BIBLIOTEKARZ PODLASKI
2018/1 (XXXVIII)
ISSN 1640-7806 (print)
ISSN 2544-8900 (online)
http://bibliotekarzpodlaski.ksiaznicapodlaska.pl/

Joel J. Janicki
Soochow University, Taiwan

Edward Lubomirski's *heroic meditations*: Background and introduction

Abstract:

The author has undertaken the difficult task of reconstruction, analysis and interpretation of *Graves on the death of Tadeusz Kosciuszko* (1821), which was given the subtitle *Knightly Prides*. It is one of the lesser known works of Edward Lubomirski, a Polish aristocrat, diplomat and poet, who lived between 1796- and 1823. As an editor, and translator of Klingemann's *Faust* Lubomirski is considered to be one of the most important precursors of Polish Romanticism.

Key words: Lubomirski Pre-Romanticism, 19th-century literature

Edwarda Lubomirskiego *dumy rycerskie*. Tło i wprowadzenie

Streszczenie:

Autor podjął się trudnego zadania rekonstrukcji, analizy i interpretacji *Grobów w dniu śmierci Tadeusza Kościuszki* (1821), którym nadano podtytuł *dumy rycerskie*. Jest to jedno z mniej znanych dzieł Edwarda Lubomirskiego, polskiego arystokraty, dyplomaty i poety, żyjącego w latach 1796–1823. Jako redaktor, edytor i tłumacz *Fausta* Klingemanna uchodzi Lubomirski za jednego z najważniejszych prekursorów polskiej epoki romantyzmu.

Słowa-klucze: Lubomirski, preromantyzm, literatura XIX wieku

The untimely death of the poet proved all too common a theme in Romantic Literature, not least among them Lord Byron (1788–1824) who died from a fever in his beloved Greece, John Keats who succumbed to the ravages of consumption at the tender age of 25, Percy Shelley (1792–1822) who drowned in a storm on the Gulf of Spezia, as well as the Russian poets Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837) and Mikhail Lermontov (1814–1841). The untimely death of the young Polish nobleman and poet, Edward Kazimierz Lubomirski, in 1823, cut down ere he reached his prime, has however gained little resonance over the past two hundred years even in his native Poland. Like Pushkin and Lermontov, Lubomirski lost his life in the seemingly most senseless of ways and most painful to posterity, meeting his end in a duel that preserved his honor but cost him his life.

Lubomirski, a Polish poet, translator and diplomat, was the son of Michal Lubomirski (d. 1825), a member of one of Poland's most prestigious families bearing the coat-of-arms *Szreniawa bez krzyży*. He was born in the town of Dubno in the Province of Volynia (Wołyń, now in Ukraine) and died in Warsaw at the tender age of 27. In his early twenties, he occupied diplomatic posts in Vienna, Berlin and London. He was the author of an original poem "Groby w dniu śmierci Tadeusza Kościuszki" (1821) subtitled "Heroic Meditations" and the translator of a version of *Faust* (1815) by the German writer E.A.F. Klingemann (1877–1831). He also compiled several factual accounts on Vienna and England in the course of his diplomatic work. Lubomirski's writings have attracted very little attention over the past two hundred years. Excerpts from "Groby" were included in an anthology by Paweł Hertz published in 1959; A. Kowalska's monograph on literary Warsaw during the Congress Kingdom provides a single reference to Lubomirski in an appendix, questioning the authorship of his „Obraz historyczno-statystyczny Wiednia oryginalnie 1815 r. wystawiony, z planem tegoż miasta", published in Warsaw in 1821. Lubomirski is cited only once in the „Słownik literatury polskiej XIX wieku", his work „Groby" being mentioned in a single passage in Maria Zielenska's entry „Cmentarz"(136-139).

One of the few contemporary writers to leave a record of his appreciation of Lubomirski's writings was Kazimierz Brodzinski (1791–1835). Like Lubomirski, Brodzinski had a broad knowledge of the German language and a strong and developed interest in German literature. He was inspired

by Gessner's pastorals, the essays of Herder and the works of Schiller and Goethe. He was a writer of pastorals and devoted several essays to the pastoral, among others: „O klasyczności i romantyczności tudzież o duchu poezji polskiej" (1818) and „O idylli pod względem moralnym". It is significant from this perspective that the final meditation of Lubomirski's poem departs temporarily from its predominant Ossianic mood to create the idyllic description of Kosciuszko's journey to Dubno and tryst with his lover Zofia before he is to set off on his grand heroic undertaking on behalf of the nation, described in the second half of the poem. The pastoral setting is a place apart from the madding crowd of both the city and the battlefield, a place where the elemental rhythms and beauties of nature give the reader a fresh perspective and a new understanding of the inner life of Kosciuszko.

The Congress Kingdom

Lubomirski was born one year after the third and final partition of Poland, and, like Mickiewicz, his junior by two years, came of age in the Napoleonic era which gripped the nation and filled it with the hope for national revival. Lubomirski turned 16 at the time of the invasion of Russia by the Grand Armée and its Polish detachment under Poniatowski:

> O roku ów! Kto ciebie widział w naszym kraju!/ Ciebie lud zowie dotąd rokiem urodzaju,/ A żołnierz rokiem wojny; dotąd lubią starzy/ O tobie bajać, dotąd pieśń o tobie marzy... Ogarnęło Litwinów serca z wiosny słońcem/ Jakieś dziwne przeczucie, jak przed swiata końcem,/ Jakieś oczekiwanie tęskne i radosne. (Book XI, lines 1-4 Mickiewicz 223)

Lubomirski's views on Napoleon, Alexander I, Russia and the War of 1812 are unknown. He does not refer to Russia or the Russians in his "Historical Meditations". His diplomatic positions were in service to the Russian government at a time of uncharacteristically non-hostile relations between Poland and Russia. The years following the fall of Napoleon, the first years of the Congress Kingdom, were devoted to peace, rebuilding and an attempt to come to terms with Alexander's Russia. Verses printed in *Kurier Warszawski* (22 sierpnia 1821) convey a picture of a renewed vibrant capital city: „Z ulic, z gmachów i z postawy/ Nie mogłem poznać Warszawy". The city remade itself in the first years of a new epoch, bustling with a new rhythm of life. (Kowalska 13)

The new order introduced into Polish life by the victorious Russians after the Congress of Vienna compelled Poles to tone down their ideals and to align them with the compromising vision of Horatian moderation: "Na lubej mierności łonie/ Połączmy pracę z honorem." The settled nature of politics after the Congress of Vienna fostered a return to the idea of hard work, similar in spirit to that of Warsaw in the positivist period. The traditional ideals of the soldier, now suppressed by Grand Duke Konstanty, the viceroy of the Kingdom were replaced by those of the citizen and practical efforts on behalf of the nation.

This change in attitude toward Russia is evident in the writings at the time of J. U. Niemcewicz. In an 1814 entry in his „Pamiętniki" he conceded to political realities: Ojczyzna pierwszym jest naszym celem i lepiej ją przyjąć z nienawistnej moskiewskiej ręki, niż nie mieć jej wcale." (II, 9)

In the spirit of reconciliation, Niemcewicz penned his „Napomknienia względem Dobra Publicznego (ut sit bene patriae)" also in 1814, that is, prior to formal deliberations on the fate of Poland at the Congress of Vienna. In it he has words of praise for the Russian Tsar, Alexander I, referring to the nobleness, humaneness and magnanimity with which he had thus far treated the Poles. The Polish writer concedes that the long-suffering nation finds itself firmly in the hands of the Tsar:

> Po tylu klęskach, nieszczęściach, cierpieniach, po długiem dręczącem oczekiwaniu, powierzył Bóg Aleksandrowi Pierwszemu ostateczne losów Polski roztrzygnienie.

In undertaking this task, Niemcewicz expresses his and the nation's gratitude to the Tsar for his generosity and apparent concern in preserving the nation. As a testament to that gratitude he presents a program for political and moral reform that would make Poles enlightened citizens and models for all European nations:

> Wdzięczni za nieprzełamaną stałość, z którą Monarcha ten przy istności naszej obstawa, troskliwi o dobro tej lubej ziemi, weźmy za ścisłą powinność naszą, dokładać wszelkiego starania, by zgoić krwią jeszcze sączące się rany, poprawić wady, sprostować tysiączne zdrożności, a tym odbierzemy od dobrego Monarchy rząd godny szlachetnej duszy jego, rząd wolny i silny. W sposób, który by dowiódł światu, żeśmy nie zasłużyli na nieszczęście, które nas przygniótł, żeśmy raczej godni tej istności, za którą przez lat tyle krew Polską lała się.

