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The Gothic Presence of Poland in Nineteenth-Century American Literature

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By

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DISSERTATION

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Dedication

For my great God who has enabled me to do what I thought I couldn't do. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

For Piotr and Joanna Jamroziak who taught me to love Poland. *Kocham wam i kocham Polskę.*

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ABSTRACT

The references to Poland in United States print culture indicate that Poland is a significant presence in the nineteenth-century literary imagination. Though often idealized, Poland emerges as a gothic presence registering anxieties about culture, imperialism, slavery, the Other, economic ruin, and identity. Using Roland Barthes' theory of cultural code, this dissertation looks to nineteenth-century United States newspapers to consider American readers' cultural knowledge about Poland. The coded history of revolution beneath each reference to Poland indicates that Polish revolution is the mechanism that reveals American anxieties about instability, imperialism, class inequalities, and violence—all of which put pressure on America's mythic history of revolution, freedom, and equality as they're expressed in literature. In Charles Brockden Brown's "Somnambulism: A Fragment" (1805), the reference to Silesia and allusion to Poland is code for Poland's 1794 revolution against partitioning powers Austria, Prussia, and Russia. The allusion registers fears of outside threats to the sovereignty of the young, vulnerable United States. As code for the major 1830-31 revolution against partitioning powers, the Polish character in Edgar Allan Poe's

"The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845) indicates American anxieties about the nation turning into an imperialistic aggressor similar to the nations that partitioned Poland because of its aggressive actions toward Mexico. For a nation struggling with its own imperialistic tendencies and increasingly quarreling over slavery, references to Poland in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*—code for the 1846 Polish revolution—reveal further anxieties about imperialism and human servitude. In the mid-nineteenth century, when the U.S. struggled with nativist attitudes toward Catholics and immigrants, Polish characters in E. D. E. N. Southworth's *The Missing Bride* (1855) and Louisa May Alcott's "The Baron's Gloves" (1868) point to Poland's final nineteenth-century rebellions and betray anxieties about the threat and/or taint of the Polish Catholic immigrant Other. Finally, in Anthony Walton White Evans's 1883 biography, *Memoir of Thaddeus Kosciuszko*, the financially broke and physically broken Thaddeus Kosciuszko, revolutionary hero of both Poland and America, registers concerns about economic ruin and psychological fragmentation that following crashes like that of the Panic of 1873.

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Introduction

The final stanza of Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing" begins with four lines about Poland: "The Cossack eats Poland, / Like stolen fruit; / Her last noble is ruined, / Her last poet mute" (90-3). In a poem that is primarily a condemnation of slavery and Manifest Destiny, a powerful indictment against political hypocrisy, and a poignant statement of Transcendental hope for the advent of a more just and compassionate world, the reference to the Eastern European country may seem an unexpected and inconsequential detail. However, mentions of Poland in nineteenth-century American literature are neither unusual nor insignificant. Rather, like the return of the repressed, Poland turns up with surprising frequency in American print culture.

Various canonical and obscure writers—James Fenimore Cooper, Robin Carver, Margaret Fuller, Harriet Jacobs, Willie Triton and Rupert Hughes among them—either mention Poland or include Polish characters in their writing. Furthermore, Poland is the subject of numerous articles, features, poems and stories in nineteenth-century American periodicals and newspapers. Thomas S. Gladsky explains that so many authors during the time reference Poland because Americans saw Poland as their country's "kindred spirit" (12). More than that, to the United States, Poland was a "beau ideal," an "idealized us" (21). Poles in American literature were mirror images of the "American gentleman" except that they had "titles" (21). There are multiple reasons that U.S. writers romanticized Poland. Poles and the history and legacy of their country mirrored what Americans felt were values—such as democracy, patriotism, freedom and Christian principles—inherent to the new and developing United States. Americans moreover looked with gratitude and admiration on the Polish military leaders, Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Casimer Pulaski, who had lent their

tactical expertise and fought against the British in the American Revolutionary War. Americans further esteemed Kosciuszko and other Polish patriots who took part in several revolutions throughout the nineteenth century to fight for their country's liberty from Austria, Prussia, and Russia, the "three pirate powers" as Melville calls them in *Moby-Dick,* which had erased the nation of Poland from the geopolitical map with a three-step partitioning process that ended in 1795 (Gladsky 11-2; Melville 70). With such desire to fight for and retain independence and "democratic" values, Poland and patriotic Poles reflected all that Americans thought was best in themselves (Gladsky 12, 17). As a result, American writers projected onto Poland the traits that their national myth avowed were those of the United States.

References to Poland in nineteenth-century American literature thus indicate the conception of Poland as America's beau ideal and expose the United States' hopes for national self-definition. This is true of "Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing." Emerson's representation of Poland as a "martyr to oppression" signals the sympathy Americans felt for Poland as a national beau ideal (Gladsky 12). However, the reference to Poland is not merely a mark of the United States' affinity and pity for the eastern European nation. It is also a coded warning revealing the emptiness of American discourse on freedom, social equality and justice. The lines on Poland do not reflect what the United States wished to be; instead, in alluding to the cruelties of Russian, Austrian and Prussian rule and the realities of Polish loss, the lines disclose projections of repressed American anxieties and bare the dark underside of the image of Poland as America's beau ideal.[1]

Yet, "Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing" is not *about* Poland. Len Gougeon asserts that it "was written in response to the funeral of the abolitionist Charles Turner Torrey, which

Emerson attended in Boston on 19 May 1846" (64). Channing spoke at the funeral, using it as an occasion to voice his belief that the north should dissolve the Union; specifically, he wanted the north to separate and insulate itself from the corruption of the south (68-70). In opposition, Emerson wrote the ode to denounce those in favor of separation (Gougeon 71-2). Emerson felt that by advocating dissolution of the Union, Channing and other northern abolitionists were "effectively denying humanity in the South while casting the North in the role of a 'complete Adam,' presumably free from the contagion of sin" (71).[2]

In the ode, Emerson denounces the "politique" of Channing as "statesman's rant" and "trick" (8, 6, 9). In response to the politician's desire to "rend / The northland from the south," Emerson insists that though the north is self-styled as "freedom-loving," it is complicit in the ravages of empire and the brutality of chattel slavery (38-9, 20). He points out that "the famous States [are] / Harrying Mexico / With rifle and with knife"; that "The jackals of the negro-holder," men enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law, are at work in the north; and that the northern states take part in the slaveholding economy (16-8, 23, 48).

Instead of proposing dissolution, a divisive act based on a false sense of moral superiority, Emerson makes a different call: "Let man serve law for man; / Live for friendship, live for love, / For truth's and harmony's behoof" (66-8). Despite human effort to "live for love," though, Emerson maintains in the penultimate stanza that it is "The over-god / Who marries Right to Might, / Who peoples, unpeoples,-- / He who exterminates / Races by stronger races," and "Knows to bring honey / Out of" human beings, peoples and countries (80-4, 86-7). The "over-god," in other words, "will ultimately purge the Cossack [evil] element in mankind. . . ." (Strauch 10). Finally, in the last stanza, come the four lines

centering on Poland: “The Cossack eats Poland, / Like stolen fruit; / Her last noble is ruined, / Her last poet mute” (90-3).

