerset, and no longer be friend-less and alone. During the turmoil of the past few months he has mislaid Pembroke's address, to be sure; and in addition no letters from England have reached him, but these facts he explains away as a result of the chaos in which he has been living. It never occurs to him to doubt the loyalty or affection of the Englishman. In London he is taken to a hotel, where there is much speculation about his identity, and where Thaddeus realises the extent of his financial difficulty. He finds a humble room to rent with a pious old lady and changes his name to Mr Constantine to avoid attention. At his landlady's, he faces new difficulties. He falls ill and runs up expenses, his watch is stolen and he has to go to a pawnbroker's to pay his debts. His landlady's son gets smallpox, Thaddeus nurses him and, after his death, struggles to pay the medical bills. He then meets the valiant General Butzou, begging in the street. He takes him home and cares for him. Butzou tells him of the indignities Poland suffered after his departure. Thaddeus begins working as an artist and sells some drawings. Thaddeus resolves to help the unfortunate veteran as much as possible; and happening to catch a glimpse of his old but forgetful friend, Pembroke Somerset, he no longer scruples to remind him of the endearing [sic] intimacy which, in happier days, had subsisted between them. With this view he addresses two letters to

Somerset, which are returned in a blank envelope to the ill-fated Sobieski. Indignant at this complicated insolence and ingratitude, Thaddeus solemnly renounces Pembroke, determined to endure any evil rather than again subject himself to the cruel pang of unmerited disappointment. The discovery is a cruel blow to his faith in humankind. Life now begins in deadly earnest for our hero.

He then saves the Countess of Tinemouth from attack and she becomes his friend. Through her, he meets two rather forward women. The first is the married coquette, Lady Sara, who determines to attract him, but instead falls in love herself. The second is a young woman he tutors in German, Euphemia, avid reader of sentimental novels. Thaddeus begins to suspect that Lady Sara and Euphemia have a romantic interest in him. The forwardness and patronage of these women of fashion disgusts Mr. Constantine. Nevertheless, he is penniless and cannot afford to cast aside the position of tutoring. Hence it taxes all his wit to maintain his dignity, and his honour as a gentleman. Yet his path is not entirely without fortune, for at the Dundas' residence he has the good fortune to meet Lady Mary Beaufort, a charming heiress who is a cousin of Pembroke Somerset's, and as good as she is rich. Of course, Thaddeus falls deeply in love with her and she with him. During his acquaintance with these many English people, all of them have suspected that Mr. Constantine is something more than an impecunious teacher of languages and they try to make him reveal his identity. Had he yielded to their wishes he would no longer have been without friends, for England was ringing not only with the fame of Kosciusko, but also with that of the brave and dauntless Sobieski. But Thaddeus is too modest to thus court recognition. He will stand upon his present merits or not at all.

Meanwhile, Lady Tinemouth tells Thaddeus her story. Her husband left her for his mistress and then removed her children, bringing her son up to hate her. She unknowingly gives Thaddeus information that makes him think this cruel man is his father. Lady Tinemouth is an old friend of the Somerset family, and at her house the two men finally confront each other. On recognizing his friend, Pembroke is filled with joy and immediately reproaches Thaddeus for never having searched him out. It is then that Sobieski tells him of the letters that have been returned to him. Pembroke is puzzled. He admits, however, that his father has always cherished a hatred for Poland and forbidden his son ever to visit that country. Hence Pembroke has never told him of his stay with the Sobieski family. The two quickly surmise that Thaddeus's attempts to contact Som-

erset were thwarted by Mr Loftus. The young Englishman confesses everything to his father and begs him to welcome to his home the Polish noble who has saved his life. Sir Robert Somerset flies into a passion. He tries by every means in his power to break up the friendship. Somerset, embarrassed, goes to tell Thaddeus the news but cannot see him. His friend is too busy nursing the dying Lady Tinemouth with the help of Dr Cavendish. The next day Pembroke fetches Lady Tinemouth's daughter, Lady Albina, who has been cruelly kept from her. Somerset is told his father is ill and rides to see him. The Earl of Tinemouth and his son arrive and insult the memory of Lady Tinemouth and Thaddeus by suggesting he is one of many of her lovers. Thaddeus controls the situation. He is told by Somerset that his father forbids their friendship. Thaddeus sets off in the night, determining to go to America.

On the way he falls down apparently dead by the roadside. From there he is rescued by a kind stranger, whom he later discovers is Sir Robert Somerset. A moving interview takes place in which Thaddeus discovers that his father is not the evil Earl, but Sir Robert himself. In his youth, Robert Somerset had formed an attachment which his father looked upon as imprudent. He was therefore sent abroad where he travelled on the Continent with the Earl of Tinemouth (then Mr Stanhope), who had left as the result of a rather less honourable entanglement. The two young men both took the name of Sackville. However, they quickly quarrelled because of Stanhope's dissolute principles. After they quarrelled, Robert kept the assumed name of Sackville. Under this name he married Thaddeus's mother because his father told him the woman he loved was married to his brother. Discovering his father's deceit, he abandoned Thaddeus's mother and left for England, where, in an act of bigamy, he married the object of his choice and fathered Pembroke. Pembroke Somerset is therefore Thaddeus's half-brother. Sir Robert had avoided Thaddeus because of his fear of declaring Pembroke illegitimate. This is resolved, however, since Thaddeus and Pembroke quickly reach an agreement by which Pembroke keeps his name and position and Thaddeus is given one of the family estates. Thaddeus and Mary become engaged, as do Pembroke and Lady Albina.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ The synopsis comes from the following sources: (Grozier [1920] 2004; Review of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* by Jane Porter, 1804: 309-314; Price 1999).

Appendix 2. The life of Tadeusz Kościuszko as a person inspiring Porter's novel

1. Introduction

Tadeusz Kościuszko played a significant role in the rebellions of two, wholly separate, nations. During the American War of Independence Kościuszko served as both an engineer and a field commander, eventually earning the title of Brigadier General. He also led the Polish-Lithuanian uprising of 1794, winning several key conflicts before being defeated by vastly superior forces: the combined might of Prussia, Russia and Austria. As well as an expert in defence and fortification, some commentators may go as far as to call him a military genius, many contemporary accounts describe Kościuszko as wholly modest, a mild and kind person who won the friendship of many influential figures, including Thomas Jefferson and General Nathaniel Greene.

2. Early Life (1746 – 1776)

Early in the February of 1746, Tadeusz Andrzej Bonawentura Kościuszko was born near Nowogródek (Novogradok). Kościuszko's family was an impoverished part of the minor nobility, and while they escaped the serfdom that constrained so much of the Commonwealth, Tadeusz needed to find a career. After a classical education at a local, church led, school, Kościuszko decided on the army, entering the newly established Polish Military Academy in 1765. He soon became a lieutenant and an instructor, before his evident skills won him promotion to Captain of Artillery; a scholarship to study in France from the Polish King, Stanisław Poniatowski, soon followed. In France, Kościuszko continued to learn engineering, military strategy, architecture and art, a skill which was to endear him to his fellows, as well as the new liberal philosophies of that time and ideas about government. In this period he also visited Italy, Germany and Britain.

Kościuszko returned to Poland in 1774, but he remained there for less than two years. While many narratives hurry past this homecoming, highlighting Kościuszko's undoubted desire to fight in the American struggle for independence, it is important to remember that several factors pushed the young captain away from Poland. In 1772 Prussia, Austria and Russia had partitioned Poland, seizing around 30% of its territory and forcing governmental changes through bribes, threats and arrests. There was no place in the Polish Army for Kościuszko, and he began to tutor Ludwika Sosnowska, the daughter of a General. Some sort of affair followed, possibly involving a failed at-

tempt to elope, and Tadeusz was forced to leave in 1775. He fled to France where, at some point in late 1775 or the first half of 1776, he heard about the American rebellion against the British. Kościuszko left during the summer of 1776, perhaps in response to the colonists' declaration of independence, and by the 18th of October he was a colonel in the Continental Army.

3. War of Independence 1: The Road to Saratoga (1776 – 1777)

Of the many foreign men and women who travelled to assist the American colonists, Kościuszko was one of the first. Arriving in Philadelphia during the August of 1776, he presented himself, and a letter of recommendation from the Polish Prince Czartoryski, to the Continental government; his application was read in Congress on the 30th of August. The colonists were desperate for engineers, even those who had only just arrived from abroad with no knowledge of America, and on October 18th 1776 Kościuszko became a Colonel of Engineers.