Niemcewicz called upon the Tsar to lend his support in view of the economic devastation of the Polish land and the depopulation of the countryside. He urged him to be indulgent in allowing the Poles themselves to create a proper government for themselves, an effective system of public and technical schools, a judicial system, a well-functioning government treasury and army, everything, in short, necessary to develop Poland into Niemcewicz's vision of a modern state. In other words, another ghost of Poland's past seems to have haunted Niemcewicz's psyche, the spirit of Stanisław August, who in his own attempts at reform bound his fate and that of his nation inexorably with that of Russia.

Kosciuszko and Alexander I

In 1818 Jan Pawel Woronicz (1757–1829), poet and bishop of Krakow, declared at a speech he gave at the funeral ceremonies held for Kosciuszko at the Wawel Cathedral upon the return of Kosciuszko's remains from Switzerland, his home in exile, to the ancient Polish capital as a "cudowne zdarzenie" "a miraculous event." (Oleksowicz 160) brought about by the magnanimity of Alexander I.

The young Grand Prince Alexander, about to turn 19, first laid eyes on Kosciuszko in November, 1796, when he accompanied his father, Paul I, to the chamber where the Polish leader had been imprisoned for the previous two years. One of the first official acts of Paul's reign was an act of magnanimity in which he granted Kosciuszko his liberty. Alexander also witnessed the lively exchange between the Russian Tsar and the Polish National Leader. Kosciuszko waxed eloquent on the virtues of the Polish people and the cause of universal liberty–liberty, he insisted, not just for Poles and the Americans on whose behalf he had fought, but for Russians as well. Alexander's long and complex relationship with A. J. Czartoryski (1770–1861) conditioned and tempered his attitude towards Poland in keeping with his liberal education.

In the aftermath of the Napoleonic defeat when Alexander made victorious entry into the French capital, the Russian tsar, urged on by Napoleon, generously pledged to allow Polish soldiers who had fought under Napoleon to return to their homeland with their arms and possessions and all due military honors and courtesies. Moreover, he promised to reunite Lithuania with the former Duchy of Warsaw. Alexander was thus hoping to win the good will of Kosciusko in forging positive Polish and Russian ties for the future. Kosciuszko made it clear he would be willing to cooperate

with Alexander upon securing the Tsar's promise to implement several proposals on behalf of the Polish people, namely to secure the freedom of person of all Polish peasants and the freedom to live under their own roofs. He proposed the creation of a constitution based on the English model under Alexander's auspices, and to provide an education for the peasants and grant them land in their name. On the urging of Czartoryski Kosciuszko met with Alexander in both Paris (1814) and in the Austrian capital on the eve of the Congress of Vienna. Alexander disappointed Kosciuszko in failing to address his ardent, idealistic proposals, yet the latter, in spite of his disillusionment, still retained a sense of admiration and gratitude for the Russian leader, for, among other things, placing the name of Poland once again on the map of Europe. This admiration found expression in the personal contribution Kosciuszko made to build a monument to Alexander in Warsaw, which eventually materialized in the construction of St. Alexander's Church. (Szyndler 346ff; Wandycz 102ff.) Alexander in turn displayed his own magnanimity several years later by granting permission for the remains of Kosciuszko to be returned to Poland and buried with all due ceremony in the Wawel Cathedral, the setting of and the inspiration for Lubomirski's „Groby".

The Heroic Tradition and the Patriotic Ideal in Polish Poetry

Lubomirski's „Heroic Meditations" are part of the extended poetic response to the mortal threats to Polish existence in the 18th century, to the partitions themselves, and their aftermath. The dramatic events that led to the demise of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, beginning in the second half of the 18th century, created a new set of values and a modern sensibility and brought to life a vigorous patriotism that became one of the distinctive features of Polish national identity. A vibrant, engaged expressiveness was conferred to poetic vision by simplifying the language to express the new exigencies of social and political life, to shape political consciousness, arouse patriotic sentiment and ultimately to mobilize the nation in the struggle for independence.

The response to the perceived mortal threat to the integrity of the nation had long been expressed in prose and poetic forms from the Renaissance poet Klemens Janicki's „Skarga Rzeczypospolitej" to Pyotr Skarga's impassioned sermons from the 17th century. An early example of a poetic meditation („Duma") in Polish literary history is Zbigniew Morsztyn's

„Duma niewolniczej": „Śpiewam-ci jak Nijobe, Gdy na dzieci ciała/ I na swoją żałobę / Patrząc skamieniała". („Horyzonty wyobraźni", 200-203)

The concrete language of the poetry of patriotism was highlighted by a strong moral vision, an idealizing virtue, and individual courage. This type of poetic expression was bound up with a strong emphasis on the importance of political and military leadership, trust in leaders' ability to govern in a law-abiding and upstanding manner, and to protect the nation from aggressive neighbor states. Statesmen and military heroes were presented in a manner of broad appeal to the reading public. The often lofty rhetorical tone combined with idealizing features was intended to offset the impact of the unhappy fate of the nation on the demoralized individual and to instill in one and all the hope and will to persevere and triumph.

Ignacy Krasicki (1735–1801) played a vital role in providing expressive means and models that were inventive, insightful and artistic, and contributed significantly to shaping the collective identity. His "Hymn do miłości ojczyzny" served as a tonic to break through the debilitating gloom that undermined political will by its uplifting strains, endowing patriotic sentiment with a religious aura and empowering it as a sacred duty. („Horyzonty" 209-210) A.K. Czartoryski (1734–1823) is credited with the inspired decision to have the hymn recited on a daily basis at the Szkoła Rycerska, the Cadets Corps, attended by Kosciuszko, Niemcewicz, Jasinski and Kniaziewicz among other future leaders, as a kind of secular prayer, an act of devotion and commitment to the national cause:

> Kształcisz kalectwo przez chwalebne blizny,/ Gnieździsz w umyśle rozkoszy prawdziwe,/ Byle Cię można wspomóc, byle wspierać,/ Nie żal żyć w nędzy, nie żal i umierać.

The appearance of Krasicki's „Pan Podstoli" in 1784 in *Magazyn Warszawski*, provided the denizens of Warsaw a model of a good citizen, proprietor and head of family as depicted in numerous settings, situations, and incidents encountered in modern Polish life.

Moreover, Krasicki was the first Polish translator of "The Songs of Ossian", published in 1793, a work of vital importance for Lubomirski's creative inspiration and sensibility. Krasicki was also the author of „Rozmowy z zmarłymi" (1791). Krasicki takes the reader to the world of the dead, seeking the wisdom of the past to serve the nation in the throes of crisis. Krasicki's work, with its classical sensibility, is part of a tradition that goes

back to Fontenelle, Fenelon, and Voltaire, all authors of "conversations". Their common purpose was to present society with models of harmonious development and individuals with models characterized by wisdom and accomplishment[1]. The lofty style endowed the heroes of the past with a sense of dignity. Krasicki was able to bring to life the Polish rulers Boleslaw Chrobry and Kazimierz Wielki. Boleslaw holds a grudge against history for giving him the lesser sobriquet "Chrobry"—"Brave", while Kazimierz was conferred the *przydomek* "Great". Kazimierz himself explains why: This is his posthumous reward for his peaceful contributions to learning, agriculture, trade and his care and concern for the people. Those with military accomplishments are deemed strong, powerful, brave, so Boleslaw was given his due; Kazimierz likewise. The clash of two ideas thus are resolved with their own sense of rightness.

The Historical Characters: Kosciuszko

The revolutionary events of the 1790s culminating with the Kosciuszko Uprising in 1794 led to the forging of national character. In critical times national character is vital in keeping up the struggle supported by the moral strength that comes from engrained habits of mind and nurturing. The partitions functioned as a kind of collective punishment for the long years of blind self-indulgence that characterized the manner of life of the Noble Republic beginning in the 16th century. At the same time these years of trial served as a spiritual rebirth. Kosciuszko, virtuous by nature and upbringing, came into his own in America where he imbibed the democratic spirit and the love of liberty of Americans, of a nation born to be free. Having served valiantly in the Revolutionary Army for seven years, he brought back those values and that spirit to his people, convinced that national character shapes political will and political institutions, while despotism, including the despotism of slavery, has demoralizing effects on the nation as a whole.

Poets, Polish and non-Polish alike[2], have been inspired by the figure of Kosciuszko, attracted by his personal virtues of selflessness and modesty, his military valor and skills, for his life-long dedication to the principles of liberty and equality, and for the role he played in shaping the nation's de-

[1] See Zofia Sinkowa, "Oświeceni wśród Pól Elizejskich", Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1976.