The line “The Cossack eats Poland” has a double historical meaning. It refers first to the three partitions of Poland by Austria, Russia and Prussia. The partitions not only put Poland under foreign—and in most cases oppressive—rule, they fragmented the country and its people into a “multinational, multiconfessional, multilingual community . . . without the borders and common institutions of sovereignty . . .” (Biskupski 22). The first line of the final stanza also refers to a quelled Polish rebellion in Austrian Poland in 1846, an event that occurred shortly before Torrey’s funeral. The premature insurrection failed largely due to “deep social and cultural divisions in large areas of the Polish countryside” (Lukowski and Zawadzki 169). Spurred by “class antagonism. . . . [t]he Polish-speaking Catholic peasants turned against the rebels and their liberal gentry sympathizers in an orgy of killing and destruction” (170). Using the peasants’ wrath to their advantage, Austria curbed the rebellion and took over the Republic of Cracow, “the last island of Polish freedom” (170). In Russian Poland, the insurrection resulted in the implementation of particularly harsh restrictions on landholding Poles (170). This may be why Emerson singles out the “Cossack” in the lines on Poland and fails to mention Austria or Prussia.

Evidenced by material from his letters and by the ode itself, Emerson was knowledgeable about the partitioning of Poland, the 1846 insurrection and the consequences of both events for the Poles. In a letter written during the summer of 1823, he references “Sir J. Mackintosh’s . . . noble article on [the] Partitions” (“To John” 134).[3] As Strauch points out, Emerson most likely read about the later rebellion in some of the many newspaper reports on the subject (10). His knowledge of it is reflected in the ode. The loss of property,

rights and life among the Polish upper classes as a result of the conflict is implicit in the line "Her last noble is ruined," while "Her last poet mute" may refer to the destruction of arts and property belonging to the noble class (92, 93). Alternately, it could refer to the exile of Adam Mickiewicz, Poland's celebrated patriotic poet, from his partitioned homeland. In 1824, he and other Polish intellectuals from the University of Vilnius "were exiled into the Russian interior" because of their support for Polish nationalism (Lukowski and Zawadzki 153). Mickiewicz remained a famous and "revolutionary" voice for Poland for his entire life, but he never again lived in Poland (Lukowski and Zawadzki 170; Koropeckyj 55). There is no evidence that Emerson knew Mickiewicz, but he certainly knew of the poet.[4]

The events alluded to in the lines on Poland are significant enough that most "Ode" scholars attempt to explain the presence and meaning of Poland in the poem. Arms states that Emerson mentions the suppression of the Polish rebellion to show acceptance of "what the over-god may do" (408). What was happening in Poland, in other words, was all part of the order of things, the way the over-god "peoples, unpeoples,-- / . . . [and] exterminates / Races by stronger races" (81-4). For Bromwich, the lines show indifference to Poland's fate; he states that "the Russian invasion of Poland . . . seems hardly worse than a boyish trespass," perhaps because Emerson compares the country to nothing more than a piece of "stolen fruit" (220-1). Only Len Gougeon sees more than a reference to an international crisis in the four lines. Poland, he argues, is an "analogy to the American situation . . . In America, too, the plundering forces of barbarism and slavery seem to dominate, as Mexico is invaded and the cruelty of the slave power extended" (74).

There is ample evidence in Emerson's journals—despite his belief in the whims of the over-god—that he saw the partitioning of Poland and the subsequent violence toward the

broken country as a grave injustice. On September 9, 1830, he compares the partitioning of Poland to one of the Western world's greatest political philosophers on a scale of importance. He writes, "Before God [the history of] Poland is a greater affair than Locke" ("Blotting Book V" 197-8). In an 1843 entry, he denounces politicians Henry Clay, John Calhoun and Daniel Webster, declaring that they "are not now to be admitted to the society of scholars" because they "have not treated Russia as they ought in the affair with Poland" ("Journal U" 17). During the following year, he compares the "partition of Poland" to slavery in the United States, writing that it "was an outrage so flagrant" that no one could stop telling the "horrid story," just as no one in the United States should stop telling the horrid story of the "iniquity of Slavery" ("Journal V" 102).[5] These journal entries give overwhelming evidence that Emerson was not merely accepting of and unconcerned with the plight of Poland, as Arms has it.

Bromwich's interpretation is not in line with Emerson's perspective on the significance of events in Poland either. He misreads the poem's imagery. "The Cossack eat[ing] Poland, / Like stolen fruit" indicates more about Russia's attitude toward Poland than Emerson's (90-1). While Russia may make light of its actions as a nation or feel that those actions are deserved or even necessary, to Emerson they are no "boyish trespass." The verb he uses does not reflect indifference or acceptance of the injustice. The action of eating connotes violence. After all, what is being masticated is a country and its people, and this meal of stolen fruit results in significant economic turmoil ("Her last noble is ruined"), the destruction of art in the ruin of property, and the exile of artists ("Her last poet mute") (92-3). This is a serious offense, affecting both the culture and economy of an entire people.

As such, the reference to Poland matters. It is, as Gougeon argues, an analogy. More than that, it is a coded warning about the failure of the American myth of freedom, egalitarianism and impartiality. In the allusion to the forced partition of Poland and the later disastrous divisions between nobles and peasants is a word of caution against the voluntary dissolution of north and south. In Russia's theft of Poland is an admonition against the United States' incursion into Mexico, a warning against the country's evolution into a despotic empire, and in the wanton actions of oppressing a people, bringing them to ruin and silencing their voices lays a warning against the abuses and injustice of slavery. The history of Poland encapsulated in four lines of "Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing" is the underbelly of the beau ideal, a projection of the United States' guilt over slavery, expansion, and empire, the three other pirate powers, so to speak, dominating the discourse of the day. In essence, the coded meaning of Poland *is* exactly what Emerson is trying to tell Channing and other abolitionists: cease your righteous anger. The entire country is guilty, north and south.

This is not to minimize the existence of Poland as America's beau ideal in nineteenth-century print culture. Many literary references idealize Poland and invest it with values like patriotism, freedom and democracy that are intrinsic to the American national myth, as Gladsky argues (14, 16-8). A February 10, 1831 news report in *The Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser* on the Polish-Russian War (1830-1831) evidences both America's admiration for Poland as beau ideal and America's conception of Polish courage and desire for freedom in the face of oppression:

> A Revolution! How stirring is in Poland the sound! How delightful the thought! Then the brave and persecuted Poles will also be free!—Then no longer shall we see the prescribed youth of this noble and glorious people obliged to wander in foreign lands;

> and no longer shall the Imperial Despots threaten a Polish Diet with Imperial displeasure, and even a suspension of their sittings, if they ventured to discuss any matters which were not submitted to them for approval by the Emperor. A Revolution in Poland! (Fitz-James 2)

To American readers, the "stirring" rebellion, the "brave and persecuted" warriors, and the triumphant hope for freedom were undoubtedly evocative of national narrative about the Revolutionary War. Projecting their myth of the past and hope for the future onto Poland, it would be understandable for U.S. readers to identify their forebears with the idealized, courageous, patriotic and "glorious" Poles while associating the excessive restrictions and "Imperial" threats of the Russian tyrants with the British.