His first duty was to help fortify Philadelphia from naval attack. Kościuszko centred the defences on a new Fort, Mercer, while setting up aquatic blockades designed to force British ships closer to both the shore, and bombardment. This work impressed Congress, and in the first quarter of 1777 he was moved to the key position of Ticonderoga, then Bemis Heights, and Saratoga. Kościuszko played a key part in the withdrawal from Ticonderoga, after his key suggestion of defence was ignored by the continental commander, slowing the British troops by felling trees and diverting rivers, which blocked trails and flooded large areas of land. He was assisted by especially foul weather and the landscape of marshes, ravines and wilderness, as well as by the mass of Burgoyne's – the British commander's – ill advised baggage. This combination reduced the British advance to as little as a mile a day, giving the colonists more than enough time to regroup.

On August 19th Congress placed General Horatio Gates in charge of the Northern Army, as a replacement for the unpopular and increasingly ineffectual Schuyler. By this time Burgoyne had crossed the Hudson, but his force was running low on supplies and operating without scouts. In view of this, Gates asked Kościuszko to prepare a defensive position, and the Pole fortified Bemis Heights, a large, and, by all accounts, quite formidable piece of high ground overlooking the Hudson. Pushed forward by a lack of food, Burgoyne attacked the Heights on September 19th. The Battle of Bemis Heights was a comprehensive victory for Gates, and the British retreated back from

their weakened defensive lines a few days later, settling in Saratoga. Within weeks the colonists encircled this position, eventually forcing Burgoyne, and around 6,000 troops, to surrender on October 17th. Burgoyne's defeat may have taken place at Saratoga, but it was made possible by the strength of Bemis Heights: Gates had assessed the British situation and opted for a defensive line, while Kościuszko had provided a perfect position. The importance of this British defeat cannot be overestimated, for it was Saratoga that finally persuaded the French to ally with the Continental government, a full-scale involvement that would prove to be a key factor in the colonist's ultimate victory. At Bemis Heights, Kościuszko undoubtedly made a tangible contribution to American independence.

4. War of Independence 2: West Point and Victory (1777 – 1784)

After his success at Bemis Heights, Kościuszko was promoted to Chief Engineer of the Middle Department and given another task – the defence of the Hudson and its surrounding area. Instigated by George Washington, who wanted a defensive system centred on the key strategic position of West Point, Kościuszko worked on the region for over two years, from early 1778 to mid 1780. His fortifications are widely acknowledged as brilliant. Strong redoubts in high positions, such as that of Fort Putnam, enabled withering artillery fire to be directed at the water, and a massive iron chain was laid across the river. Lying submerged, this could be pulled tight, causing it to rise and block enemy ships from advancing. Although Kościuszko's chain was never used, it certainly advanced his reputation.

Kościuszko's success at West Point was of a far subtler nature than that of Bemis Heights. The British never launched a major attack on his large network of defences, nor did they try and sail through them to the larger river network beyond; consequently, there was no great defensive victory. Instead, the area became one of minor skirmishes and stalemate. However, it was Kościuszko's work that created this situation, his fortifications appearing too imposing or effective for the British to attack. Instead, they used other tactics, often trying to draw out the Continental forces by attacking unfinished or outpost areas. These proved ineffective, as Washington always held firm, often countering effectively with a smaller, stealthier, force.

Many stories surround Kościuszko's time at West Point. He is supposed to have been given a slave, Agrippa Hull, whom he freed immediately, and to have shared his

rations with some of the captured British troops. Kościuszko is also supposed to have laid out a garden that still remains.

In 1780 Kościuszko was named Chief Engineer of the South, serving under General Nathaniel Greene. This time, however, the Pole's role had changed, for he commanded his own troops and took part in battle. His strategy and innovation continued, and on two occasions Kościuszko masterminded a retreat across potentially difficult rivers – the Dan and the Yadkin – leading some modern commentators to claim that he made the Southern Army amphibious. He also organised the blockade of Charleston, leading the eventually victorious colonists into the city and ending the South's official resistance. After the British defeat in 1784, Kościuszko was promoted to Brigadier General and given US citizenship in honour of his contribution; Washington also presented him with the Cincinnati Order Medal. Kościuszko returned to Poland later that year.

As an individual in a multi-continental war, Kościuszko made a noticeable, and lasting, contribution. His fortifications helped change the direction of the conflict – Bemis Heights and West Point providing secure areas for the colonists to work from – while his ability on the retreat bought time and kept units from destruction. Of the foreign subjects who came to the revolution's aid, Kościuszko's contribution was perhaps only second to the great French General Lafayette. Of course, the war also benefited Kościuszko himself. He learnt how to win battles with a militia of untrained and poorly equipped men, as well as how to apply his years of study – often quite brilliantly – in the field, abilities he would use in his later career. Some narratives of Kościuszko's life argue, most plausibly, that he also developed a personal political and social ideology, including a strong dislike for slavery and an evolved belief in the rights of freedom and liberty. In Kościuszko's mind, these applied not just to the newly independent colonies, but to Poland too. Finally, he made many friends and admirers, including General Greene and Thomas Jefferson, with whom he had a particularly close bond. The latter famously said this of the Pole: "He was as pure a son of liberty as I have ever known."

5. Peace, War and Exile (1784 – 1792)

Kościuszko's return to Poland in 1784 was similar to that of his homecoming from Europe a decade earlier: he was unable to get a commission in the Polish army. The Czartoryski family – whose recommendation had helped Kościuszko to establish himself in America – were now supporters of a political group that campaigned for reform,

and an end to what they considered Russian interference. This helped place them in opposition to King Poniatowski who, although a known reformer, had been the Russian candidate for the empty Polish throne, and a lover of Empress Catherine II. Kościuszko's association with the Czartoryskis effectively barred him from the army, and he returned to a small family estate where he lived in relative poverty, a situation exacerbated by his liberal attitude to serfdom. Around 90% of Poland's population were serfs, tied to their land and magnate by debts of service; Kościuszko freed many of his own from much of their dues, costing himself greatly in the process.

In 1791 the Polish Diet (Parliament) passed a new constitution, replacing the older system which Russia had dictated in 1775. The monarchy became hereditary, government was strengthened, and the *liberum veto*, a system whereby a single dissenting member could veto any decision, was scrapped. The result was a reduction in Russian influence and a more effective, and centralised, Poland. These changes upset both the Russians and some of the, now much weaker, Polish magnates, and in early 1792 the former invaded, joining with the Confederacy of Targowica, a group of the latter. It was in this situation that Kościuszko was asked to defend an area between the Wisła and Bug Rivers. He established a position at Dubienka: a defensive line situated between two villages – one located near the Austrian border – with a swamp between him and the Russians. The Poles had 5,000 soldiers, and the Russians four times as many. The battle of Dubienka began on the 18th of July when Russian troops, under the command of General Kochowski, mounted several frontal assaults, all of which were beaten off by Kościuszko's defences. It ended when the Russians marched round and through the Austrian territory, enabling an attack from the rear that finally forced the Poles to withdraw. Kościuszko was considered a hero despite the retreat – not only was his force intact and able to continue fighting, but the Polish forces had inflicted thousands of casualties on the Russians, while their own dead was estimated in the low hundreds. It may have re-established his reputation within Poland, but Kościuszko's defence of Dubienka did not halt the Russian invasion, and within days King Poniatowski had ceded to both the Russians and the confederacy, revoking the constitution of 1791. Many narratives are quick to accuse the King of surrendering too early, citing the growing resilience, and strength, of the Polish army as it fell back and gathered; conversely, others stress the wisdom of avoiding inevitable bloodshed. Many of the generals, including Kościuszko, were dismayed, and at the end of July, despite a promotion to Lieutenant General and the entreaties of Poniatowski himself, Tadeusz resigned.

The Confederacy of Targowica was quick to consolidate its power, expelling many of the liberal politicians and landowners from the Commonwealth, and Kościuszko again left Poland. Travelling through Europe, he returned to France with the intention of campaigning for support; the Revolutionary government there made him an honorary French citizen. Although it's unclear what effect this period had on Kościuszko – how he interpreted these fallow years followed by defeat – the battle of Dubienka left a lasting impression on the Polish people. Kościuszko was associated with patriotism, valour and success, qualities which they would call on within only two years.

6. The Kościuszko Uprising 1: Rebellion and Raclawice (1792 – 1794)

On the 23rd January 1793 Poland-Lithuania suffered the second partition: Prussia and Russia occupied a further 42% of the Commonwealth's territory, and Russian soldiers remained in the rest. Coupled with an economic crisis, this was too much for even the confederate magnates who had invited the Russian invasion of 1792, and massive anti-foreign sentiment grew. Over the winter of 1793 an uprising was planned, and messages were sent to Kościuszko, asking him to be the leader. Kościuszko was given total command of the rebellion, and on March 24th 1794 he swore an oath in Kraków Market Square amidst a large gathering, in which he promised to recover the Commonwealth's borders, sovereignty and freedom, while not abusing his new powers. Whereas in America he had served in a revolution, Kościuszko was now in charge of the whole uprising.