[2] See Francis E. Zapatka, "Kosciuszo Among the English Romantics". The Polish Review, Vol. XXX, No. 3, 1985, 239-255.

stiny. Kosciuszko became a legendary hero in his lifetime; his person and legend played a significant role in the shaping of national consciousness in post-partition Poland. He has become the model of the ideal Pole which to this day has not been challenged or changed. Kosciuszko as the ideal Pole is an embodiment of the most significant national traits, which has made him a fitting modern representative to be grouped with the great leaders from the Polish past. The culminating manifestation of public enthusiasm for the man and legend was the creation of the *Kopiec Kosciuszki*, the huge mound located on the outskirts of Krakow in 1820–1823 several years after his death–from its earliest days a site of pilgrimage[3].

Kosciuszko's inclusiveness and universality succeeded in engaging Poles of all classes and religions to identify with the nation and infuse them with patriotic feelings. These qualities served as the basis for a common heroic tradition and a common set of political, social and humanistic ideals for a nation in crisis. The Kosciuszko Uprising itself spawned countless expressions of national pride and unity in building up a new Poland under the leadership of Kosciuszko, bolstered by a reaffirmed belief in divine justice. In F. D. Kniaźnin's "Na Rewolucję 1794" the poet sees Poland's destiny in God's hand:

> Sklepienie góry wnet pęka,/ Wystrzeli rozpacz, kruszą się kajdany,/ Zbledniały zbrodnie, drętwieją tyrany./ O, jak im straszna Najwyższego ręka!

Later in the poem Kniaźnin introduces Kosciuszko as quiet and virtuous in demeanor, aided by the powers above to help him carry out his sacred trust:

Bohater w cichej postaci,/ Z cnotą na ziemi, a ufnością w niebie,/ Pod swiętym hasłem: "Ojczyzno, za ciebie"/ Błysnął orężem na czele swych braci.

Kosciuszko was embraced as a paragon for youth for the new generation of Polish romantic poets, and as a leader who would live and die for the fatherland as expressed by Jan Czeczot[4] (1796–1847), Lubomirski's contemporary:

[3] See "Kościuszko" Bolesław Oleksowicz, 435-438, Słownik literatury polskiej XIX wieku.

[4] Jan Czeczot gave up his freedom for the fatherland in 1823, near the end of Alexander's reign, when he was arrested by the Russian secret police and exiled to Siberia for his participation in the Circle of Philomaths. He was allowed to return back home to Lithuania only in 1839.

> O Kościuszko, piękny wzorze, Jako ojczyznę miłować!/ W każdej życia swego porze,/ Pragniemy Cię naśladować./ Szczerze ojczyznę kochamy,/ Dla niej tylko oddychamy.

Mickiewicz saw Kosciuszko as the mythical embodiment of *polskość* as presented in his work, *O przyszłym wielkim człowieku* written in 1832. Mickiewicz viewed Kosciuszko as the incarnation of Piast:

> Dlaczego Kościuszko w tak uderzający sposób przypomina Piasta? Naród od razu wzrusza się, otacza go i daje mu władzę nieograniczoną. A jest to czlowiek w sukmanie chłopskiej, żyjący wśród ludu, tak pełen prostoty… I kiedy naród wołał o Piasta na tron, kiedy brał sobie za wodza Kościuszkę, można powiedzieć, że wykonywał słowa Pisma św., które mówi: 'weźcie ciało z ciała mojego, kość z kości mojej'. (*Wykład o literaturze*, 15 marca 1842 r. Lekcja XVII.)

B. Oleksowicz points out another image of Kosciuszko, one that emerged from the pens of preromantic writers. They were inspired by the sentimental cult of feeling in which the pastoral is highlighted together with an idyllic nature, where heart triumphs over reason, and virtue is paramount. This aspect of Kosciuszko as sentimental hero is highlighted in Lubomirski's poem. Kosciuszko becomes the key figure in maintaining the continuity of Polish community and tradition that remains unbroken and retains its vibrancy in spite of the partitions. The virtues extolled by Lubomirski derive from Old Polish traditions, those of the old nobility. His Kosciuszko embodies the typical features of the knight-farmer *(rycerz-rolnik*) and of the knight himself. The Polish Cincinnatus, Kosciuszko as the student of Washington, is a fine blend of the noble ideal and the modern ideal.

Zofia/Ludwika

Lubomirski endows his poem with a romantic sensibility in the prominent role given to Kosciuszko's relationship with Zofia, a fictionalized variation of Ludwika Lubomirska (d. 1836). He describes the shared sentiment of the two lovers doomed to bid a permanent adieu in this life only to be reunited in death. In his depiction of their love Lubomirski reveals how laudable love is when born of virtue. At the same time his portrait of Kosciuszko with its emphasis on personal sentiment gives a more solid structure to his identity and strong motivation for his selfless devotion to country that went hand in hand with his devotion to Zofia.

Zofia, the same name that Mickiewicz gave to his young heroine in *Pan Tadeusz*, had her real life counterpart in Ludwika z Sosnowskich Lubomirska. The daughter of the wealthy magnate Jozef Sosnowski was married off to a relative of Edward Lubomirski, Prince Jozef Lubomirski, the son of the Kievan Wojewoda Stanislaw Lubomirski. The latter, among the wealthiest and most influential of magnates, was married to Izabela, sister of Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, patron of Kosciuszko. A.K. Czartoryski provided the young Kosciuszko the wherewithal to continue his studies in Paris upon his graduation from the School for Knights. Jozef, meanwhile, received an estate in Wołyń as part of the dowry in marrying Ludwika, the setting for Kosciuszko and Zofia's meeting in the Fourth Meditation.

Ludwika's unhappiness in marriage and her undying feelings for Kosciuszko were revealed in a letter she wrote to her "Friend" many years later. In the meantime two of her sons had died in childhood, while her eldest, Henryk was given over to her sonless mother-in-law Izabela for his upbringing. Upon the death of Izabela, Henry inherited her palace in Vienna, and a valuable library and art collection. (Szyndler 56) Kosciuszko had managed to avoid the wrath of Ludwika's father, the Governor of Smolensk, by escaping to Vienna through the assistance of Czartoryski where he found temporary shelter with his wife Izabela Czartoryska. Kosciuszko soon set off for America with letters of recommendations to Kazimierz Pulaski and sufficient funds provided by Izabela.

The letter written in French by Ludwika to Tadeusz from her father's home in Sosnowice is dated 21 May 1789, 14 years after their romance. It is a testament to a love that stood the test of time. She writes at a time when she can give herself over to bittersweet memories "to przykre, to przyjemne" in a setting of blossoming spring. She calls Kosciuszko her "Drogi przyjacielu!" three times in the letter: "…przepędzam całe godziny na rozpamiętywaniu przeszłości." She expresses her intention to make a trip to Wisznice – "aby być w Twojem sąsiedztwie, liczyłam bowiem na to, że może przypadek nastręczy mi przyjemność spotkania z Tobą". Thus, she determines to assist fate in playing a part in their reunion, yet merely to be close to Kosciuszko is sweet solace. She affirms to him that his name has a secure place in her heart. She writes that she will soon go off to Spaa to meet up with Princess Izabela and her own son Henryk:

> Rada bym, abyś był przekonany, że w nikim pod słońcem los Twój nie budzi żywszego i prawdziwszego zajęcia niż we mnie. Nie myślę nigdy o Tobie bez pewnego

> wzruszenia serca i duszy: dusza moja nie jest niewdzięczna, a Tyś w niej rozwinął pierwsze uczucie tkliwości. Nieszczęścia Twoje zawsze mnie obchodziły i chciałabym własnym szczęściem okupić szczęście Twoje i zadowolenie. (Szyndler 53-54)

The indomitable will to sacrifice oneself for the well-being of the other is a testament to their lifelong mutual devotion and an ever flowing source of their virtue, feelings captured in the Fourth Meditation.

Ossianism and the Bard

James MacPherson (1736–1796), a historian and squire from the Scottish Highlands, is most widely known as the creator of the Ossian Songs. The extraordinary nature of these songs lay in its claim to reveal the origins of poetry, where it comes from and its overriding purpose. Beginning with the publication of elegies of the recent dead, written in the spirit of Edward Young's "Night Thoughts" (1742), MacPherson's primary emphasis was on the sentiment of the subject's death, the expression of grief and sorrow at the passing of a life, on decaying memory, on time's swift stream, and on deathless Fame. His first book was "Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands of Scotland", his own rhythmic and highly evocative prose translations of traditional Gaelic verse from the Highlands.