In *Washington and His Generals: or, Legends of the Revolution,* George Lippard celebrates war hero Casimer Pulaski, "the man of Poland and the Patriot of Brandywine . . . whom it were tautology to call brave . . . ," for his exceptional valor and his willingness to forge ahead in the name of freedom even when the odds are against him (32-3, 332). When Pulaski finally falls on the battlefield in Savannah, Lippard exclaims, "So in his glory he died. He died while America and Poland were yet in chains. He died, in the stout hope, that both would one day, be free" (334). Here is the figure of a foreign patriot who offered his life for the ideal Americans hold in the highest regard in their national story: liberty. He is, in one character, America's beau ideal, a projection of the United States' utmost hopes.

Louisa May Alcott's sketch, "My Polish Boy" is another example of Poland as beau ideal. "Vladimir Prakora, a young Pole—poor, sick and alone," whom the narrator meets "at [her] Pension, in Geneva," is the subject of the sketch (191). This young man "had fought through the last [Polish] outbreak, been imprisoned, and while there, had learned that his

parents were killed in a cold-blooded massacre, in which five hundred Poles were shot down for singing their national hymn in the market-place, at Varsonnie" (191). The Pole's goodness and innocence after witnessing such horrors shocks the narrator. As she grows closer to Vladimir, she learns that he is "simple, frank and grateful," "polite," full of "true courage," "full of spirit" and "modesty," and a man of "faith" (191, 194). He is a "beautiful character," a "humble" hero, and the narrator loves him for it (194). In taking his trials with strength, humility and "spirit," all the while still "hop[ing] against hope" in his country, Vladimir is an ideal patriot, an ideal man (191). Like Lippard's Pulaski, he is a projection of American national wishes. American readers could see in him all they wished for themselves and their country.

However, the representational act of projection that occurs in each of these passages points not only to what American writers and readers desired for the United States but also to what their country lacked. They desired freedom, for example, because true liberty was impossible in a nation that embraced slavery. Emerson's "Ode" showcases this deficiency, as does Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, in which she laments the injustice in the fact that "Oppressed Poles and Hungarians could find a safe refuge" in the Northern cities of the United States while escaped slaves could not (367). In each case, through a projection of guilt onto the image of Poland, the dark underside of the beau ideal becomes visible. In fact, as this study argues, other literary representations of Poland show that many nineteenth-century American writers saw Poland through a gothic lens. Representations of Poland as a gothic presence signal nineteenth-century American anxieties about the future survival of their country; about the possibility of the United States becoming a land-hungry oppressor such as Prussia, Austria, or Russia; about the sale of human bodies; about the

presence of Catholicism and immigrants in the United States; and about economic ruin resulting in the fragmentation of the individual. Persistent references to Poland from authors such as Charles Brockden Brown to Louisa May Alcott in fact betray major concerns about the preservation of culture, the tensions between imperialism and democracy, the existence of slavery in a free society, the presence of the Catholic immigrant Other, and the fragmentation of male identity resulting from economic ruin in nineteenth-century American literature.

Working with Cultural Code

Uncovering these revelations necessitates an understanding of the cultural code of Poland for the nineteenth-century American reading public. In "Textual Analysis of Poe's 'Valdemar,'" Roland Barthes analyzes the cultural code of several references to Poland in Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" to give an example of how his theory of codes works. Barthes claims that "what founds [a] text is not an internal, closed meaning that can be accounted for, but the *opening* of the text onto other texts, other codes, other signs . . ." (86). This "opening" happens through analysis of "cultural code[s]," "socio-historical code[s]," and "socio-ethnic code[s]" in a text (88, 94). Cultural code, Barthes explains,

> is the code of knowledge, or rather of human knowledge, public opinion, of culture transmitted through books, education, and in a more general and more diffuse way, through all sociality; the referent of this code is knowledge . . . (94)

In any given text, names and references to historical events or people may be cultural codes (Barthes 88, 94). To readers of the present, such codes signal a certain social or common knowledge belonging to society at the time and place of the text's publication. In other words, a particular code (a name or a reference to an event, etc.) would have meant

something to readers of the past (94). Our understanding of codes' meanings for past readers helps us "to conceive, to imagine . . . the open-endedness of [the text's] significance" (84).

For example, Barthes points out the Polish origin of Valdemar's name, noting that it is a "socio-ethnic code," as is the "M." in front of the name (88). Both have meaning beyond a simple signification. "Valdemar" is the Swedish spelling of the Polish name "Waldemar," which is "perhaps a cognate composed of the Germanic elements *wald* 'rule' and *meri* 'famous'" ("Waldemar," par. 1). The Swedish origin of "Valdemar" and its meaning, which can translate roughly as "famous ruler," are suggestive of the historical connection of Poland's monarchy with Sweden. For instance, King Sigismund III, who became "king of Poland in 1587," was the "son of John III of Sweden" (Lukowski and Zawadzki 93). Some cite his reign and policy decisions as putting in motion events that would lead to the downfall of Poland two centuries later (Davies, vol. 1, 168). The name of Poe's Pole, then, is code for Poland's national ruin. Thus, it should come as no surprise that the end Valdemar comes to in the tale is decomposition into a "liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putridity" (1243).

Barthes is sure that the "M." stands for "'Monsieur'" and is a "social code" (88). Through hints in the story, knowledge of the critical events in Polish history that happened prior to the tale's publication, and newspaper articles that Poe might have read about the event (thus showing he most likely had a knowledge of major foreign affairs, especially those in Poland), it is possible to tease out the social code of "M." First, it is important to note Poe's statement that Valdemar is a Pole with "no relatives in America" (1234). This means he is a first generation immigrant. The most major event in partitioned Poland that sparked a wave of emigration before "Valdemar's" 1845 date of publication is the war between Russia and Poland in 1830-1831. Russia was the victor in this conflict, and as a result of the

devastating loss, many "educated, principled" Poles who were involved in the uprising fled their homeland and took refuge in France, among other places (Davies, vol. 2, 277). Thus, a reading of social code tells us that the Polish Valdemar expatriated to France first (where he gained "Monsieur" as a title) and later to the United States.