He quickly set about improving the scattered Polish army, which consisted of between ten to fifteen thousand trained men, much fewer than the Russians had stationed in the Commonwealth. Kościuszko introduced conscription, using peasants to bolster existing regiments and form new units. Whereas the actual troops had weapons and equipment, the peasants were both untrained and unarmed, and Poland had no military industry to supply them. Kościuszko's solution was both practical and ingenious. The conscripted serfs were to transform their scythes into pikes and spears by converting the angled blade into a straight point.

After his declaration in Krakow, Kościuszko marched towards Warsaw. Although he had mustered 4000 regular troops and 2000 scythe-bearers (Pol. *Kosynierzy*), the Russian force that stood in his way still outnumbered him. They came together at Raclawice, where General Tormasow of the Russian army attacked. Kościuszko eschewed the conventional tactics of forming up in clear units, instead adopting tech-

niques he had learnt in the American war of independence: with the regular troops as a distraction, the *Kosynierzy* advanced stealthily through cover, breaking when they were within a few hundred yards of the enemy artillery. Their victory, supposedly led by Kościuszko himself, was swift and clear – they captured the cannons, and pushed the Russians into retreat.

Although Raclawice was a relatively minor military victory – the Russian force remained intact – the effect on the Polish-Lithuanian consciousness was immense. Kościuszko was an even greater hero than before, and thousands more peasants rose up to join the rebellion; in the last weeks of April there were large rebellions in Warsaw, Wilno and other important towns. Kościuszko fed the impetus on May 7th when he announced the Manifesto of Połaniec, a policy which cut back vastly on both serfdom and the service owed by peasants. Modern commentaries on the rebellion tend to attribute the Manifesto of Połaniec either to Kościuszko's ideals, a belief that all serfdom should end, or his military need: freeing the peasants would prompt many of them to fight. The reality was probably a mixture of these two factors, as both were driving Kościuszko.

7. The Kościuszko Uprising 2: The Siege of Warsaw and Defeat (1794)

Despite victory at Raclawice, the pressure on Kościuszko's forces grew, and several defeats – including the loss of Kraków – forced a retreat to Warsaw. Here Kościuszko was able to establish a strong defensive position, mobilising the city's population to construct earthworks and marshalling them effectively alongside the trained soldiers. Combined Prussian and Russian forces laid siege to Warsaw for nearly two months before a further uprising in Wielkopolska, under the command of General Dąbrowski, attacked the besiegers in the rear and forced them to retreat. This defence is arguably Kościuszko's finest military achievement, a distillation of his skill, ingenuity, and the techniques he learnt in the War of Independence. Additionally, he continued to play a part in the actual fighting, supposedly leading bayonet charges. Conversely, Wilno did not have a Kościuszko to defend it, and the town was attacked and crushed by a second large Russian army, which then marched towards Warsaw, led by Suvorov. Now facing two substantial Russian fronts, Kościuszko acted quickly to prevent them from combining. He marched to Maciejowice, intending to combine his own force with that of General Poniński, stationed less than thirty miles away. However, the Russians captured Kościuszko's first messenger, and although later communications did arrive and prompt Poniński to move, he would be too late. On October 10th the Russians, under the com-

mand of General Ferson, attacked with a force almost twice that of Kościuszko's. They marched straight through a swampy river and the Polish right flank; during the attack Kościuszko was wounded and taken prisoner, while Colonel Jasiński was killed. Needless to say, the rebellious army was defeated.

Within weeks of Kościuszko's defeat Suvorov arrived at the outskirts of Warsaw, where he implemented a simple, wholly effective and perfectly horrifying plan. His army bombarded, and then entered, the suburb of Praga, massacring the entire population. Figures vary, but between 10,000-15,000 adults and children were killed on November 4th 1794; Warsaw capitulated immediately, and the rebellion was over. Rebels were arrested, executed or deported to Siberia, while a third partition in 1795 removed Poland-Lithuanian from the map of Europe. Even so, the rebellion had an important effect on the formation of Polish and Lithuanian national identities, forming the myth upon which later uprisings were partly based. Kościuszko captured the faith of all levels of society, drawing support from the peasant classes as well as the nobles and magnates. Indeed, words allegedly said by Kościuszko at his capture now form the first part of the Poles' national anthem: "Jeszcze Polska nie zginieła póki my żyjemy" (Poland is not dead whilst we live) by Józef Wybicki (1747 – 1822). Finally, there is a clear sign of how important Kościuszko's role was in the Polish-Lithuanian uprising of 1794: it is the only revolt in Polish history to be named after one individual: the Kościuszko Rebellion.

8. Final Years (1794 – 1817)

The Russians held Kościuszko captive for over two years, before political changes allowed his freedom. The death of Catherine II brought a new Tsar, Paul I, to power, and he released Tadeusz on one important condition: the Pole could never return to Russia (which now included much of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). Still recovering from his wounds, Kościuszko travelled through Northern Europe, visiting Sweden and then Britain, before returning to the United States of America in 1797. Here, he was granted land and a stipend by Congress, and welcomed as a returning hero. Despite renewing his friendship with Jefferson, Kościuszko left for France within a year. Before departing he made provisions for freeing a number of slaves, and named Jefferson executor of his will.

Kościuszko settled in France for just over sixteen years, his longest stay in any one country since childhood. Here Tadeusz campaigned on behalf of the Polish Com-

monwealth, but with limited success. He distrusted Napoleon and would not fight for him, despite the Emperor's offer of the Polish Legion, an army composed of the Commonwealth's exiled military. Kościuszko instead demanded a commitment to Polish sovereignty, believing Napoleon to be only interested in France; the Emperor found other allies. Consequently, Kościuszko was not involved in the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, a puppet state set up by Bonaparte in 1807. He was, however, invited to the Congress of Vienna, the great gathering of European leaders that redrew Europe in the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat. Here, Emperors once again courted Kościuszko, and Tsar Alexander planned a Poland under Russian dominion, possibly headed by the Pole. Once again, the plans did not conform to Tadeusz's ideals, and he refused.

The question of revolution continued to occupy Kościuszko, and he wrote several texts on rebellion, contributing to, if not starting, a genre of works discussing uprisings and guerrilla warfare. In 1815 Kościuszko moved to Switzerland, dying of a fall in 1817. He became a hero of both the American Revolution and the Polish people, while the monuments to his name include Australia's highest mountain. When American pilots flocked to the newly reborn Poland in the aftermath of the Great War, they formed the "Kościuszko Squadron". Tadeusz's place of burial also highlights his contemporary importance to the Polish people – he is one of only five non-royals to be interred in the "kings' tomb" at Kraków's Wawel Cathedral. (King Poniatowski, Kościuszko's original patron and the monarch whose reign saw his country partitioned three times, is missing from the Cathedral – he died in Russia, where his remains were lost). He has as great a claim as any to be called "The Hero of Two Worlds".

9. Timeline

1746 - Tadeusz Andrzej Bonawentura Kościuszko is born near Nowogródek.

1765 - He enters the Polish Military Academy, and soon becomes an instructor.

1769 - Given the rank "Captain of Artillery," and awarded a royal scholarship to study in France.

1774 - Returns to the recently partitioned Poland where, unable to find a position in the army, he takes work tutoring Ludwika Sosnowska (1751 – 1836).

1775 - After an unsuccessful attempt to elope with Ludwika, Kościuszko returns to France.

1776 - Travels to America, to assist in the colonists' rebellion. In October he is appointed as a Colonel of Engineers, and given the task of defending Philadelphia from naval attack.

1777 - Assigned to Fort Ticonderoga where his opinions, especially those concerning artillery on Sugar Loaf hill, are ignored. The Fort falls easily, and he plays a key part in the colonists' retreat, slowing British forces. Later in the year, and on the orders of General Gates, Kościuszko creates a defensive position at Bemis Heights. The solidity of these defences enables a colonist victory at Saratoga.

1778 - Promoted to Chief Engineer of the Middle Department, and given the task of fortifying West Point. His defences are so successful the British never launch a direct attack at them.

1780 - Appointed as Chief Engineer of the South, where he commands troops under General Greene.

1784 - Given US citizenship and promoted to Brigadier General by Congress, in honour of his contribution to the successful rebellion. Kościuszko returns to Poland, but he is again unable to find a position in the army, instead settling on his poor estate.

1789 - Liberal reforms, and the assistance of Ludwika, provide Kościuszko with an appointment as Major General.

1792 - Commands forces in the Polish-Russian War, where his defence of Dubienka makes him a hero. When the Commonwealth surrenders to Russia in July, Kościuszko resigns and returns to France.

1793/4 - During this winter he is asked to lead a rebellion but, after a brief visit to Poland, he decides that the preparations are incomplete.

1794 - Returns to the Commonwealth once Russian arrests trigger the uprising, where he is declared Supreme Commander and given almost dictatorial powers. After a stunning victory at Raclawice, and a successful defence of Warsaw, he is wounded and captured during the Battle of Maciejowice. The rebellion is crushed a month later.