MacPherson's efforts centered on Ossian, a 3rd century bard and the son of Fingal, who purportedly wrote an epic devoted to his father. Macpherson published "Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem in Six Books, together with Several Other Poems composed by Ossian, the Son of Fingal, translated from the Gaelic Language" in 1761 and *The Songs of Ossian* in 1765. All of Macpherson's claims about Ossian and the provenance of poetry proved false, and no original versions were forthcoming. Yet his "translations" proved immensely influential, and he helped introduce new directions for poetic expression, characterized by imaginative distance in bringing to life the voices of bygone poets/bards and espousing the values those voices proclaimed. In his prose renditions the heroic feats of warriors mingled with romantic interludes often marked by the poignant deaths of lovers. Ghosts of the past filled with haunting prophecies imbue the writings with a supernatural aura. The evocative natural beauty, the melancholy atmosphere, the presentation of the legendary past provided a model of broad appeal that captured the spirit of the time and was soon translated into other languages and emulated by many contemporary poets. (Baines 227-8) The admiration Herder and Goethe held for Ossian was no doubt well known to Lubomirski.

Ossianism went hand in hand with poetic writings from the Graveyard School. The graveyard and grave in English pre-romantic literature were prominent features as was the theme of death itself. Thomas Gray (1716–1771) with his scholarly knowledge of Old Icelandic and his celebration of the oral traditions of Welsh verse was eminently qualified to provide specimens of the style of ancient poems and songs. Themes he broached in his historical studies and in his own graveyard elegy paid homage to the other world, the world of death, with the mysticism of the funereal setting as a point of departure for philosophical, religious and patriotic considerations. (Meyer Spacks 156-7)

Just as in Lubomirski's "Meditations" as for MacPherson and Gray, the bard's deep and penetrating historical memory brings the past to life. The grave markers for each of the heroes of the past speak to the bard, each revealing its sealed mysteries, lines inspired by tombstone inscriptions. The bright moon beams shine on the desolate heath, the sublime quality of the poems, making a deep impression on readers. The bard's tale of woe and grief of the warrior king, his bravery in battle and his role as upholder of moral values, compassion and benevolence presents a moving portrait of the nobility of the human spirit.

Hugh Blair's (1718–1800) "Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres" (1783) helped popularize the cult of masculine gallantry that spread quickly to the continent and took deep root there. He pointed out the simplicity of manner, the noble suffering and the praise of virtue in the songs that are filled with nostalgia for what has been lost. He was enchanted by the natural metaphors of Ossian's verse: The two dark streams that meet as colliding factions can be compared to Lubomirski's depiction of the parting of Zofia and Kosciuszko as two streams flowing apart, gradually, yet inexorably distancing themselves from each other. (Burstein 36)

The solemn tones of the Bard's voice provide an interpretation of the lessons of history, a poetic counterpart to Gibbon's "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" (1776–1778). The songs depicted the manly independence of the heroes of yore, descriptions marked by emotion-filled oxymorons: joy of grief, pleasures of sorrow and melancholy, an overindulgence of feeling, the passion and imagination that recreated animating pictures of the past. Its driving spirit was a vital aspect of virtue, its songs presenting themselves and their heroes as models for ennobling oneself and cultivating virtue in the present, engendering a civic humanism that spurred a commitment to political liberty that moved such

eminent readers as Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826). (Burstein 32ff) Strong feelings for nature were combined with the striving for integrity and humanity, and an attempt to bring idealized aspects of the past into the present. Refined, polite, humane warriors, fearless of death, redoubtable on the battlefield, became the models for improving moral character, the embodiments of the hero of their times. Ossian-influenced poets, Lubomirski among them, attempted to give their readers a new historical identity in portraying the heroic deeds of the ancestors and the power to determine the fate of the nation and the individual, while creating historical memory that lives in the present.

Ossianism, together with Youngism and Sternism, ushered in a new era of feeling and sentiment, created a new sensibility of pre-romantic and early romantic writing that wielded a strong influence on Polish writers. Ossianism in particular created a model of the golden age of the national past, its proponents drawing upon native traditions, "historical songs" and "meditations" and in the case of Polish writers, intertwining their works with the idea of patriotism, a literary response to the threat to and the loss of independence. In place of classical models, Ossian-inspired works featured an atmosphere of melancholy, whose characters taken from the historical tradition were often displayed brooding over their personal fate and the fate of the nation and whose structure was shaped by that atmosphere. Puławy was a major center of the rise of sentimental literature, playing host to such writers as D. Kniaźnin ("Matka Spartanka", 1786) Niemcewicz ("Duma o Żółkiewskim", 1786) F. Karpiński, Adam Jerzy Czaroryski ("Bard", 1795) and Maria Wirtembirska (nee Czartoryska), as well as the Pulawy-inspired poem by Jan Pawel Woronicz (1757–1829), "Świątyni Sybilli".

Ossianic-inspired poems effectively creating a mood of threat and mystery became increasingly popular in the patriotic literature of post-partition Poland. As a setting and theme in 1801 Karpinski's "Żale Sarmaty nad grobem Zygmunta Augusta" captured the pessimistic tones, the feelings of despair of the citizen pondering the loss of political freedom. The poet becomes dismayed by the silence of the Muses, and the lute that has become untuned, as he finds himself incapable of expressing the nation's grief. The theme of graveyards and funeral processions naturally appears more prominently after a calamity when the nation is forced to bury and grieve for its fallen heroes. Niemcewicz, translator of Gray's "Elegy" as a prisoner in Petersburg, and A. J. Czartoryski, among others, each wrote

an elegy on the funeral of Prince Jozef[5]. Poems devoted to the graves of the kings and heroes in the Wawel include not only Lubomirski's" "Groby w dniu śmierci Tadeusza Kościuszki", but also E. Wasilewski's "Katedra na Wawelu" and K. Ujejski's "Pogrzeb Kościuszki" (1853).

Their works sought to bring the past and its historical representatives to life by creating an atmosphere conducive to melancholic meditations, fostering in the reader an emotional link to the historical past while introducing a new type of sensibility and literary experience connected to a sense of both loss and recovery. The cult of Ossianism was particularly strong in Poland in terms of creating a cult of the national hero. The first translation of the Ossianic songs appearing in 1791 by I. Krasicki and the peak of Ossianism in Poland was scaled in the years 1818–1820. (Szykowski cited in Szczepan-Thomas 138) This spirit is captured in K. Brodzinski's essays, e.g., "O klasyczności i romantyczności" (1818) in which he affirms that poetry should be viewed as a reflection of the language, feeling and tradition of a given nation, capable of inspiring patriotic sentiments that in turn inspires a love of virtue and a capacity to accomplish noble deeds. (Szczepan-Thomas 138)

A new voice was made use of by pre-romantic writers, those of the shades of the dead who actively engage with each other or with the living, bringing to life a previously little known or lifeless past. They speak with a voice from beyond the grave characterized by a preternatural power and inspiring awe and terror, further intensified by a nocturnal setting and graveyard settings that bespeak of the mysteries of life and death, the past and the future. Niemcewicz, whose two early historical meditations (*Dumy*) were written in the spirit of his translations of French historical romances situated in Medieval times, combine heroic virtue and romantic love. These provided him with the inspiration to write on themes from Polish history and an imagined view of the heroic tradition. "Duma o Żółkiewskim" and "Duma o Stefanie Potockim" (1789) both depict defeated heroes fallen in battle, the deaths of military leaders who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Their tone of regret and hopelessness conveys a tragic sense of the past while the lyrical narrator convincingly induces his readers to consider the fate of

[5] Niemcewicz's "Pogrzeb Xiecia Józefa Poniatowskiego, Pienie żałobne" was written in 1814 and Czartoryski's "Na śmierć księcia Józefa Poniatowskiego" dates from the same year. Czartoryski also wrote a verse on Kosciuszko's death, Strofy na śmierć Tadeusza Kościuszki. See Sławomir Kufel, *Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770–1861)* 39 in Encyklopedia pisarzy Oświecenia, t. III. 30-52.)

the nation. The success of his "Polish meditations" gave rise to a second edition of his works including a verse entitled "Pieśń" which began with the lines "Raz patrzając na mą Zosię, Gdy skronie wieńczyła kwiatem…"

Several of Niemcewicz's historical dramas written during the Congress Kingdom share features with Lubomirski's "Heroic Meditations". They are characterized by strong emotional elements, love motifs, and souls of the dead, and bring the historical past to life in dramatic fashion. "Władysław pod Warną" (1787), a work inspired by the knightly historical romance, features a young Polish king and military leader who was killed in a battle against the Ottoman Turks in the 15th century. A dramatic scene on the eve of the battle shows the king terrified by a premonition of his imminent death on the battlefield. In his nightmarish dream he is transported to the underground vaults of Wawel Cathedral where he sees the ghost of his father emerging from his dark grave in the depths of the night to warn his son of treachery. Niemcewicz, ever the political realist, uses allegory as a warning to Stanislaw August to refrain from entering into an alliance with Russia against the Ottomans.