Had he read any Baltimore newspaper in November 1831—and it was probable that he did—Poe would have had knowledge of the war. An article in the November 2 issue of the *Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser,* for instance, reads, "unhappy Poland and fallen Warsaw!—The evidences are now too conclusive upon this lamentable subject, to leave room even for a hope that the nationality of Poland will be respected. . . . Everything is, in a word, lost to Poland, except its honor, and that still remains untarnished" ("London, Sept. 20" 2). This excerpt is one example of the many articles written in various Baltimore papers in 1831 about the fall of the Polish army, which along with a letter by Poe that I will cite in chapter one, serve to give evidence of Poe's knowledge of Polish events.

Similar to the "M." before Valdemar's name, each reference to Poland in nineteenth-century literature is a specific cultural code, and in recent literary criticism, there is much precedent for considering how an idea—a people, a nation, or a history—that recurs in a number of texts is a cultural code in nineteenth-century American literature. In their scholarly works, Toni Morrison and Lucy Maddox focus on what the presence of a specific people (whether they are in the background or foreground of a text) in American literature means. Analyzing the works of nineteenth-century writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Mark Twain in *Playing in the Dark,* Morrison examines the "Africanist presence" and the gothic meaning it holds for whites in the United States (32). As she argues, it reminds them of "the presence of the unfree within the heart of the democratic experiment . . ." (48). Similarly, in *Removals,*

Maddox studies the Native American presence in American literature. She asserts that when nineteenth-century American writers like Melville, Sedgwick and Thoreau wrote about the "Indian question," they took part in "the process of constructing a new-nation ideology" and, in effect, symbolically removed Native Americans through their writing just as United States government agencies physically removed them from their territories (11).

Other scholars study representations of specific nations in American literature. Both Stanley T. Williams and Maria DeGuzman, for example, see Spain as cultural code in United States texts. Williams traces the enormous influence of "Spanish culture during three and a quarter centuries upon our [American] essays, stories, novels, poems, histories, dramas, or satire" through the work of writers such as Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (vol. 2, 271, 290). DeGuzman goes further, arguing that from the 1700s, the self-styled character of the United States "has been dependent on Spain" (289). American authors, she argues, use uniquely Spanish tropes to write their "fictions" of rebellion, imperialism, nativity and "'American' exceptionalism" (289). Centering on the presence of Mexico rather than Spain in American literature, Jesse Alemán contends that nineteenth-century "U.S. hispanophone writers" such as Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton and the anonymous author of *Xicotencatl* are responsible for the "invention of Mexican America" through their works ("The Invention" 83). Through the "socially subversive act" of creating this portion of America, they envision a place in the hemisphere in which they can fit (95, 83).

While I follow in the above critical footsteps, my project is more closely related to Thomas McLean's *The Other East and Nineteenth-Century British Literature*. With the events of the partitioning of Poland and the subsequent Polish uprisings always in the

background, McLean analyzes the recurrent and "evolving image of the Polish exile" in various British texts of the nineteenth century (2). Studying works by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Blake, Jane Porter, Lord Byron, George Eliot, and others, McLean posits that the way literary representations of the "Kosciuszko-inspired gallant exile" evolve over the nineteenth century reveals changing British attitudes toward Russia, Poland, and Poles in Great Britain (13). In most of this literature, Russia stands "as England's imperial double, [and] Poland as an oppressed land that bore comparisons to British India, the Caribbean, Scotland, and Ireland" (9). Early in the century, the British felt great hostility for Russia, which was seen as a "military power and imperial threat" (9). The British were, in fact, "Russophobes" (10). Conversely, they felt compassion for Poland as the victim of Russia (9). This compassion translated into Romantic literary representations of the heroic and "idealized" Polish exile in the early 1800s (9). As the years wore on, McLean observes, writers used the Polish character to uphold Western European claims to power, as well as to critique British self-absorption, racial intolerance, and imperialism (11-2). Finally, with the influx of Polish immigrants to Britain and growing British mistrust of them because of their involvement in extreme political movements, the figure of the Romantic Polish exile became a "radical," a "scheming, avaricious immigrant" (12). In the end, McLean's examination of the ever-changing figure of the Polish exile teaches us much about the evolving nineteenth-century British responses toward Eastern Europe and the resulting changes in British stereotypes about Poles.

In revealing what is behind literary representations of Poland and Poles in the literature of 1800s Great Britain, McLean's book seems to be the British double of my own study of Poland in nineteenth-century American literature. My project, however, differs in

several important ways. First, while McLean focuses on the development of a single literary image—"the Polish exile"—over the course of the century, I concentrate on recurring references to Poland/Poles and recollections of Polish historical personages in American literature, as well as the figure of the Polish exile (2). Second, whereas McLean makes the relation between the fragmentation of Poland by Russia and the colonization of various nations by Great Britain, my reading of the gothic underside of Poland as America's "beau ideal" examines references to Poland not only in terms of imperialism, but also in terms of slavery and other conflicts and anxieties specific to the United States. Of course, the biggest contextual difference between my project and McLean's text is that I examine nineteenth-century *American* literature rather than British literature. McLean explains that he does not analyze Poland in United States literature because "studies of American . . . representations of Poland already exist . . ." (12). This is true. McLean is certainly alluding to Karen Majewski's *Traitors and True Poles* and Thomas Gladsky's *Princes, Peasants, and Other Polish Selves,* both of which are comprehensive studies of Poland and Poles in American literature. My project, however, also differs from both of these books in argument and content.

Majewski's book is a landmark study in that it uncovers and examines "a forgotten fragment of American literature: immigrant narrative fiction written in Polish and published in the United States before World War II" (1). This fiction, she argues, both "attempted to model a Polish identity" and "articulated specifically Polish-American perspectives and experiences" (1). In doing so, it also counteracted American authors' stereotypical representations of Poles as mumbling, primitive peasants and silent sufferers to oppression and inequities in society (13). Polish America was instead "an active, vibrant, and complex

community" whose stories are best told and heard in Polish (13). Departing from the work of Majewski, my project focuses on earlier images and references to Poland and Poles not for what they reveal about Polish Americans or even about Poland, but for what they can tell us about the United States. Gladsky notes that early nineteenth-century American authors both "presented [Poles] in positive, almost glowing terms" and "portrayed Poland as a mirror to the" United States (16). This means that what passed for "Polish" virtues and characteristics in literary representations are not very Polish in actuality (12, 20). Rather, they are the longed-for virtues and characteristics of the United States (16-7). In working as projections, the references to Poland that I analyze register the anxieties of American writers and readers, not of Poland or Poles.

Thomas S. Gladsky's scholarship, particularly his conception of the beau ideal, provides the foundation for my argument. The image of Poland as America's beau ideal undeniably exists in nineteenth-century American literature. Many authors celebrate Poles for their "tenacious patriotism," their "Bravery and honor, high-mindedness and breeding" (22). Likewise, many writers represent the history of Poland as the "conflict between the standard-bearers of truth and enlightenment, the Poles, and the barbaric dark forces, the Russians" (20). The purpose of my project is not to discount Gladsky's argument. Neither is it to point out that such views of Poland, its people and its history are reductive. Gladsky does this already. Rather, my objective is to consider that many images of Poland in nineteenth-century American literature, although idealized, betray a more sinister aspect when contextualized through Polish and American history. In other words, I seek to uncover the dark underside of Poland as America's beau ideal and then to examine what that underbelly reveals about the nineteenth-century anxieties of the United States.