1796 - After over two years of Russian imprisonment, he is released by Tsar Paul II. Kościuszko returns to France.

1797 - Travels to the USA, where he is granted both land and a stipend. He renews his friendship with Jefferson.

1798 - Returns, yet again, to France.

1799 – 1814 - Campaigns for Polish independence and freedom, but refuses to co-operate with Napoleon.

1815 - Moves to Switzerland.

1817 - Killed by a fall from his horse. His body is later returned to Poland.⁷¹

⁷¹ The synopsis comes from the following sources: (Wilde 2001; Brożek 1993: 12).

Appendix 3. Preface to the first edition of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (fragments)

Having attempted a narrative of the intended description, but written, in fact, from the mere impulse of sympathy with its subject still fresh in my own and every pitying memory, it is natural that, after having made up my mind to assent to its publication, in which much time and thought has been expended in considering the responsibility of so doing, from so unpractised a pen, I should feel an increase of anxiety respecting its ultimate fate.

Therefore, before the reader favours the tale itself with his attention, I beg leave to offer him a little account of the principles that actuated its composition, and in regard to which one of the most honoured heads in the author's family urged her "not to withhold it from the press;" observing, in his persuasions, that the mistakes which many of my young contemporaries of both sexes continually make in their estimates of human character, and of the purposes of human life, require to have a line of difference between certain splendid vices and some of the brilliant order of virtues to be distinctly drawn before them. "And," he remarked, "it appeared to be so done in the pages of my Polish manuscript. Therefore," added he, "let Thaddeus of Warsaw speak openly for himself!"

This opinion decided me. Though with fear and trembling, yet I felt an encouraging consciousness that in writing the manuscript narrative for my own private enjoyment only, and the occasional amusement of those friends dearest around me, I had wished to portray characters whose high endowments could not be misled into proud ambitions, nor the gift of dazzling social graces betray into the selfish triumphs of worldly vanity, - characters that prosperity could not inflate, nor disappointments depress, from pious trust and honourable action. The pure fires of such a spirit declare their sacred origin; and such is the talisman of those achievements which amaze everybody but their accomplisher. The eye fixed on it is what divine truth declares it to be "single!" There is no double purpose in it; no glancing to a man's own personal aggrandizement on one side and on professing services to his fellow-creatures on the other; such a spirit has only one aim - Heaven! and the eternal records of that wide firmament include within it "all good to man" (...).

To exhibit so truly heroic and endearing a portrait of what every Christian man ought to be, - for the law of God is the same to the poor as to the rich, - I have chosen one of that illustrious and, I believe, now extinct race for the subject of my sketch; and

the more aptly did it present itself, it being necessary to show my hero amidst scenes and circumstances ready to exercise his brave and generous propensities, and to put their personal issues to the test on his mind. Hence Poland's sadly-varying destinies seemed to me the stage best calculated for the development of any self-imposed task.

There certainly were matters enough for the exhibition of all that human nature could suffer and endure, and, alas! perish under, in the nearly simultaneous but terrible regicidal revolution of France; but I shrunk from that as a tale of horror, the work of demons in the shapes of men. It was a conflict in which no comparisons, as between man and man, could exist; and may God grant that so fearful a visitation may never be inflicted on this world again. May the nations of this world lay its warnings to their hearts!

It sprung from a tree self-corrupted, which only could produce such fruits: the demon hierarchy of the French philosophers, who had long denied the being of that pure and Almighty God, and who, in the arrogance of their own deified reason, and while in utter subjection to the wildest desires of their passions, published their profane and polluted creed amongst all orders of the people, and the natural and terrible consequences ensued. Ignorant before, they became like unto their teachers, demons in their unbelief, - demons in one common envy and hatred of all degrees above them, or around them, whose existence seemed at all in the way of even their slightest gratification: mutual spoliation and destruction covered the country. How often has the tale been told me by noble refugees, sheltered on our shores from those scenes of blood, where infamy triumphed and truth and honour were massacred; but such narratives, though they never can be forgotten, are too direful for the hearer to contemplate in memory.

Therefore, when I sought to represent the mental and moral contest of man with himself, or with his fellow-men, I did not look for their field amongst human monsters, but with natural and civilized man; inasmuch as he is seen to be influenced by the impulses of his selfish passions - ambition, covetousness, and the vanities of life, or, on the opposite side, by the generous amenities of true disinterestedness, in all its trying situations; and, as I have said, the recent struggle in Poland, to maintain her laws and loyal independence, against the combined aggressions of the three most powerful states in Europe, seemed to afford me the most suitable objects for my moral aim, to interest by sympathy, while it taught the responsible commission of human life. I have now described the plan of my story, its aim and origin.

If it be disapproved, let it be at once laid aside; but should it excite any interest, I pray its perusal may be accompanied with an indulgent candour, its subjects being of so new, and therefore uncustomary, a character in a work of the kind. But if the reader be one of my own sex, I would especially solicit her patience while going through the first portion of the tale, its author being aware that war and politics are not the most promising themes for an agreeable amusement; but the battles are not frequent, nor do the cabinet councils last long. I beg the favour, if the story is to be read at all, that no scene may be passed over as extraneous, for though it begin like a state-paper, or a sermon, it always terminates by casting some new light on the portrait of the hero. Beyond those events of peril and of patriotic devotedness, the remainder of the pages dwell generally with domestic interests; but if the reader do not approach them regularly through the development of character opened in the preceding troubled field, what they exhibit will seem a mere wilderness of incidents, without interest or end; indeed I have designed nothing in the personages of this narrative out of the way of living experience. I have sketched no virtue that I have not seen, nor painted any folly from imagination. I have endeavoured to be as faithful to reality in my pictures of domestic morals, and of heroic duties, as a just painter would seek to be to the existing objects of nature, “wonderful and wild, or of gentlest beauty!” and on these grounds I have steadily attempted to inculcate “that virtue is the highest proof of understanding, and the only solid basis of greatness; that vice is the natural consequence of grovelling thoughts, which begin in mistake and end in ignominy” (...).⁷²

⁷² The preface comes from the following source: (TW, 1845).

Appendix 4. Preface to the 1831 edition of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (fragments)

THE AUTHOR, TO HER FRIENDLY READERS.

Written for the new edition of “Thaddeus of Warsaw,” forming one of the series called “The Standard Novels.”

To such readers alone who, by the sympathy of a social taste, fall in with any blameless fashion of the day, and, from an amiable interest, also, in whatever may chance to afford them innocent pleasure, would fain know something more about an author whose works have brought them that gratification than the cold letter of a mere literary preface usually tells: to such readers this - something of an egotistical - epistle is addressed.

For, in beginning the republication of a regular series of the novels, or, as they have been more properly called, biographical romances, of which I have been the author, it has been considered desirable to make certain additions to each work, in the form of a few introductory pages and scattered notes, illustrative of the origin of the tale, of the historical events referred to in it, and of the actually living characters who constitute its personages, with some account, also, of the really local scenery described; thus giving, it is thought, a double zest to the entertainment of the reader, by bringing him into a previous acquaintance with the persons he is to meet in the book, and making him agreeably familiar with the country through which he is to travel in their company. Indeed, the social taste of the times has lately fully shown how advantageous the like conversational disclosures have proved to the recent republications of the celebrated “Waverley Novels,” by the chief of novel-writers; and in the new series of the admirable naval tales by the distinguished American novelist, both of whom paid to the mother-country the gratifying tribute of making it their birthplace.

Such evidences in favour of an argument could not fail to persuade me to undertake the desired elucidating task; feeling, indeed, particularly pleased to adopt, in my turn, a successful example from the once Great Unknown - now the not less great avowed author of the Waverley Novels, in the person of Sir Walter Scott, who did me the honour to adopt the style or class of novel of which “Thaddeus of Warsaw” was the first, - a class which, uniting the personages and facts of real history or biography with a combining and illustrative machinery of the imagination, formed a new species of writing in that day, and to which Madame de Staël and others have given the appellation of “an epic in prose.” The day of its appearance is now pretty far back: for “Thaddeus of

Warsaw” (a tale founded on Polish heroism) and the “Scottish Chiefs” (a romance grounded on Scottish heroism) were both published in England, and translated into various languages abroad, many years before the literary wonder of Scotland gave to the world his transcendent story of Waverley, forming a most impressive historical picture of the last struggle of the papist, but gallant, branch of the Stuarts for the British throne. [Footnote: It was on the publication of these, her first two works, in the German language that the authoress was honoured with being made a lady of the Chapter of St. Joachim, and received the gold cross of the order from Wirtemberg.]