Niemcewicz's "Zbigniew" (1815) features one of the historical characters in Lubomirski's "Groby". The dramatic work was modelled on such Shakespearean tragedies as "Othello", "Macbeth" and "King Lear" dealing with the theme of guilt and punishment and the anathema of bringing in foreign armies to decide the thorny issue of succession to the Polish crown, as well as revenge, civil strife and the harm such division does to the fatherland. (Szczepan-Thomas 140ff.)

The Historical Characters

The Ossian-inspired Bard shares the narrative and engages in dialogues with the figures of Gedymin, Zbigniew, Sieciech and Zawisza. Each of these heroes given a voice in "Groby" emerges from the depths of the Middle Ages. Gedymin, (1275–1341), the founder of the Lithuanian state and its capital, Vilnius, appears as a patriarch whose voice carries the weight of wisdom and authority. He is the lone representative of the pagan past, a worshipper of lightning and thunder, a leader of a people known for their simplicity, modesty and dutifulness.

Zbigniew (1070–1113) and Sieciech (dates unknown) were contemporaries and rivals from the late 11th century. Zbigniew, Prince of Wielkopolska and Mazowsze, was the first-born son of Grand Prince Wladyslaw Herman. Sieciech served as palatine and was a party to the court in-

trigues of Wladyslaw's Czech wife, Judyta, who deprived Zbigniew of his rights of primogeniture in favor of his younger son Boleslaw Krzywousty. This led to a prolonged power struggle that came to an end only with the death of Wladyslaw when the kingdom was divided and Zbigniew came to rule the northern half. Sieciech was a wealthy landowner who wielded enormous influence over Wladyslaw and served as the guardian of the young Boleslaw. He was ambitious and power-hungry, and was willing to use whatever means necessary to secure power and maintain his sway. The injustice suffered by Zbigniew provoked a crisis that posed a mortal threat to the Piast monarchy and undermined social harmony and well-being. Their presence in the poem recalls the dissension and political factions that contributed to the loss of the nation state under Stanislaw August.

Zawisza Czarny (c. 1379–1428) was a Polish knight and nobleman, a commander and diplomat under Polish king Wladyslaw II Jagiello. He was a model of knightly virtue and renowned for his formidable prowess in tournaments. His nickname stems from his jet-black hair and his black armor. He became a folk hero in Poland, famed for trustworthiness and loyalty. Niemcewicz's historical song devoted to him added to his legendary fame:

> W obliczu ludu wśród Pańskiej świątnicy/ Bierze młodzian cześć rycerz,/ Ojciec mu wkłada zbroję, hełm, przyłbycę/ I mieczem trzykroć uderza,/ I mówi, pawęż dając mu niezmierny:/ "Kochaj ojczyznę, bądź kochance wierny". (13-18)
>
> Wkrótce się wsławił czyny walecznemi/ I tak śmialość jego znano,/ Że w Niemczech, Włoszech i tureckiej ziemi,/ Gdy rycerza wychwalono,/ Przysłowiem było bojów towarzyszy:/ "Polega na nim, jakby na Zawiszy". (25-30) (Witkiewicz 168-69)

The Heroic Meditations, Part 1

Groby was inspired by the figure of Kosciuszko on the occasion of his death on October 15, 1817 in Solurz, Switzerland. His posthumous yet triumphal return to Krakow a year later was widely celebrated, highlighted by his burial in the underground vaults in Wawel Cathedral where he was placed among his historical forebears and was situated beside Jan III Sobieski and the recently interred Prince Józef Poniatowski.

Lubormirski chose for his epigraph to the poem lines from the ode "Do Kosciuszki" (1794) written by his fellow Wolynian, Aloyzy Felinski

(1771–1821). Felinski was a veteran of the Kosciuszko Uprising and served Kosciuszko as his secretary for French correspondence and as commissar in Wołyń[6]. The line from Felinski's poem points to an oxymoron, a featured trope in Lubomirski's "Meditations". Modesty so rarely defines the character of a national leader, whose grip on power tends to tighten over time. Modesty does not seek out praise, yet Kosciuszko became a subject of legend during his lifetime and among the most venerated Poles in the history of the nation.

In the poem proper, the first meditation, consisting of 29 rhymed octaves, is subtitled "Bard": The Bard's voice is the first to greet the reader. The Bard, discreet, modest, and restrained, creates a solemn tone in the opening lines. He declares that he is following in the footsteps of Ossian and in the spirit of Ossian summons the Muses to tell of the fate of the Polish nation and its hero. The Bard, is the Polish counterpart of the Celtic poet from the land of Raledon. The Bard's meditations harken to Fingal's songs and the origins of the bardic tradition, mentioning a wandering tribe of minstrels who made their way to Poland from the west, bards of love, whose songs charmed princes and maidens. Songs of the fame of heroes are praised in the double octave of the poem's beginning.

The Bard is largely self-effacing, sharing the narrative duties with four other story-tellers. His persona contrasts sharply with that of Byron's narrator in "Don Juan" for example, a long narrative poem also written in octaves. There the narrator's presence is dominating and domineering, as he displays his wit in a tone of mocking playfulness, and a pose of poetic self-importance.

Lubomirski's Bard gives notice early on that he derives his inspiration as well from the "Bards of love",an indication that the theme of love is of

[6] Felinski became a member of the Society of the Friends of Learning. Characteristic of the guarded optimism of Poles toward the new rapprochement with Russia under Alexander, Felinski penned an ode, "Hymn", in honor of the Russian tsar on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Congress Kingdom of Poland in July 1816. The poem was commissioned by Grand Prince Konstantine to honor his brother, King of Poland, and is also referred to as "Pieśń narodowa za pomyślność króla". It inspired a version by Antoni Gorecki who transformed the poem into a religious and patriotic him known as "Boże, coś Polskę". He was also the author of the tragedy in verse "Barbara Radziwiłłówna" (performed 1817) the historical theme of which together with Niemcewicz's "Historical Songs" which appeared around the same time brought forward the national past as a theme for poetry and drama (Milosz 205-206). Felinski's tragedy with its plot involving the conflict between passion and civic duty of a national figure, and its portrayal of the devotion and the despair of two star-crossed lovers united only in the grave, deeply resonates with Lubomirski's poem.

paramount importance in the heroic tale. Yet the emphasis is placed on the mutuality of love and courage. Ancient virtue is mirrored in the present through the figure of Kosciuszko: the music holding sway over the scepters spreads songs of praise throughout the world, heralding a time when love and courage went hand in hand. It was a time when pure hearts were ruled by nobility, honor, generosity and simplicity:

> Miłość szła w parze z zuchwałą odwagą,
> Czystsza mieszkała ieszcze w ludziach cnota,
> Sercem śmiertelnych władały z przewagą,
> Szlachetność, honor, gościnność, prostota. (III)

Yet the Bard expresses his concern about the sorry fate of „feeling" stripped of its significance by cold reason. In these „reasonable" times feeling finds itself in exile, outcast, abandoned, „without purpose," causing him to suffer unduly. Finding himself in a site of ruins, he summons his „sad Muse" to weep over the past, since the dark age we live in has overwhelmed us. He confesses that regret has forced him to wander aimlessly: what is left of kingly hosts are mere ruins; happiness has long proved fleeting.