I argue that the nineteenth-century United States suffers from paranoia and certain phobic disorders; in upholding a national narrative of liberty and egalitarian principles, the country represses any inklings of self-reproach and anxiety, and so is unconscious of its own guilt over national issues such as imperialism and slavery and its own fears about being taken over, about the Other and about fragmentation of identity. As this guilt and fear have been "abolished," it inevitably "returns from without" (Freud, "Notes" 71). For the purposes of my study, it returns in gothic images of Poland that haunt United States print culture, reminding America of what it lacks. Just as Gladsky reveals that some U.S. writers projected national desires for America (freedom, democracy, etc.) onto Poland, thus creating the beau ideal, I argue that other writers projected repressed American fears and guilt onto Poland. The images produced as a result—images of the dark underside of the beau ideal—are what I am concerned with in this project.[6]

Poland as an American Gothic

My project furthermore necessitates an understanding of the American Gothic and how Poland fits into that theoretical framework. According to Teresa Goddu, "American Gothic, like Gothic more generally, is haunted by history. Instead of fleeing reality, Gothic registers its culture's anxieties and social problems" ("American Gothic" 63). These cultural anxieties include slavery, class tensions, and economic instability among other things, and the "haunts" that symbolize them, Alan Lloyd-Smith argues, can be packed into the minutest details of a text (Goddu, "American Gothic" 63-4; Lloyd-Smith 136). Drawing from these ideas about the American gothic, I read recurring minor references to Poland as a haunting presence in nineteenth-century American literature, a presence that reveals the anxieties of Americans about their own and their country's past and present actions and conflicts. Some

of the smallest details in the texts I analyze are references to Poland and Polish characters. A point, event, or conflict in Polish history haunts and contextualizes each reference. These histories highlight the various social problems of nineteenth-century Poland such as national fragmentation, the position of being under the oppression of foreign rule, and the reality of social and economic inequalities. Because the images of Poland are projections, the Polish social problems in turn point to and register repressed American anxieties about being controlled by other nations; the possibility of becoming an imperial power like Prussia, Russia, or Austria; and complicity in the institution of slavery.

As they deal with these and other anxieties specific to the United States, scholars in the field also theorize about the source of the national guilt and fear which the gothic registers. Some read American gothic texts "through the lens of race" (specifically, through the lens of slavery), as Goddu does (64). Others, like Renee Bergland, pinpoint "Indian Removal" as the gothic origins of nineteenth-century American literature (90). Through background images of slaves and Native Americans, scholars read American anxieties about the "competitive market" and the racial Other, among other things (Goddu, "American Gothic" 63-4; Bergland 91). My reading of Poland as a gothic presence for the United States offers an alternative paradigm, one that sees America's cultural anxieties through the lens of revolution. While race or ethnicity, instances of removal and the institution of slavery are in the background of the texts that I analyze, I focus on the specter of Poland behind each text and the coded history of revolution underneath each reference to the Eastern European country. For example, the mention of Silesia in Brown's story, as I will show in chapter 1, evokes the Prussian takeover of the territory and alludes to both the partitions of Poland and Kosciuszko's 1794 revolution. In another instance, the Polish character Casimer in Alcott's

"The Baron's Gloves" loses all his wealth, receives terrible wounds, and is exiled from Poland as a result of fighting in the 1863 uprising.

Revolution in Poland thus connects all the texts in the study. Inextricably linked as they are to historical flashpoints of rebellion against political and military oppression, mentions of Poland and Polish characters also point to the American Revolutionary War. After all, as Gladsky points out, U.S. interest in Poland was born during America's revolution through the "distinguished efforts of Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski" in battle (11). Because of these two men, references to Poland in literature throughout the nineteenth century would have turned United States readers' minds to the revolution that helped to establish their own country. Inevitably, along with thoughts of the Revolutionary War would have come reflections on the ideals associated with it and with America as a nation: patriotism, independence, liberty, democracy, and the ideology of Manifest Destiny. In signaling this romanticized view of the American Revolution, the image of Poland in literature brings us back again to Gladsky's notion of Poland as America's beau ideal.

Besides the connection Americans felt to their beau ideal through the shared history of revolution and respect for democratic values, racial heritage was an undeniable similarity between those Poles who fought for American freedom and those Americans who expressed sympathy for revolutionary movements in Poland. Indeed, the whiteness of Poland was a revolutionary site for the United States. Gladsky writes that the merging of "Polish and American history" through the beau ideal in American literature "implied that ethnicity and Americanness were compatible" (16). Whiteness, undoubtedly part of the mutual affinity between the United States and "ethnic" Poland, enabled this compatibility, making economic, emotional, and physical support for Polish revolutions acceptable for Americans. The history

of the American reaction and contribution to the Haitian Revolution further shows that American feelings about international revolutions were, for many, dependent on the race of the revolutionaries. Even though the United States had a trade agreement with the revolutionary government under the administration of John Adams and though the U.S. Navy supported the revolutionaries for a time, there was never much "enthusiasm" for the Haitian revolution in America (G. Brown 144, 169, 5). Instead of celebrating the revolutionary fervor in Haiti, Brown explains that many Americans looked on the insurrection with terror for several reasons (5). First, "the Haitian revolt was egalitarian in the most blatant way, at a time when our founding fathers were unready for any leveling of class distinctions" (5). Second, the revolution "was in no way republican" (5). Finally, some Americans reacted negatively toward the revolution because of racist ideologies, and many feared the possibility of a similar slave revolt at home (5).[7] Unlike white Polish ethnicity, blackness, in other words, was not compatible with Americanness; rather than being a site of revolution for Americans, blackness was a site of fear, misunderstanding, and for many, discrimination and oppression.

While the whiteness of Polish and American rebels is a significant commonality to keep in mind when exploring the cultural anxieties of the United States through the lens of revolution, it is also important to recognize that the nature of the American Revolutionary War and the nineteenth-century revolutions in Poland was quite dissimilar. Because the New World colonies were originally part of the British settler colonial state, the American Revolution was largely a rebellion against a "parent" nation in response to political and economic injustice perpetrated by that nation. Conversely, all of the revolutions in Poland in the 1800s were the uprisings of a once-sovereign nation colonized by three foreign states,

leading Mayblin, Piekut, and Valentine to argue that Poland should "be understood in terms of a *triple relation:* Poland as former colony, as former coloniser and finally in relation to the Western hegemons" (2). In other words, on the one hand, Americans fought as members of the colonizer seeking to separate, or become independent from, the "parent" colonizer. On the other hand, colonized Poles fought to regain what superior military powers forcibly took from them: their national sovereignty and the freedom to practice their culture, speak their language, and be Polish without international oversight and prohibitive laws and regulations. Thus, although in essence both American and Polish revolutionaries entered the respective frays for freedom and independence and though the American Revolution and the nineteenth-century revolutions in Poland were all forms of resistance to oppression, the national subject positions of Poland and the new United States were uneven.