“Thaddeus of Warsaw” being the first essay, in the form of such an association between fact and fancy, was published by its author with a natural apprehension of its reception by the critical part of the public. She had not, indeed, written it with any view to publication, but from an almost resistless impulse to embody the ideas and impressions with which her heart and mind were then full. It was written in her earliest youth; dictated by a fervent sympathy with calamities which had scarcely ceased to exist, and which her eager pen sought to portray; and it was given to the world, or rather to those who might feel with her, with all the simple-hearted enthusiasm which saw no impediment when a tale of virtue or of pity was to be told.

In looking back through the avenue of life to that time, what events have occurred, public and private, to the countries and to the individuals named in that tale! to persons of even as lofty names and excellences, of our own and other lands, who were mutually affected with me in admiration and regret for the virtues and the sorrows described! In sitting down now to my retrospective task, I find myself writing this, my second preface to the story of “Thaddeus of Warsaw,” just thirty years from the date of its first publication. Then, I wrote when the struggle for the birthright independence of Poland was no more; when she lay in her ashes, and her heroes in their wounds; when the pall of death spread over the whole country, and her widows and orphans travelled afar.

In the days of my almost childhood, - that is, eight years before I dipped my pen in their tears, - I remember seeing many of those hapless refugees wandering about St. James’s Park. They had sad companions in the like miseries, though from different enemies, in the emigrants from France; and memory can never forget the variety of wretched yet noble-looking visages I then contemplated in the daily walks which my mother’s own little family group were accustomed to take there. One person, a gaunt figure, with melancholy and bravery stamped on his emaciated features, is often present

to the recollection of us all. He was clad in a threadbare blue uniform great coat, with a black stock, a rusty old hat, pulled rather over his eyes; his hands without gloves; but his aspect was that of a perfect gentleman, and his step that of a military man. We saw him constantly at one hour, in the middle walk of the Mall, and always alone; never looking to the right nor to the left, but straight on; with an unmoving countenance, and a pace which told that his thoughts were those of a homeless and hopeless man - hopeless, at least, of all that life might bring him. On, on he went to the end of the Mall; turned again, and on again; and so he continued to do always, as long as we remained spectators of his solitary walk: once, indeed, we saw him crossing into St. Martin's Lane. Nobody seemed to know him, for he spoke to none; and no person ever addressed him, though many, like ourselves, looked at him, and stopped in the path to gaze after him. We often longed to be rich, to follow him wherever his wretched abode might have been, and then silently to send comforts to him from hands he knew not of. We used to call him, when speaking of him to ourselves, *Il Penseroso*; and by that name we yet not infrequently talk of him to each other, and never without recurrence to the very painful, because unavailing, sympathy we then felt for that apparently friendless man. Such sympathy is, indeed, right; for it is one of the secondary means by which Providence conducts the stream of his mercies to those who need the succour of their fellow-creatures; and we cannot doubt that, though the agency of such Providence was not to be in our hands, there were those who had both the will and the power given, and did not, like ourselves, turn and pity that interesting emigrant in vain.

Some time after this, General Kosciusko, the justly celebrated hero of Poland, came to England, on his way to the United States; having been released from his close imprisonment in Russia, and in the noblest manner, too, by the Emperor Paul, immediately on his accession to the throne. His arrival caused a great sensation in London, and many of the first characters of the times pressed forward to pay their respects to such real patriotic virtue in its adversity. An old friend of my family was amongst them; his own warm heart encouraging the enthusiasm of ours, he took my brother Robert to visit the Polish veteran, then lodging at Sablonière's Hotel, in Leicester Square. My brother, on his return to us, described him as a noble looking man, though not at all handsome, lying upon a couch in a very enfeebled state, from the effects of numerous wounds he had received in his breast by the Cossacks' lances after his fall, having been previously overthrown by a sabre stroke on his head. His voice, in consequence of the induced internal weakness, was very low, and his speaking always with resting intervals. He wore

a black bandage across his forehead, which covered a deep wound there; and, indeed, his whole figure bore marks of long suffering.

Our friend introduced my brother to him by name, and as “a boy emulous of seeing and following noble examples.” Kosciusko took him kindly by the hand, and spoke to him words of generous encouragement, in whatever path of virtuous ambition he might take. They never have been forgotten. Is it, then, to be wondered at, combining the mute distress I had so often contemplated in other victims of similar misfortunes with the magnanimous object then described to me by my brother, that the story of heroism my young imagination should think of embodying into shape should be founded on the actual scenes of Kosciusko’s sufferings, and moulded out of his virtues!

To have made him the ostensible hero of the tale, would have suited neither the modesty of his feelings nor the humbleness of my own expectation of telling it as I wished. I therefore took a younger and less pretending agent, in the personification of a descendant of the great John Sobieski.

But it was, as I have already said, some years after the partition of Poland that I wrote, and gave for publication, my historical romance on that catastrophe. It was finished amid a circle of friends well calculated to fan the flame which had inspired its commencement some of the leading heroes of the British army just returned from the victorious fields of Alexandria and St. Jean d’Acre; and, seated in my brother’s little study, with the war-dyed coat in which the veteran Abercrombie breathed his last grateful sigh, while, like Wolfe, he gazed on the boasted invincible standard of the enemy, brought to him by a British soldier, - with this trophy of our own native valour on one side of me, and on the other the bullet-torn vest of another English commander of as many battles, - but who, having survived to enjoy his fame, I do not name here, - I put my last stroke to the first campaigns of Thaddeus Sobieski.

When the work was finished, some of the persons near me urged its being published. But I argued, in opposition to the wish, its different construction to all other novels or romances which had gone before it, from Richardson’s time-honoured domestic novels to the penetrating feeling in similar scenes by the pen of Henry Mackenzie; and again, Charlotte Smith’s more recent, elegant, but very sentimental love stories. But the most formidable of all were the wildly interesting romances of Ann Radcliffe, whose magical wonders and mysteries were then the ruling style of the day. I urged, how could any one expect that the admiring readers of such works could consider my simply-told

biographical legend of Poland anything better than a dull union between real history and a matter-of-fact imagination?

Arguments were found to answer all this; and being excited by the feelings which had dictated my little work, and encouraged by the corresponding characters with whom I daily associated, I ventured the essay. However, I had not read the sage romances of our older times without turning to some account the lessons they taught to adventurous personages of either sex; showing that even the boldest knight never made a new sally without consecrating his shield with some impress of acknowledged reverence. In like manner, when I entered the field with my modern romance of Thaddeus of Warsaw, I inscribed the first page with the name of the hero of Acre. That dedication will be found through all its successive editions, still in front of the title-page; and immediately following it is a second inscription, added, in after years, to the memory of the magnanimous patriot and exemplary man, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who had first filled me with ambition to write the tale, and who died in Switzerland, A. D. 1817, fuller of glory than of years. Yet, if life be measured by its vicissitudes and its virtues, we may justly say, "he was gathered in his ripeness."

After his visit to old friends in the United States, - where, in his youth, he had learned the art of war, and the science of a noble, unselfish independence, from the marvel of modern times, General Washington, - Kosciuszko returned to Europe, and abode a while in France, but not in its capital. He lived deeply retired, gradually restoring his shattered frame to some degree of health by the peace of a resigned mind and the occupation of rural employments. Circumstances led him to Switzerland; and the country of William Tell, and of simple Christian fellowship, could not but soon be found peculiarly congenial to his spirit, long turned away from the pageants and the pomp of this world. In his span he had had all, either in his grasp or proffered to him. For when nothing remained of all his military glory and his patriotic sacrifices but a yet existing fame, and a conscious sense within him of duty performed, he was content to "eat his crust," with that inheritance alone; and he refused, though with an answering magnanimity of acknowledgment, a valuable property offered to him by the Emperor of Russia, as a free gift from a generous enemy, esteeming his proved, disinterested virtues. He also declined the yet more dazzling present of a crown from the then master of the continent, who would have set him on the throne of Poland - but, of a truth, under the vassalage of the Emperor of the French! Kosciuszko was not to be consoled for Poland by riches bestowed on himself, nor betrayed into compromising her birthright of na-

tional independence by the casuistry that would have made his parental sceptre the instrument of a foreign domination.

Having such a theme as his name, and the heroes his co-patriots, the romance of "Thaddeus of Warsaw" was no sooner published than it overcame the novelty of its construction, and became universally popular. Nor was it very long before it fell into General Kosciusko's hands, though then in a distant land; and he kindly and promptly lost no time in letting the author know his approbation of the narrative, though qualified with several modest expressions respecting himself. From that period she enjoyed many treasured marks of his esteem; and she will add, though with a sad satisfaction, that amongst her several relics of the Great Departed who have honoured her with regard, she possesses, most dearly prized, a medal of Kosciusko and a lock of his hair. About the same time she received a most incontestable proof of the accuracy of her story from the lips of General Gardiner, the last British minister to the court of Stanislaus Augustus. On his reading the book, he was so sure that the facts it represented could only have been learned on the spot, that he expressed his surprise to several persons that the author of the work, an English lady, could have been at Warsaw during all the troubles there and he not know it. On his repeating this observation to the late Duke of Roxburgh, his grace's sister-in-law, who happened to overhear what was said, and knew the writer, answered him by saying, "The author has never been in Poland. "Impossible!" replied the general; "no one could describe the scenes and occurrences there, in the manner it is done in that book, without having been an eyewitness." The lady, however, convinced the general of the fact being otherwise, by assuring him, from her own personal knowledge, that the author of "Thaddeus of Warsaw" was a mere school-girl in England at the time of the events of the story.