The Bard soon identifies the month and day, October 17[7], a sunny day described in its autumnal colors now abandoned by the birds who have made off for their winter abodes in the Carpathians. The setting soon ranges in on the old city of Krakus and to its very heart, Wawel Heights and its Cathedral. The reigning peacefulness witnessed in the pastoral surroundings belies the storm of passion in the Bard's heart:

> Sam Kraków grobem iest Lackiey potęgi,
> Na gruzach Zamku stoi nędzy chata,
> W Piastów siedzibie goszczą Niedołęgi,
> Każdą tu wielkość zniżała zatrata. (X)

The narrator is overcome by an overpowering sense of awe as he crosses the threshold of Zygmunt's Gate and enters sacred grounds. He is moved by the statues of the kings who in turn appear to come to life. He feels empowered to enter into their thoughts, who as denizens of the land of

[7] Apparently, the day Kosciuszko died – October 15, 1817.

the dead, are bereft of false pride and are free to speak the truth. Drawn to the crypts of the Polish leaders of the past, he discovers each has his own story to tell:

W owey świątyni obfitey w pamiątki,
Każdy głaz mówi, że Polak był sławny,
Wielkość dowodzą starożytne szczątki,
Te godła, rzeźby, ten Skarb, ten Gmach dawny. (XIV)

The Bard dwells on the feats of Kazimierz the Great, Jadwiga, Jagiełło and Stefan Batory. He rues the passing of Kazimierz, king of the farmers, as marking the end of a golden age of peace and harmony:

Słońce się Polski w twym ukryło grobie! (XVII)

The Bard concludes his historical panorama with the death of Prince Józef, and a questioning of Poland's capacity to regain her independence:

Z rąk Lackich berło w obce się dostało,....
Niemógłże Polak sam dźwigać korony?
Piąć się nad siły, cenić się zbyt mało,
Równie oznacza umysł osłabiony. –
Polska iuż ciebie straciła Józefie! (XXII)

Yet in turning to the graves he regains his spirit, seeing in them noble, battle-scared figures, the collective embodiment of Polish greatness:

Sędziwe skronie okryte są szronem,
Twarze Szramami – ta szpetność niekazi,
Wielkie ich czoła są wolności tronem.
Niezgięte iarzmem choć wróg ciężko razi.
Niezdobi żadna próżności oznaka ,
Piersi co były tarczami Oyczyzny.
Godłem pamiętnem odwagi Polaka ,
Były w początku, będą zawsze blizny. (XXV)

The first meditation concludes with the presentation of the heroes who come to life as the Bard finds them gathered by the crypts of

Poniatowski and Sobieski, just where Kosciuszko is to join them for eternity:

> Nieraz tu nawet północ ich witała:
> Gdzie Poniatowski przy Sobieskim leży
> Gdzie lampa w górze, słabym brzaskiem pała;
> W koło tam siedzą wrycerskiey odzieży. (XXVIII)

The four spirits are inspired to impart their voice by their personal loss of dear ones, pain mingled with the sufferings brought on by loss of the fatherland itself:

> Któż o nich godnie, nucić się ośmieli?
> Zawisza Oyca, Sieciech stracił brata,
> Zbigniew potomka i Gedymin syna;
> Przecież nayczulszą iest oyczyzny strata,
> Taka iest główna ich żalu przyczyna. (XXVII)

Gedymin is the first to speak and his is the primary voice of the second meditation. He praises the Polish nation that grew in strength and prospered under Piast kings. They were lovers of freedom who fought for the oppressed, upheld the law and opposed anarchy.

Gedymin bemoans the loss of national leadership once the king became a servant, an elected official, instead of a ruler, which ushered in a reign of anarchy. Once the kings were no longer true to themselves, no longer true Sarmatians, catastrophe befell them. Gedymin expresses regret over the dark days that have befallen Poland and bemoans its loss of virtue. He cautions that in order for the people to regain their past glory they must hold virtue uppermost: "The gift of freedom is only for the virtuous." (XXXIV)

Zbigniew is the first to respond to Gedymin's increasingly sharp attack on the Polish character and the nation's loss of virtue in defensive and protective tones. Yet Gedymin is speaking as a father whose purpose is to strengthen his child's moral fiber. Zbigniew's heartfelt response is a defense of the integrity of the nation and its people. Rather, he blames fate for what has befallen Poland. He declares that "laurel leaves grew in these lands once upon a time!" (XL) For Zbigniew the essence of the nation is its modest virtue as embodied in the present by Kosciuszko.

The hellhounds of war drove Poles to find shelter in all corners of the globe, yet never did they give in to despair, ever clinging to hope. Zbigniew

berates Gedymin for underestimating the moral courage of young Poles, the sons, after all, of Polish women (XLIV)[8]. He makes mention of the graves of those youths now forgotten and makes them a part of living memory. The buried remains serve nature and serves Poland as a storehouse of treasured virtue; much is to be learned from their sacrifice as both warning and consolation:

> W kraiu gdzie sroga płonie Berezyna,
> Kwiatby się do mnie może ozwał skrycie,
> „Nietłocz mnie, iestem grobem twego Syna,
> „Prochy umarłych kwiatom daią życie." (XLVII)

Zbigniew sees the ashes of the fallen youth as a source of virtue for the present generation:

> W nich są zawarte rzadkie zbyt kleynoty,
> Sława, waleczność, cnota, światło, chwała.

Finally Zbigniew ponders the fate of the last king, Poniatowski, whose own life and death were bound up with the nation's fall. At the end of his speech before he yields to Sieciech, he offers a generous response to the last Polish king. Overcoming his instinct to curse Stanislaw, he chooses to honor him as worthy to be called King of Poland. "Honor to Poniatowski, to the king! And honor to you." (XLIX)

Sieciech, addressing the others as fellow warriors, begins his meditation with dark thoughts about Polish history. Sieciech, like Zbigniew, seeks to remove the stain of ignominy from Polish hearts. His words are riddled with sadness as he sees Poland as a victim of the powers of Chaos. Poles, he claims, have been forced to fight a hopeless battle against the gods, the heavenly powers, who overwhelmed them with the roar and rush of the elements.

Sieciech is rebuked by Gedymin who claims the former suffers from an overwrought imagination in blaming the gods; rather he reduces the monstrous vision to a human level, to the folk of the eternal realm, whose sons and daughters derive their strength and endurance from love, sweet love –

[8] This is perhaps an allusion "Matka Spartanka", Kniaźnin's play performed at Puławy in 1786.

"the dear shadows of the heart." He mourns the fate of young Poles who have braved the fight for freedom, their thread of life severed too soon. A litany of the great names of the past, echoing Niemcewicz's heroes from his "Historical Songs", ensues, ever the objects of veneration. Waiting for the storm's end, in anticipation of the arrival of a new hero, Gedymin's words of praise greet the appearance of Zawisza, a hero characterized by brilliance, deep feeling and justice.

The Bard at this point intervenes, providing the reader with his own impressions of Zawisza who is reluctant to speak, his heart the heaviest, yet he commences with the following lines:

> My rhymes are preordained for a man's adventures,/ Who has lengthened the life of Poland through his virtue. The name of the man on the lips and in the hearts of all the glorious heroes present in their nocturnal sojourn is Kosciuszko!/ "Kosciuszko" the listeners broke out in harmony,/ For it's difficult to keep under wraps such great deeds./ At the word "Kosciuszko", one of the burning lamps,/ Suddenly went out, affecting the speakers./ At times the beams of the moon, at times flashes of lightning/ Would illuminate the darkness of the Temple.

The very word "Kosciuszko" elicits a response from nature itself, echoing its own response to Christ's death on Calvary. The Bard ends the second meditation with the following comment:

> The brilliant glory of Kosciuszko is known to me,/ The tribe of contemporaries recognizes his virtues./ Even living in that land distant from here, /Under a free sky, though inactive, he is renowned.

Zawisza, the speaker of the third meditation, begins with praise of his subject and introduces the theme of love. He is proud that among their sons, they number a Son in Kosciuszko who honors women, cherishes virtue, and holds liberty dear. He praises Kosciuszko as one who supports the throne, and respects the farmer. His noble stature and deeds make him worthy to be called a Nobleman. (LXV) Love has tempered his soul, has forged within him an unswerving love for and devotion to Zofia, deep feelings that run parallel to, and undergird his love for and devotion to Poland.

Zawisza identifies Anarchy (*nierząd*) as the source of Poland's misfortunes, of its self-destructive tendencies, which left the nation in a weakened

condition, one that her greedy neighbors availed themselves of. Meanwhile, Kosciuszko had been abroad, developing skills that would eventually do his suffering country good, ever remaining faithful to the hidden will of destiny:

> Jeszcze w podróżach, doświadczenia szuka.
> Skromnie wielkiego umysłu, młodzieniec,
> W dalekie kraie, w obce dąży strony,
> Radzcą bydź własnym, musi sam w potrzebie,
> Jak ułom skały, wśrzód wałów rzucony;
> Sam walczy z burzą, sam ochrania siebie. (LXVII)

Kosciuszko is seen as a new type of knightly hero, one who has learned to adapt to the changing times. Though he still plows the land in keeping with Poland's agricultural traditions, yet he is the one who breeds new crops. He is congenial, ahead of his times, experienced, self-sufficient, "a youth of modestly great mind."

Yet Zawisza's meditation takes a turn at this point is to cast insight on the source of the hero's heroism: the love of a woman. All great heroes, he insists, from Achilles to Roland, know the value of love. His heart was given to Zofia who returned his love in kind. Their love turns tragic, stymied by the will of her parents, yet sanctified. His first victory is over his heart: he who once came to know love remained true to it forever. He retains his purity of mind and retains his sanity by bidding a fond farewell and casting out for foreign shores.