These commonalities and distinctions help us begin to see through the often idealized nature of revolution to its dark underside; specifically, national fervor for revolutions abroad can be contingent upon the race of the Other (racist ideologies, in other words, sometimes win out over bedrock values such as freedom for all people), and the level of privilege that a nation—or a revolutionary group—has can determine the outcome of a rebellion (even if there is ample justification for insurrection, the colonized will rarely be able to defeat and remove the colonizer). The outcome of revolution, even if the revolutionaries triumph, can also be gothic in nature. Benjamin Reiss writes, "Founded by violence but appealing to reason, a postrevolutionary society . . . can never achieve stability" (146). Such a society, based upon "myths" of superiority and "rationality," is and can only be defined by inequality, "brute force," "madness, and violence" (146-7). In calling attention to the incompatible cornerstones of the foundational struggle of the United States—rational thought and violence,

Reiss pinpoints the source of all of the post-revolutionary American anxieties explored in this project. After winning their independence through the bloodshed of war, it is only natural that Americans would be anxious of losing it in the same way during the economic and national instability of the United States in the 1790s. The American myths of superiority that fed revolutionary fervor eventually also fed the Manifest Destiny ideology that led to the Mexican American War and to the concern that the United States had become the very kind of tyrant it had fought for freedom less than a century before. This same myth was used to justify the brute force and inequality of the system of slavery; it led also to the fear and mistreatment of the immigrant and Catholic Other, not to mention the Native American Other. All of these failures show that despite the exclamation to the contrary that is implicit in America's national narrative, the United States, a country established on the Enlightenment ideals and the ferocious fighting of revolution, did not achieve stability in the nineteenth century. While the ideology of Manifest Destiny represses these realities, they become evident when reading references to Poland in nineteenth-century American literature as being haunted by revolution; through this lens, Poland reveals American anxieties about national instability, acts of aggression, and inequalities. Poems, features and short stories about Poland in nineteenth-century American periodicals and newspapers also reveal that the eastern European country becomes an uncanny presence. Over the century, as the United States faced various problems, literary representations of Poland gradually shifted from familiar to strange.

Revolutionary Poland

In the early nineteenth century, Poland is the familiar beau ideal, a nation that represents freedom and patriotism and that, in its distress, is deserving of American

sympathy. On January 1, 1800, the *Centinel of Freedom,* a New Jersey newspaper, published a poem entitled "A New-Year's View of Important Political Events." A fitting text to mark the turn of the century for the new United States, the poem muses about "the century past" (8) and seeks "To lift futurity's thick veil and trace / Th' approaching glory of the human race" (13-4). Looking back on the eighteenth century, the speaker unfolds the history of America from the repressive measures of "Britain the great, the wicked and the base" on its colonies in the New World to Washington's rise to general during the Revolutionary War, from the American victory which launched "a new era . . . on the world" to the funeral of Washington (55, 79, 107, 200). The unnamed poet tells the history in hyperbolic terms, confirming already-forming ideas of American exceptionalism. In the beginning of the poem, before the birth of the United States, the planet seems a place of hopelessness. The speaker asks, "what good could rise" from a world full of "Tyrants" and "Oppression"; will injustice, corruption and exploitation continue "Till the whole human race are lost in death?" (29, 33-4, 38). The answer comes: "No—In the west one favourite there remain'd, / By kings uncurs'd, by violence unstain'd; / Doom'd to become fair virtue's safe retreat, / The world's example, Freedom's lofty seat" (39-42).

Against this backdrop, which paints the United States as the world's only hope for passing on the virtue of freedom, are some lines on Poland. The lines begin with a reference to Russia, "Who Poland from the list of states eras'd; / Whose murders tyranny itself disgrac'd; / Who swell'd the catalogue of human woe / And bade the tears of suffering millions flow" (171-4). After committing such "shocking crimes," Russia must face "the bolts of vengeance" and the "ghosts" of "Warsaw" (180, 178, 179). Next to the glories of America's "liberty," the image of Polish misery is grim. Nonetheless, "eras'd" Poland stands

as a revolutionary ideal. The poem's lines call up the history of Kosciuszko's uprising and the subsequent third partition of Poland in 1795, presenting the conflict as the rhetoric of the beau ideal normally does: Poland, the United States' virtuous and liberty-loving double, regrettably falls to tyrannical Russia.

American newspapers at the end of the eighteenth century reported on the uprising and partition, lamenting Polish defeats. In early 1795, a Massachusetts newspaper reports on "the capture of Kosciusko" and the "defeat of his army," referring to both as a "disastrous state of affairs" ("Tuesday, January 20" 3). A headline in a January 1795 issue of the *Newbedford Marine Journal* exclaims "KOSCIUSKO a PRISONER!" (3). Below the title, the article begins, "Every friend of liberty must regret the fate of the brave Kosciusko" (3). Later in the year, *The North Carolina Journal* reports on the "reduction and complete partition of unfortunate Poland" ("New York, May 7" 3). At the news, the writer of an article in the *Windham Herald* in June bemoans, "The State of Poland is wretched indeed" and cries, "When will despotism cease to scourge the human race!" ("New York, May 27" 3). Several newspapers even ran a copy of the "Resignation of the Crown of Poland," a text translated from a speech by Stanislaus of Poland and filled with similar rhetoric of grief and anger that surely fueled American readers' passionate feelings about the partition. It begins, "'The name of the Crown of Poland has been obliterated from amongst the Crowns of the European states. . . . The Polish army has entered into the service of the three Belligerent Powers, or are made prisoners of war by them'" (2). Each article characterizes Kosciusko and his fractured nation as "unfortunate" and "wretched" victims of violence, injustice and tyranny.

Yet, in "A New Year's View of Important Political Events," Poland is more than a familiar beau ideal; it is also an uncanny gothic presence. According to the poet, the nation

has been murdered and now returns as a ghost (179). An otherworldly figuration of Russian guilt over its crimes of conquest, Poland haunts Russia, constantly seeking to retaliate and recover its sovereignty. More importantly, Poland offers a grim warning for America, "Freedom's lofty seat." In the stanza immediately following the lines on Poland is a list of the dangers facing the United States in the year 1800:

> Though foreign nations prey upon our trade;
> Though daring breaches on our rights are made;
> Though Alien and Sedition laws are pass'd;
> Though drones the profits of our labor waste;
> Though armies rise, the Democrats to lay,
> And fright the creed of Seventy-Six away,
> Yet the . . . feeble voice ev'n now is heard,
> That voice by tyranny abhor'd and fear'd,
> Which back to their own nothingness can speak,
> All upstart-despots who our ruin seek. (187-96)

While these lines end with the voice of liberty speaking back to despotism, they also register the failures and fears of America. This land, still in its infancy, is not free of danger and care. Disagreements with Britain and France over trade cause it economic hardship, the passage of "protective" laws restricts freedom of speech, and the threat of war seems to be always looming on the horizon. Beneath the poem's narrative about the United States, Poland is America's dark underside. Depending on what happened as a result of the various external and internal threats the poet highlights, the United States could either become a bastion of liberty or go the way of Poland and become a victim of despotism.