How, then, it has often been asked, did she obtain such accurate information with regard to those events? and how acquire her familiar acquaintance with the palaces and persons she represents in the work? The answer is short. By close questioning every person that came in her way that knew anything about the object of her interest; and there were many brave hearts and indignant lips ready to open with the sad yet noble tale. Thus every illustrious individual she wished to bring into her narrative gradually grew upon her knowledge, till she became as well acquainted with all her desired personages as if they were actually present with her; for she knew their minds and their actions; and these compose the man. The features of the country, also, were learned from persons who had trodden the spots she describes: and that they were indeed correct

pictures of their homes and war-fields, the tears and bursting enthusiasm of many of Poland's long expatriated sons have more than once borne testimony to her (...).

Thus, then, it cannot but be that in the conclusion of this my, perhaps, last introductory preface to any new edition of "Thaddeus of Warsaw," its author should offer up a sincerely heartfelt prayer to the King of kings, the Almighty Father of all mankind, that His all-gracious Spirit may watch over the issue of this contest, and dictate the peace of Poland!

ESHER, May, 1831.⁷³

⁷³ The preface comes from the following source: (TW, 1845).

Appendix 5. Appendix from the 1845 edition of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (fragments)

NOTES CHIEFLY RELATING TO GENERAL KOSCIUSKO.

(...) Kosciusko's tomb is at Cracow, the ancient capital of Poland; and in the manner of its most ancient style of sepulchre, it appears an immense earthen tumulus, piled over the simple-mounded grave, which accumulating portions were severally borne to their hallowed place in the arms alone of each silent mourner, in a certain number of successive days, till the whole was raised into a grand pyramidal mass.

In looking back through the avenue of life to those periods the tale tells of, what events have occurred, public and private, to the countries and the individuals referred to in these memoranda! to persons of lofty names and excellence, both in our own and in other lands, mutually affected with admiration and regret for the virtues and the calamities described. It is an awful contemplation, and in sitting down in my now solitary chamber to its retrospection, I find that nearly half a century has passed since its transactions swept over Europe like a desolating blast. Then I wrote my little chronicle when the birthright independence of Poland was no more; when she lay in her ashes, and her mighty men were trodden into the dust; when the pall of death overspread the country, and her widows and her orphans wandered afar into the trackless wilderness of a barren world.

During this wide expatriation, some distinguished captives, who had fallen in the field, and were counted among the slain, having been found by the victors alive in their stiffened blood, were conveyed to various prisons; and along with these was discovered the justly feared, and not less justly deplored, General Kosciusko, who, though long unheard of by the lone wanderers of his scattered host, had been thus preserved by the supreme Lord of all, to behold again a remnant of his own brightened in hope, and comforted by the honouring sympathy of the good and brave in many nations.

Kosciusko was of noble birth, and early distinguished himself by his spirit and talents for the martial field. Indeed, owing to the belligerent position of Poland, situated in the midst of jealous and encroaching nations, arms was the natural profession of every gentleman in the kingdom, commerce and agriculture being the usual pursuits of the middle classes. But it happened, in the early manhood of Thaddeus Kosciusko, that the dangerous political Stromboli which surrounded his country, and often aroused an answering blaze in that since devoted land, slept in their fires; and Poland being at

peace, her young military students, becoming desirous of practising their science in some actual campaign, resolved to try their strength across the Atlantic. Hearing of the war then just commenced between the British Colonies in America and the mother country, Kosciusko, as a deciding spirit amongst his ardent associates, brought them to this resolution. Losing no time, they embarked, passed over the wide ocean of the Western world, and landing safe and full of their object, offered their services to the army of independence. Having been readily accepted, and immediately applied to use, the extraordinary warrior talents of Kosciusko soon shone conspicuous, and were speedily honoured by his being appointed special aide-de-camp to General Washington. His subsequent conduct in the camp and field was consonant to its beginning, and he became a distinguished general in rank and command long before his volunteered military services had terminated. When the war ended, in the peace of mutual concessions between the national parent and its children on a distant land, (a point that is the duty of all Christian states to consider, and to measure their ultimate conduct by,) the Poles returned to their own country, where they soon met circumstances which caused them to call forth their recently passed experience for her. But they had not departed from the newly-established American State without demonstrations of its warm gratitude; and Kosciusko, in particular, with his not less popular compatriot and friend, Niemcivitz, the soldier and the poet, bore away with them the pure esteem of the brave population, the sighs of private friendship, and the tears of an abiding regret from many fair eyes.

To recapitulate the memorable events of the threatened royal freedom of Poland, by the three formidable foreign powers confederated for its annihilation, and in repelling which General Kosciusko took so gallant a lead, is not here necessary to connect our memoranda concerning his unreceding struggles to maintain her political existence. They have already been sketched in the preceding little record of the actual scenes in which he and his equally devoted compeers held their indomitable resistance till the fatal issue. "Sarmatia lay in blood!" and the portion of that once great bulwark of civilized Europe was adjudged by the parricidal victors to themselves: a sentence like unto that passed on the worst of criminals was thus denounced against Christendom's often best benefactor, while the rest of Europe stood silently by, paralysed or appalled, during the immediate execution of the noble victim.

But though dismembered and thrown out from the "map of nations" by the combination of usurping ambition and broken faith, and no longer to be regarded as one in

its “proud cordon,” Poland retained within herself (as has been well observed by a contemporary writer) “a mode of existence unknown till then in the history of the world - a domestic national vitality.” Unknown, we may venture to say, except in one extraordinary yet easily and reverentially understood instance. We mean the sense of an integral national being, ever-living in the bosoms of the people of Israel, throughout all their different dispersions and captivities. And, perhaps, with respect to this principle of a moral, political, and filial life, still drawing its aliment from the inhumed heart of their mother-country, who, to them, “is not dead but sleepeth!” may be explained, in some degree, in reference to the above remark on the existing and individual feeling amongst the wanderers of Poland, by considering some of the best effects, latent in their “working together for good,” in the deep experience of her ancient variously-constituted modes of civil government.

Under that of her early monarchs, the Piasts and their senate, she sat beneath an almost patriarchal sceptre, they being native and truly parental princes. John Sobieski was one of this description by descent and just rule. Under the Jagellon dynasty, also sprung from the soil, she held a yet more generalizing constitutional code, after which she gradually adopted certain republican forms, with an elective king - a strange contradiction in the asserted object, a sound system for political freedom, but which, in fact, contained the whole alchemy of a nation’s “anarchical life,” and ultimately produced the entire destruction of the state. From the established date of the elective monarchy, the kingdom became an arena for every species of ambitious rivalry, and its sure consequences, the interference of foreign influences; and hence rapidly advanced the decline of the true independent spirit of the land, to stand in her laws, and in her own political strength; her own impartial laws, the palladium of the people and a native king the parental guardian of their just administration. But, in sad process of time, “strangers of Rome, of Gaul, and of other nations,” in whose veins not a drop of Sclavonian blood flowed, found means to successively seat themselves on the throne of the Piasts, the Jagellons, and the Sobieskis, of ancient Sarmatia; and the revered fabric fell, as by an earthquake, to be registered no more amongst the kingdoms of the world.

THE EARLY EDUCATION OF KOSCIUSKO AND HIS COMPATRIOTS, WITH ITS SUBSEQUENT EFFECTS ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR LIVES.

Though their country appeared thus lost to them, they felt its kingdom still in their minds - in the bosom of memory, in the consciousness of an ancestry of bravery and of virtue; and though the soil had passed away from the feet of those whose ancestors of "sword or share" had trod it as sons and owners, and it now holds no place for them but their fathers' graves, yet the root is deep in such planting, and the tree, though invisible to the world, is seen and nourished in the depths of their hearts by the dews of heaven.

The pages of universal history, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, when opened with the conviction that He who made the world governs it also, will best explain the why of these changes in the destiny of nations; and within half of the latter part of the last century, and the nearly half of the present, awful have been the pages to be read. Hence we may understand the vital influence of the objects of education with regard to the principles inculcated, whether with relation to individual interest or to the generalized consideration of a people as a commonwealth or a kingdom. A kingdom and a commonwealth may be considered the same thing, when the power of both people and king are limited by just laws, established by the long exercised wisdom of the nation, holding the whole powers of the state in equilibrium; and in this sense, meaning "a royal commonwealth," comprising, as in England, "kings, lords, and commons," it is generally believed is intended to be understood the term, "The republic of Poland, with its king."