> Duch wielki, bywa do miłości skłonny!
> Choć Rycerz, wolność nad życie przekłada,
> Łańcuch miłości, nosić chce dozgonny,
> Wdziękiem go luba, w swey władzy posiada.
> Pelid nie walczył, bez swey Brizeidy.
> Herman Thusneldę, Cyd kochał Xymenę,
> Tankred był mężnym, dla Amenaidy,
> Sławnym był Roland? znał miłości cenę. (LXIX)

Zawisza travels with Kosciuszko to America where he learns the lesson of freedom so thoroughly. Freedom is a source of happiness and praise for "the brother of Lech, an American son." Washington regales the Polish engineer, victor at Saratoga, with a laurel wreath for showing what he co-

uld do in battle. Washington and Kosciuszko come from the same mold, valorous commanders, champions of their people, knowing when to lead and when to relinquish power: "Their hearts were bound at their first meeting./ In a single glance they got to know each other." (LXXXII) Washington is Kosciuszko's great teacher in the art of fighting for freedom.

Zawisza links Kosciuszko with the key word of hope, both on a personal level and a national one. The success and good fortune Kosciuszko enjoyed in America is a happy harbinger for what awaits him in Poland, a presentiment of a return to his lover from whom he was forced to part:

> Hope: To grasp the flaming visions of the imagination,/ To not give leave to despair to enter the heart,/ To think that all desires will be realized,/ To never tire in the pursuit of happiness,/ It is to make the most of existence with hope. (LXXXIII)

In Stanza LXXXVIII Kosciuszko undergoes a transformation on the battlefield. The humanitarian is confronted by the horrors of war, a relentless enemy. In the heat of battle his humanity is transmuted by a vision of the most stalwart of Polish heroes, Stefan Czarniecki, into the most precious of battlefield virtues–courage:

> He was full of feeling as he entered the bloody battle,/ Kosciuszko had humanity in his heart, though it was beating strong, / But that feeling was stifled by the voice of glory,/ It had to yield to the stronger Courage. In the clouds he sees the fancies of spells,/ In a group of angels, the figure of Czarniecki;/ In it the Hero's feeling changes into courage,/ It was impossible to remain inactive any longer.

During his American sojourn, Kosciuszko comes to know firsthand the art of warfare, the price of freedom, and the land upon whom fortune smiles. He comes to know Americans, a people tempered with steel in defense of their liberties. He comes to understand the wisdom that a unified people can resist any form of tyranny. (XCI)

Zawisza's song becomes a paean to patriotism. Love of fatherland is nurtured by nature in the new born babe. Patriotism is the epitome of all virtues, all essential elements. In describing Kosciuszko's civic virtue Zawisza makes reference to classical motifs:

> Nieugiął męstwa, srogi ból w Scewoli,
> Bogaty w sławę Regulus i w blizny,

Nad ziomków hańbę, śmierć przeniósł w niewoli.
Słodko iest cierpieć, umrzeć dla Oyczyzny.
Jak w zimie, śniegi gdy opruszą błonie,
Zatarła barwę mych włosów siwizna,
Jeszczebym stanął, Polsce ku obronie,
Wiecznym Lechitów iest hasłem – Oyczyzna[9] (XCIV)

Zawisza has Kosciuszko trekking across the American landscape, its byways and river ways, even along the Ohio, land the Polish-American hero had never laid eyes on. His friend Jefferson had made a promise of just such land had he chosen to settle in America[10]. The ancient hero provides the reader with a visionary Whitmanesque landscape of the promised land:

Many rivers flow into the Ohio/ In a rush it overflows the flowery meadows,/ The virgin land, the fertile fields./ Watery creation has nourished itself with its sleep,/ With its migratory dwellers of a yew forest./ One could smell the abundant fragrances of the plants,/ The night beckoning the hard-working farmer to rest,/ The Dark Appalachians covered in clouds. (XCVII)

Yet the hero, following the mysterious promptings of fate, is led to the sea and a ship bound for Albion, and ultimately to Poland. The motivating

[9] Stanza XCIV echoes Horace: Dulceo et decorum est/ pro patria mori ("Odes III": 2, 13): "It is sweet to suffer, to die for one's Fatherland. As in winter when the snows cover the fields,/ The color of my hair has turned to white,/ I still would stand up in Poland's defense,/ The eternal motto of the Lechites is Fatherland." In Horace's version the Roman poet states:

To suffer hardness with good cheer,
In sternest school of warfare bred,
Our youth should learn; let steed and spear
Make him one day the Parthian's dread;
Cold skies, keen perils, brace his life.
Methinks I see from rampired town
Some battling tyrant's matron wife,
Some maiden, look in terror down,—
"Ah, my dear lord, untrain'd in war!
O tempt not the infuriate mood
Of that fell lion I see! from far
He plunges through a tide of blood!"
What joy, for fatherland to die!
Death's darts e'en flying feet o'ertake,
Nor spare a recreant chivalry,
A back that cowers, or loins that quake. (Translated by John Conington)

[10] In a letter Jefferson wrote to Kosciuszko dated May 7, 1800. (Grzelonski 56)

force driving Kosciuszko back to Poland is the thought of being reunited with Zofia. At this point Zawisza endows Kosciuszko with a deep poetic sensibility. The sea voyage he undertakes is rendered awe-inspiring by the visions it provides of a sense of the infinite, of boundless horizons, of the sublime. The image of eternity is stamped upon his soul; he is initiated into the mystery of creation and the sacred laws of nature. Kosciuszko is struck by its wonders, its sounds, its songs, its silences. His communion with nature at its most sublime transports him to the shade of a native oak, where he recalls childhood days. Yet he is torn abruptly from his reveries by a storm at sea worthy of Homer, inspiring fears of imminent death. All on the ship, passengers and crew alike, are paralyzed by fear, prey to the unmitigated terrors of the sea, all save for Kosciuszko, whose native resolve is further tested and strengthened: "Kosciuszko did not tremble, mercy went through him,/ He supports some here, gives courage to others." (CX) He undergoes a test of his manly virtue, a presage of what awaits him in his native land. Ultimately, the crisis at sea provides him with a vision of the peace and harmony that come after strife and struggle.

The Third Meditation ends with the return of the hero to his native land, armed with experience, battle-tested, prepared to take on the role of leader. Kosciuszko passes from Ireland, land of the Celts, past the western shores of the continent, past Lisbon to Sicily where Theocritus once sang of the pastoral age. The Greek poet provides a hint of the idyllic scenes that the hero would soon encounter in the fertile Lithuanian landscape in the environs of his own country estate. Zawisza's provides enticing words of what awaits the reader: "After all you, Zbigniew and Sieciech, you know,/ Gedymin, you know with how much feeling the Fatherland/ Embraced their prodigal son at that time."

As Zawisza falls silent (CXIV) the Bard comments briefly on the ringing of the Zygmunt bell, the knelling of which informs the gathered knights that Kosciuszko's soul has been released from his body and has made its way to the heavenly throne and so they pay him due respect:

> Teraz ponury słyszę odgłos dzwonu,
> Co wznosi duszę aż do niebios tronu,
> Znak krzyża czyniąc, przyklękli Rycerze;
> Z przykładną ciszą, odbyli pacierze. (CXIV)

The fourth and final meditation belongs to Zawisza as well as he continues the tale of Kosciuszko with yet another invocation to the Muse:

Słabym iest polot moiey wyobraźni.
Lutnia w milczeniu leżąc odstroiona,
Dziś dźwięk wydała, posłuszna przyiaźni,
Niech się raz ieszcze, odezwie iey strona.
Swieżych Parnasu laurów nieposiadam,
Już nieśmiem wdzięczney Muzy, trudnić sobą,
Lecz prawdę nucąc, hołdu iey nieskładam,
Bo niemieć ozdób, iest prawdy ozdobą.

Zawisza, in his modest self-effacing manner resigns himself to unvarnished truth in his desire to present a true and faithful portrait of Kosciuszko, uttering the seeming paradox: Refraining from adornment is the adornment of truth. (CXV)

Seeing Kosciuszko up close, knowing his soul by reading his face, Zawisza gives the reader a penetrating description of the hero in Stanza CXVII. His quick glance is open and sincere, revealing honesty, wit and a bold mind. He is of an unyielding will when facing troubles. His deep sensitivity is conveyed by his lips which guard his feelings.