U.S. Imperialism & Poland As Cautionary Tale

Another uncanny Polish ghost haunts "The Shade of Wanda," a story by Mrs. E. F. Ellet published forty-six years later in *Columbia Magazine*.[8] Unlike the New Year's poem, this text does not indicate the United States' fear of being taken over but its cultural anxiety about taking over the territory of Others. The story begins with the narrator, who is visiting 1840s Poland, noticing "a strip of cloud" in the shape of "a gigantic female figure" rising from the Vistula River near Cracow (26). The narrator asks her companion, a Polish count, about the figure, and the count commences to tell her, as the narrative's subtitle announces, "A Polish Legend, Given as Current in Europe."

In the tale, Princess Wanda, the ruler of Poland and a figure similar to Malinche or Pocahontas who comes close to betraying her people for a man from a conquering culture, falls in love with Prince Rithogar of Saxony, who loves and proposes to her. When Wanda asks for counsel from her court about whether to accept the proposal, though, one advisor tells her, "'this marriage will unite Poland and Saxony. We, thy faithful servants esteem it dangerous, inasmuch as the Saxon power would soon overshadow our land, perhaps to the peril of our name as a nation" (27). Wanda listens to this advice and refuses Rithogar's proposal, angering "malevolent Lech," king of Saxony, terror to Poland (before this point) and father to Prince Rithogar (27). Inevitably, Lech uses Wanda's refusal as an excuse to march into battle against Poland. One day when the Poles are certain to lose, an advisor tells Wanda, "'Thou hast ruled like a man and led us into battle like a hero, but the Saxon foe sees in thee but a woman and this fills him with boldness'" (27-8). For this reason, the advisor asks her to choose a Polish war hero to marry and rule beside her as king. She chooses "a youth, Kiosky, distinguished among others for bravery, warlike accomplishment and

nobleness of character" (28). However, before she marries Kiosky the next morning, she cries to the gods for forgiveness for being a "traitor to Poland" and loving her "mortal enemy," Rithogar (28). Then, asking for Poland's freedom, she drowns herself in the Vistula River. The gods seem to accept her sacrifice; Poland wins the day, and ever after, legend says, "the spirit of Wanda, robed in cloud or mist . . . rise[s] from the waves of the Vistula" to warn her people of any forthcoming danger (28).

Through the brave Kiosky, the selfless Wanda and the courageous Poles doing battle for their nation, Poland as America's beau ideal is a clear presence in this story. The familiar representation is in the background, though. "The Shade of Wanda" foregrounds Poland as a ghostly image. Transcending history to caution her people of threats to their sovereignty and subjecthood, the shade literally frames the tale. She is the beginning and the end, and her wispy presence emphasizes the fact that Poland has become an uncanny presence for the United States. As was true for the New Year's poem, the key to the cultural code of the uncanny specter is in the news.

The story of Wanda's ghost and war in Poland would have turned the minds of 1846 U.S. readers to the "'people's war'" taking place that year in Cracow (Lukowski and Zawadzki 170). American newspapers reported heavily on the rebellion. On April 15, 1846, for example, readers of the *Tri-Weekly Ohio Statesman* opened their newspapers to read about "The Polish Insurrection" in Cracow, which had "assumed [such] a serious character" that "considerable forces were said to be on the march from Austria, Prussia and Russia, to crush the insurrection before it had time to spread" ("Highly Important" 3). Providing a detailed and accurate account of the rebellion, the article describes the anger of the "country people" against the "lords of manors," the resulting "massacre [of] 200" landowners, and the

calculating schemes of Austria to manipulate the situation ("Highly Important" 3; Lukowski and Zawadzki 170). Knowledgeable about the facts of the rebellion given in this article and others, readers of U.S. newspapers would have understood in reading Mrs. E. F. Ellet's story that Wanda's ghost, rising from the Vistula and making herself visible to the narrator in the 1840s present, held a warning for contemporary Poland. Applied specifically to the events of 1846, Wanda's ghost raises the alarm about danger from within—class tensions that could lead to violence—and danger from without—the possibility of Russia, Austria and Prussia using such tensions to initiate an imperialist takeover of the Republic of Cracow (Lukowski and Zawadzki 170).

Wanda's shade also holds a coded warning for the United States. Rather than cautioning America about internal or external threats to its sovereignty, the specter warns the U.S. that it is tending towards imperialism in its quest to expand territory. This is most clearly seen in what, in the same article, immediately precedes the information about the insurrection in Poland: a series of paragraphs giving England's view on "the Oregon question" ("Highly Important" 3). As a result of President Polk's aggressive statements in pursuit of the Oregon territory in 1846, the writer of the article calls the United States a "bully" (3). He goes on to write, "American pretensions have always so regularly and impudently advanced as our claims receded, that our statesmen begin to think, with much reason, that all the Americans seek (we allude, of course, to the mad and dominant portion of them) is war" (3).

The *Gloucester Telegraph* of the same day has a similar pairing of subjects in one article. Reporting on the Polish uprising, the writer cannot help opining, "From that unhappy and dismembered country, we never hear of the dawn of a conflict between the people and

their powerful oppressors, without shuddering in anticipation of the natural and expected result. If personal bravery could save the sons of Poland, their country would be no longer without a name among the nations of the earth" ("Later from Europe" 2). In the column immediately to the left of this are some lines on, once again, "The Oregon question" (2). This part of the article reports that "The news of the refusal of arbitration on the part of the United States, was received with a general burst of indignation, and newspaper writers talked of war, bloodshed, and annihilation, as the natural result of what they deem American temerity . . ." (2).

If the side-by-side placement of news about the Polish rebellion and the "Oregon question" in two newspapers in different states is merely coincidental, it is no less meaningful. Information about the insurrection in Poland shows an uprising against imperialistic forces, a "conflict between the people and their powerful oppressors." The sections on the Oregon territory show British reactions to the United States as a "bully," an imperialistic aggressor that takes what it wants by force. The association in the articles is easy to make: while Poland was fighting the forces of imperialism, America was at risk of becoming a land-hungry despot. Ideologically and in reality, America resembles Saxony and King Lech in "The Shade of Wanda" more than noble, righteous and patriotic Poland. Wanda's ghost, then, works as a projection, a "return from without" of repressed American guilt over imperialist tendencies and ventures.