The Polish nation, however, under all their dominions of government, usually partook something of the policies and manners of the then existing times. Yet they were always distinguished by a particular chivalry of character, a brave freedom from all foreign and domestic vassalage, and a generous disposition to respect and to assist the neighbouring nations to maintain the same independence they themselves enjoyed. Though actual schools, or colleges, or written lore, might not originally have had much to do with it, the continued practice of old, well-formed customs held them in "the ways their fathers walked in" and they found them those of "pleasantness" and true honour. But the time came when literary dictation was to take the place of oral tradition, and of habitual imitative reverence of the past. Schools and colleges were instituted, teaching

for doctrines the prevailing sentiments of the endowers, or of the instructors employed. During the reigns of the later sovereigns of the Jagellon dynasty, Sigismund I. and II., and that of their predecessor, John Sobieski, the principles of these seminaries might be considered sound. But soon after the death of the last-named monarch, when the latent mischief contained in the Utopian idea of the perfection of an always elective monarchy began to shake the stability of even the monarchy itself, certain of the public teachers evinced correspondent signs of this destructive species of freemasonry; and about the same period the Voltaire venom of infidelity against all the laws of God and man being poured throughout the whole civilized world, the general effect had so banefully reached the seats of national instruction in Poland, that several of the most venerated personages, whose names have already been, commemorated in the preceding biographical story, congregated together to stem, by a counteracting current, the torrent where they saw it likely to overflow; to sap up its introduced sources, by obtaining the abolition of some of the most subtle and dangerous of the scholastic institutions, and the establishment of others in their room, on the sound foundation of moral and religious polity between men and nations.

The sole remaining princely descendants of the three just referred to, true patriot-monarchs, were the earliest awakened to resist the spirit of evil spreading amongst all classes in the nation. The Czartoryski and the Zamoyski race, both of the Jagellon line, and near kinsmen to the then newly raised monarch to the Polish throne, Stanislaus Poniatowski, appeared like twin stars over the darkened field, and the whole aspect of the country seemed speedily changed. A contemporary writer bears record that one hundred and twenty-seven provincial colleges were founded, perfected, and supported by them and their patriotic colleagues; while the University of Vilna was judiciously and munificently organized by its prince palatine, Adam Czartoryski himself, and a statute drawn up which declared it “an open high-school from the supreme board of public education for all the Polish provinces.” Herein was every science exalting to the faculties of man, and conducive to his sacred aspirations, seriously and diligently inculcated; and every principle of morality and religion, purifying to his mixed nature, and therefore calculated to establish him in the answering conduct, truth, justice, and loyal obedience to the hereditary revered laws of the nation, equally instilled, qualifying him to uphold them, and to defend their freedom from all offensive operations at home or

abroad, intended to subvert the purity of their code or the integrity of their administration. Such was the import of the implied vow on entering the university.

Amongst the gallant youths brought up in such a school of public virtue was Thaddeus Kosciusko and the young Timotheus Niemcivitz, his friend from youth to age. Kosciusko, as has already been said, was of noble parentage; and to be the son of a Polish nobleman was to be born a soldier, and its practical education, with sabre and lance, his daily pastime. But military studies were included in these various colleges, and the friends soon became as mutually expert in arms as they ever after continued severally distinguished in the fields of their country with sword or lyre. Besides, neither of the young cavaliers passed quite away from their alma mater without having each received the completing accolade of "true knighthood" by the stroke of "fealty to honour!" from the inaugurating sunbeam of some lovely woman's eye. Such befell the youthful Kosciusko, one bright evening, in a large and splendid circle of "the beautiful and brave" at Vilna; and it never lessened its full rays in his chivalric heart, from that hour devoted to the angel-like unknown who had shed them on him, and who had seemed to doubly consecrate the ardours of his soul to his country - her country - the country of all he loved and honoured upon earth. How he wrought out this silent vow is a story of deep interest - equally faithful to his patriotic loyalty and to his ever-cherished love; and in some subsequent reminiscences of the hero, should the writer live to touch a Polish theme again, they may be related with additional honour to his memory.

Brief was the time after the preceding sealing scene of the young Kosciusko for his military vocation took place, before himself and his friend Niemcivitz - who had also received his "anointing spell," which he gayly declared came by more bright eyes than he would dare whisper to their possessors - made a joint arrangement to quit the study of arms, though thus cheered on by the Muses and the Graces, and at once enter the exercise in some actual field of rugged war. The newly-opened dispute between Great Britain and her colonies in North America seemed calculated for their honourable practice. Consulting some of their most respected friends, they speedily found means to cross the seas, and shared the first great campaign under Washington. The issue of that campaign, and those which followed it, need not be repeated here; suffice it to say, the hard-fought contest ended in a treaty of peace between the parent country and its contumacious offspring, in the year 1783, with England's acknowledgment of their independence, under the name of the United States of America.

(...) the Emperor Paul, on his accession to the throne of the Czars, as has before been noted, was too generous a captor to hold in cage so sweet a singing bird and so noble a lion; and he gave them liberty, appending to the act, dearest to a free-born heart, an imperial donation to Kosciusko that might have furnished him with a golden argosy all over the world. But the wounded son of Poland declined it in a manner worthy her name, and with an ingenuous gratitude towards the munificent sovereign who had offered it, not as a bribe for “golden opinions,” but as a sincere tribute to high heroic virtue.

The writer of this note was informed of this fact many years ago, by a celebrated English banker, at that time at St. Petersburg, and corresponding between that city and London, with whom the imperial present had been lodged, and through whom General Kosciusko respectfully but decidedly declined its acceptance.

Then it was that, after halting a short time in England, he with his school and camp companion in so many changes, prepared a second crossing over the Atlantic, to revisit its victor President in his olive-grounds at Mount Vernon. But Niemcivitz had another errand. His roving Cupid had long settled its wing, and he eagerly sought to plight, before Heaven’s altar in the church, the already sacred vow he had pledged to a fair daughter of that country while sharing the dangers of its battlefields.

It was with great difficulty the portcullis of a friendship strong as death had been raised in old chivalric Kent, to allow departure to so dear and honoured a guest as he, who their master had seen fall in his memorable wounds on the plain of Brzesc. But he promised to return again, should the same sweet cherub that sat up aloft on his first voyage to America steer back his little bark in safety; and then he trusted to be once more clasped to the bosom of Poland, in that of his most beloved friend, a dweller in England. [Footnote: The portcullis, the gate, and the armorial crest of Beaufort has descended from the royal founder of the family, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.]

(...) Niemcivitz, meanwhile, with dew-like tear-drops glittering over his joyous smiles, greeted every one with the affectionate recognition of a heart that seemed to know only to love. The writer, for one, shall never forget those tears and smiles on that venerable but ever kindly face; yet it was only in his old age that I first knew him. But sweet sisters, whom I began to know in your bright bloom, I can never forget those charming looks of reciprocating welcome that sprang alone from the fullness of a good and truthful virgin heart. They are now before me, though the eyes which then beamed

so ingenuously on the honored countenance of the Polish hero are closed in death; or rather, shall I say, re-opened on him in a fairer and never-closing light.

He spent a happy week in that bright circle, in which the present commemorator has often since moved, and heard members of it over and over again describe its happy scenes; sometimes, the younger sister, my own especial friend; at other times the animated brother. The revered father has long been in his respected grave; and the elder sister, after an early marriage with an officer of distinction in the British army, breathed her last sigh in the island of Antigua, leaving an only child, a daughter, Cordelia Duncombe Taylor, a beautiful memorial of the surpassingly lovely mother and aunt from whom she is descended (...).

The narrator of these little reminiscences might well, perhaps most agreeably, drop the curtain here; for strange and stirring incidents awaited the two friends on their return to Europe, after a rather prolonged sojourn amongst the animated hospitalities of a grateful people.

The homeward side of that curtain was wrought in mingled fabric, gold, silver, and various threaded yarns; and many were the different hands that threw the shuttles - emperors, kings, princes, friends, traitors; but above all, in the depth of mischief, the spirit of suspicion had steeped the web.

Such was the lurid appearance of the great drama of Europe when Kosciusko and Niemcivitz set foot again upon its shores. Death had thrown his pall over some in high places and others in low. But more cheering suns soon arose, to scare away the darkening shadows, and the patriot heroes' hopes ascended with them. How some were honoured, some deceived in the observance, need not lengthen out our present pages; suffice it to say that there were stars then rising on the horizon which promised fairer elements.