Yet Kosciuszko is portrayed as one who has been smitten by love's arrow, experiencing love unmatched in its ardency and passion. Love is what has made him such a daunting hero. Love is his mistress-muse that imbues his aims and ambitions with a loftiness that serves to realize a latent potential capable of making him a gentle giant among men.

Upon his homecoming Kosciuszko comes to grips with Poland in dire straits, a land of misery, bereft of love, and so is unredeemed by love. He overcomes his misgivings, momentarily stricken by a sense of hopelessness in seeing the fallen fate of Poland. He reaffirms his faith at the thought that "Poland still lives and a Pole is a Pole."(CXXIII)

Poland has arrived at a sad time in its history, when its virtues and ideals have been desecrated, freedom has been undermined by anarchy, happiness replaced by despair. It has been overrun by vicious and bloodthirsty neighboring states. Signs of the demise of the Pole Farmer and his virtuous way of life are ubiquitous: Everywhere rose up the tombs of the bodies of the dead. Yet the essence of life and nature with their ceaseless vicissitudes is change itself and with change comes hope. Even in the midst of suffering, suffering itself plants the seeds of hope

Kosciuszko, though battle-ready, armed and saddled on a worthy steed, sets out on a journey to see his true love. The many octaves of the fourth

meditation are devoted to his final pilgrimage, to a meeting of lovers in the pastoral regions of the poet's native Wołyń. Familiar sites are recounted: where the Ikwa river flows as a quiet murmur of the water and where the century-old Dybowiec Woods spread out their tangled roots, where the ponds of Iwani and the meadows of Raczyn reveal Nature's abundance. (CXL) The anticipated meeting is marked by Ossianic imagery: the dark night, the gloomy castle, the lover abandoned to her loneliness, the plaintive voice of the owl; the lover seeking his beloved as a hunter in exhaustive pursuit of fleet deer. Spurred on by the stirrings in his heart, he is led to a grove of trees filled with a melodious voice, a voice that fills his heart with joy, the joy of recognition. And yet the song is a lament filled with sadness for a wedding never to be and a love left unfulfilled:

> You sleep, skylark, blessed bird,/ Worn out by play, by song./ On the branch of the divine woods, The Gods lullaby you with a breeze./ Love is for you a wedding,/ Where you visit airborne lands,/ The beloved purpose of life. What will love make of me?
>
> In Stanza CLIV Zawisza keeps true to his promise of presenting unvarnished truth while leaving much to the reader's imagination: "Brothers, I won't recall their loving conversations,/ Of such a pure soul it is a faithful image./ For modest thoughts they had modest words,/ The one asked the other a thousand questions at once./ It was pure happiness for them to gaze upon each other./ A pleasure to count the former torments and sobbing,/ A solemn promise to unite their wedded soul in heaven,/ A regret to think again about the moment of parting".
>
> The lovers are filled with mournful sadness as if they were about to enter their graves, yet they experience a love that while tormenting is also joyful. He accepts gifts from her, a belt embroidered in silver made by her charming hand and a golden ring, ith the engraving "Seek praise in virtue".(CLX)
>
> Zawisza paints the exquisite sadness of parting as a journey into the realms of death. The vivid natural scenery echoes their plight of separation: It came time to part on a side road./ Stepping along their paths with head turned back,/ They let loose the reins of an intense pain. / So the cliff divides the river into two streams./ It breaks their union, weakens their swift pace,/ The distant countryside divides their riverine branches,/ The one is no longer united with the other. (CLX)

The meditation and the poem itself come to a close with a storm of unusual fury drowning out the reverberations of the funeral bell, as the temple itself is almost shaken from its foundations. The mood reverts to

one capturing the Ossianic mood of sorrowful reflections on the mysterious doings of Fate, now enhanced by the mournful trembling and drawn-out tones of a funeral hymn. The voices of priests and chorus harmonize in their praise of Zofia, the faithful and virtuous helpmeet.

HYMN

Father of the world! To your blessed threshold,/ Accept the maiden desiring to rest in this tomb,/ Soon only your judgment passed the gates of Heaven,/ The thread of her life has come undone at last.

3 The appeal of sex, full of cares and pain,/ The spirit of the deceased maiden struggled with masculine strength./ To hide her regrets, her virtues, stifle love,/ She remains a faithful helpmeet worthy of praise.

7 Here we place with taint of death the lifeless body,/ Just a while ago the beauty of spring, it still had life./ The receptacle of ash now repays its debt of nothingness,/ Earth to earth and ashes to ashes.

The Bard retains a haunting presence in the final lines of Part I in anticipation of what is to come. The conversations suspended, the listeners along with the reader incline themselves toward Zawisza with their gaze so that he would be the first to break the solemn silence of the graves. "Sitting on the steps, hidden behind the wall/ I listen unseen to his tale." It is a tale, alas, that remains untold.

Conclusion

It is fruitless to speculate how Lubomirski would have proceeded in the writing of an anticipated second part of the poem. The cult of Kosciuszko had reached new heights when on the third anniversary of Kosciuszko's death, October 1820, the Polish Senate had voted to erect a mound in his honor in the district of Zwierzyniec on the outskirts of Krakow. This was the time when Lubomirski had been writing the first part of *Groby*. By the time the construction of the mound had been completed in 1823 Lubomirski had already met his ill-timed end.

The times indeed had taken a repressive turn. By 1822 Novosiltsov had succeeded in abusing his significant powers to undermine any remaining good will on Alexander's part toward a liberal regime in Poland. He had effectively discredited A. J. Czartoryski, depriving him and the historian Joachim Lelewel (1786–1861) of their positions at the University of Wilno and arresting and eventually exiling numerous students,

including Mickiewicz. The "western provinces" including Wołyń were also subjected to anti-Polish repression and hopes for a revitalized Polish nation were rapidly diminishing. A telling sign of the gloomy times was the arrest of Major Walerian Lukasinski (1786–1868) in 1822, perhaps the contemporary who most closely fit the Kosciuszko mold of heroism. Lukasinski was a dedicated soldier and liberal, a man of great honesty and love of country, a fervent supporter of the May 3 Constitution, a strong believer in equality who sought to improve the plight of Poland's peasants and Jews and to increase their opportunities for education. He brought to life the Patriotic Society in 1821 with active circles throughout the Congress Kingdom, Wielkopolska and the western provinces. His long drawn-out years of imprisonment in a Schlusselberg cell marked a gloomy end to the hopes Poles had placed in Alexander and their efforts at cooperation with Russia. (Wandycz 130ff)

Perhaps we can turn to another Polish poet inspired by Kosciuszko and his legend. Kornel Ujejski, like Lubomirski, was born in the eastern reaches of the old Republic in the province of Podolia in the year the elder poet died, 1823. A second-generation romantic poet, Ujejski created a model of a high-minded romantic hero inspired by the ruins of the past in his native Podolia. He also found inspiration in his travels to Krakow, where he viewed such sites as the Wawel and the Kosciuszko Mound, as well as the shrines of Czarnolas and Pulawy's Sybilline Temple.

Ujejski, following along Lubomirski's path, wrote a poem inspired by the figure of Kosciuszko and highlighted its funereal setting. "Pogrzeb Kosciuszki" (1853) marked the return of the hero to his native land:

> W cudzych stronach na tułactwie wiódł żywot w boleści,/ Jasnowidza nie zwabiły uwodzące wieści,/ Aż dopiero teraz wraca na ojczyste łany,/ Ale w trumnie! wraca w trumnie hetman ukochany!...
>
> I na Wawel między królów ponieśli hetmana,/ I rozwarła się świątynia złotem nabijana;/ U jej progu stanął Kmita i "co zacz on" pyta–/ Swój! Swój! Świętszy od waszeci – puszczaj, mości Kmita!
>
> Zaruszały się posągi – królowie umarli/ Na kamiennych sarkofagach na dłoniach się wsparli,/ I ciekawie każdy patrzy, stare sny uciszą,/ I spojrzeniem wniebowziętym wita towarzysza.

The poem echoes the sentiments and inspirations of Lubomirski and ends with a proud description of the completed mound, a testament to the

love and faith generated by Kosciuszko in his countrymen and a vision of hope and pride for the days to come:

> Miłość wiąże i umacnia – praca idzie chyżej,/ A krakowska cała ziemia woła: "Wyżej, wyżej!/ Niech mogiła wszystkim oczom zaświeci donośnie…"/ I mogiła Bogu miła rośnie, rośnie, rośnie…
>
> I urosła; już ją widzi przechodzień daleki,/ Każda chata na nią patrzy. Od wieku po wieki/ Stać jej w straży będą: Miłość i Wiara – dwie służki;/ Wawel runie – a zostanie: Mogiła Kościuszki!

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