It may be recollected that at the signing of the partition of Poland by the benumbed Senate, on the fatal day of its political decease the young prince Adam Czartoryski, the eldest son of the justly-renowned and virtuous palatine of Vilna, who had been so signal a benefactor to his country by the endowment and reformation of its chief schools, was sent out a hostage to Russia, in seal of the then final resignation. His education had been noble, like the principles of those schools in the foundation of which the brave, illustrious and also erudite Lithuanian family of Krasinski had been eminent sharers. [Footnote: Count Valerian Krasinski, a distinguished son of this house, has long

been an honoured guest in England, and held in high literary respect for his veritable and admirable works, written in fine English: "The Times of Philip Augustus," and "The History of the Protestant Reformation in Poland." The writer of this note knows that he has in his possession some beautiful manuscript tales, descriptive of the manners of Poland; one called "Amoina," a most remarkable story; another, entitled, "My Grandmamma," full of interesting matter, written as a solace in occasional rests from severer literary occupations. And she laments that he has not yet allowed himself to be prevailed on to give any of these touching and elegant reminiscences to his English readers.] The young prince's manners were equally noble with his principles, and not long in attracting the most powerful eyes in the empire. During the remainder of the reign of the Empress Catharine, she caused him to be treated with protective kindness, and on her demise he was instantly removed by the Emperor Paul from whatever surveillance had been left over him, into the imperial palace of St. Petersburg, where this justly-admired princely student of Vilna was to be the constant inmate and companion of the youthful Alexander, the eldest son and heir of the empire.

Their studies, their amusements, were shared together; and they soon became friends like brothers. About the same time, as has before been related, Paul had given freedom to General Kosciusko and his compatriot Niemcivitz. And still, after the death of that mysteriously-destined sovereign, a halcyon sky seemed to hold its bland aspects over Russia's Slavonian sister people, ancient Sarmatia. But ere long the scene changed, and the "seething-pot" of a universal ambition, the crucible of nations, grasped by the hand of Napoleon, began again to darken the world's atmosphere.

Kosciusko now looked on, sometimes with yet struggling hopes, then with well-founded convictions that "the doom was not yet spent;" and no more to be deluded one way or another, while such shifting grounds and sudden earthquakes were erupting the earth under his feet, like the prophet of old, boding worse things to come, he withdrew himself far into the solitudes of nature, into the wide yet noiseless temple of God, where the prayer of an honest man's heart might be heard and answered by that all-merciful and all-wise Being, who sometimes leaves proud men to themselves, to the lawless, headlong driving of their arrogant passions, to show them, in the due turn of events, what a vicious self-aggrandizing, abhorrent and despicable monster in human shape such a noble creature, when turned from the divine purpose of his creation, may become. To such contemplations, and to the repose of a mind and conscience at peace

with itself, did the once, nay, ever-renowned hero of Poland, retire into the most sequestered mountains of Switzerland. A few friends, of the same closed accounts with the world, congregated around him; and there he dwelt several years, beloved and revered, as, indeed, he was wherever he planted his pilgrim staff.

He died at Soleure, in the house of a friend, Mr. Zeltner, in consequence of a fall from his horse while taking a solitary ride. He was buried there with every demonstration of respect in the power of the simple inhabitants to bestow. But the Emperor Alexander, on hearing of the event, would not allow remains so honourable to be divided from the land of their birth; and such high and sincere homage to the undaunted heroism and universally acknowledged integrity of the lamented dead found no difficulty in obtaining the distinguishing object sought, that of transferring his virtue-consecrated relics to the shrine of ancient Christian Poland, the city of Cracow, and there reintering them in the great royal cemetery of the most revered patriots of the kingdom.

Years rolled on over the head and heart of the patriot and the bard, Niemcivitz, the ever “faithful Achates” of his friend and his country, even after, to his bereaved heart, he had survived both. He had also become a widower. His gentle and delicate wife went to revisit her native climate in the United States, but died there. On his return thence to Europe, the consolations of a fraternal friendship, in the bosoms of his noble countrymen, who had become adopted denizens of free and happy England, vainly sought to retain him with them. Sorrow in a breast of his temperament cannot find rest in any place. His shining locks, once likened to those of Hyperion, became frosted by an age of wandering as well as of sadness; and the till then joyous and ever-tender heart of the sweetest poet of Sclavonian birth breathed its last sigh in Paris, in the summer of 1841. It was on the first of June; and on the eighth of the month he was buried with military honours and all the distinguishing rites of the national church. The funeral service was performed by the Archbishop of Chalcidonia, with a large body of the clergy attending. A choir of fifty professors sung the mass, and more than a thousand persons thronged the procession - persons of all nations, of all creeds, religious or political, of every rank amongst men, of every mind, from the prince to the peasant, that understood the true value of genius when helmed by virtue, either on the land or on the wave; whether in the field or in the cabinet; in the student’s closet, or in the duties of domestic home.

Such a man was Niemcivitz. So was he wept; so will he be remembered, proving, indeed, most convincingly, that there is a standard set up in men's hearts, if they would but look to it, which, whatever be their minor clashing opinions, shows that the truly great and good in this earth are all of one family in the estimation of pure intellect, the spiritual organ of all just estimation, which is, in fact, that of the kingdom of heaven -that kingdom which, if its laws to man were properly preserved and obeyed, would spread the shepherds' promised "peace and good-will to all mankind." But men may listen, approve, and admire, and yet withhold obedience. But why will the heirs of such a covenant, with sight and hearing, die from its inheritance?

Kosciusko and Niemcivitz were real appreciators of so rich a birthright in "the better country!" and now are gone to Him who purchased it by His most precious blood, to enter with Him forever into its peaceful and glorious rest.

J. P.

BRISTOL, SEPTEMBER 1845.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ The appendix comes from the following source: (*TW*, 1845).

Appendix 6. Figures



Figure 1. Adoption of the Polish Constitution by Jan Matejko. National Museum of Poland Catalogue, 1891 (after “Constitution of May 3, 1791”, 2007).



Figure 2. Battle of Racławice (4 Apr. 1794) by Jan Matejko. National Museum in Kraków, 1888 (after “Kościuszko Uprising”, 2008).



Figure 3. Portrait of Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746 – 1817) by Józef Grassi, around 1830 (after “Tadeusz Kościuszko”, 2007).



Figure 4. Portrait of King Stanisław August Poniatowski (1732 – 1798) by Marcello Bacciarelli (after “Stanisław August Poniatowski”, 2009).



Figure 5. Portrait of Prince Adam George Czartoryski (1770 – 1861) (after “Adam Jerzy Czartoryski”, 2011).



Figure 6. Portrait of Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1758 – 1841) (after “Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz”, 2008).

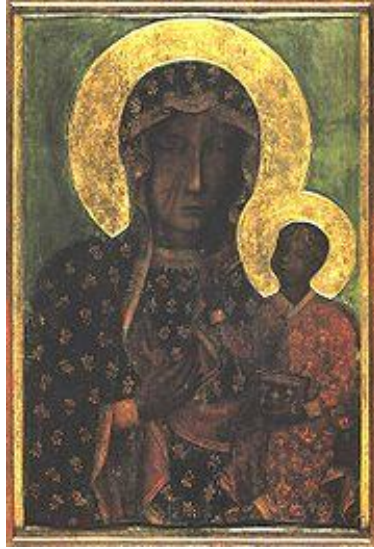


Figure 7. Photographic reproduction of Black Madonna of Częstochowa (after “Black Madonna of Częstochowa”, 2011).



Figure 8. A Polish nobleman in the Polish over-coat (Pol. *kontusz*) (after “Szlachta”, 2007).



Figure 9. A photograph of Wilanów from a collection of the Museum Palace at Wilanów (after “Wilanów”, 2011).



Figure 10. A photograph of the King's study at Wilanów Palace (after “The King's study”, 2011).



Figure 11. Portrait of Jane Porter (1776 – 1850), author unknown, before 1828. The Ladies' Monthly Museum (after "Portrait of Jane Porter", 2008).



Figure 12. Undated watercolour portrait of Jane Porter (after "Jane Porter and Maria Porter collection, 1808 – 1850", 2011).



Figure 13. Statue of John Wilkes (1725 – 1797) in Fetter Lane, London (after “Portrait of John Wilkes”, 2011).



Figure 14. Portrait of John Wesley (1703 – 1791) (after “Portrait of John Wesley”, 2011).



Figure 15. Portrait of Walter Scott (1771- 1832) from 1822 by Sir Henry Raeburn (after “Sir Walter Scott”, 2011).



Figure 16. The English landscape garden of the 18th century (after “The English garden”, 2011).



Figure 17. Image of Gin Lane (the 18th century) by William Hogarth (after “Mother’s ruin”, 2008).



Figure 18. Partitions of Poland (after “Partitions of Poland”, 2011).

Appendix 7. Advertisement for *Thaddeus of Warsaw*

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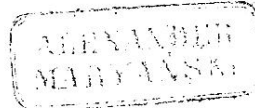


Figure 19. An offer of works by Baudry's Librairie Europeenne (after TW, 1831: front page).