"The Forgotten Grave," a story published in the May 2, 1846 edition of New York's *Plattsburgh Republican,* also reveals Poland as an uncanny presence that uncovers similar anxieties of the United States. The tale begins with a walker sitting to rest on a "small pile of stones" in a wooded area of New York near Fort Montgomery (1). As he is resting, a man

from the area tells him he's sitting on the grave of a foreigner who fought for the "redcoat officers" in the American Revolution. The first man realizes he is on top of the resting place of Count Grabouski, "a young Pole" who had left Europe "to offer his services, like Pulaski, to our country, when the ship in which he embarked at Nantes was captured by a British ship of war . . ." (1). Familiar with the Grabouski's story, the walker narrates it for readers. Upon meeting Grabouski, the English soldiers who captured his ship immediately liked him and wanted to enlist his services, so they lied, telling him, "the *rebellion* was nearly ended—that the Americans were returning to the king's allegiance . . ." (1). Thinking that it was too late to fight for American independence, Grabouski decided to join the British as "a volunteer aid" (1). Soon thereafter, he was killed by "a twelve pounder loaded with grape shot and musket balls" as he and the British were in the process of capturing Fort Montgomery (1). Reflecting on Grabouski's story, the walker muses,

> And was it for this, thought I, that the young Polish nobleman sought fame and renown! To leave his native land and enter into the fight against those who had never injured him or his country! And here to fall!—to lie in a forgotten grave!—forgotten, for those who passed by where he lay knew not even his name, only that he was one of those that fought against the liberties for which their fathers battled! Poor Grabouski! If you had fallen like your countryman, Pulaski, on the side of freedom, or served us like Kosciusko, your name would have ever been remembered with joy and gratitude. (1)

True to the tale from the walker's perspective, Count Grabouski has all but been forgotten by history, while Kosciuszko and Pulaski, his counterparts who fought for American independence have been celebrated in United States history books, county names, national

monuments, statues, and museums. Except for a mention in *Historical Collections of the State of New York,* an 1842 text by John W. Barber and Henry Howe, references to the count are nonexistent. In Barber and Howe's work, Grabouski's name comes up in an anecdote about Fort Montgomery given by "Dr. Dwight, then a chaplain in the army," who spoke about "the appearance" of the fort "a few months after [it was] taken" (423). At the end of a description of "the horrors of war," including "decayed human bodies," "their faces . . . bloated and monstrous; and their postures . . . uncouth, distorted, and in the highest degree afflictive," Dwight speaks of the count (423). He says,

> we proceeded to find the grave of Count Grabouski, a Polish nobleman, who was killed in the assault, while acting as aid-de-camp to the British commander. The spot was pointed out to us by Lieut. Col. Livingston, who saw him fall, and informed us that he was buried in the place where he was killed. Here we found a grave—in all probability, that in which he was buried—without a 'stone' to 'tell where he lay,' and now forgotten and undiscoverable: a humiliating termination of a restless, vain, ambitious life. (423)

In foregrounding forgotten Grabouski and pushing symbols of the beau ideal (Kosciuszko and Pulaski) into the background, this brief history and the later anonymous sketch in the *Plattsburgh Republican* (for which the history is most likely the source) reveal the gothic terror of being on the wrong side. Though there is no apparition here, the young Pole haunts the tale of revolution. Having set out to fight for American independence, he is all too easily hoodwinked into aiding a force of oppression. The "restless, vain, ambitious" spirit that ostensibly allows Grabouski to be duped also aligns him with the British. Having repressed their own national tendencies toward imperialism, the United States projected onto Great

Britain the negative qualities of narcissism, conceit, and blind ambition. For embracing this spirit and joining the British, Grabouski's reward, unlike that of Pulaski and Kosciuszko who received the glowing commendations of fame and history, is probable dismemberment, a painful death, a body decaying on the battlefield, and an eventual burial in an unmarked grave.

As cultural code, "The Forgotten Grave," would have brought the minds of U.S. readers to two events, one of which was ending and the other which was beginning in early 1846. First was the Polish rebellion in Cracow. Like "The Shade of Wanda," the anonymous tale was published concurrently with many newspaper articles about the insurrection. As I have shown above, Americans would have understood events in Poland as being primarily defined by the struggle for freedom against tyrannical oppression. Second, American readers would have associated the reference to Poland with the Mexican American War, which began in late April 1846.

Indeed, "Mr. Polk's Mexican War—Spirit of the Press," an article in the *Auburn Journal and Advertiser,* makes a direct comparison between Poland and Mexico. The early 1846 article exclaims that President Polk

> may drive the whole army of Mexico not only back *upon*, but *into* the tombs of the Montezumas. He may take the prairies, swamps, plains, rivers, lakes, and cities, and make them appendages of this government and blot out from the list of nations the name of Mexico, as Russia has done Poland; but all the blood he may shed, or cause to be shed, in such a warfare, and for such an end, will not wash out the stain . . . placed upon our national fame . . . (2)

The equation of Polk's actions in Mexico with the partitioning of Poland marks a shift between earlier modes, which equated the United States with Poland in their revolutionary histories, and a mid-century mode, which now links the United States not with revolutionary Poland, but with imperialist Russia.

Thus, "The Forgotten Grave" provides a cautionary tale for U.S. readers. It begs them to ask whether their country is like Grabouski. Is the United States on the right side? Is it fighting for liberty or on the side of oppression? If one takes into consideration the correlation American newspapers make between Mexico and Poland—and by extension, the correlation between the United States and the partitioning powers—the answer to the first question is no. America is not fighting "on the side of freedom" as "The Forgotten Grave" recognizes that Kosciuszko and Pulaski had done. The U.S. is on the wrong side. The buried and almost forgotten Count Grabouski and the gothic images of the violence of war thus register American anxieties over the Mexican American War. If the nation gives in to its hunger for territory by endeavoring to take Mexican land by force, the story warns readers, it may end up like Grabouski, who, allowing himself to be swayed away from the purpose of justice and freedom, lost not only his life but a chance for historical renown as well. Like the life of the count, the name of the nation will henceforward be "stained" by violent acts committed in the name of imperialist dreams of grandeur.

Poland Underground

While Poland as America's beau ideal is visible in the background of the three aforementioned texts, it is altogether absent from J. Ross Browne's travel memoir, "Poland Over-Ground and Under-Ground," which appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* as a two-part series in November and December 1862.[9] Overwhelmingly gothic in nature,

Browne's piece shows us Poland as a strange wasteland and Poles as unfamiliar zombies, living under a harsh, dehumanizing and deadening oppression. Certainly, these Poles are not an "idealized us." Yet, they, like the other uncanny Polish ghosts reveal an American anxiety: guilt over slavery. The specter-like humans are ultimately a warning against the perpetuation of slavery in the United States.

Subtitled "Over-Ground," the first half of the serial records Browne's misadventures while crossing the border into Poland, his time spent in Cracow, and his observations about the Polish people and their lives under Austrian rule. It is this last part, the conditions under which the Poles live, that is the most horrifying. Browne describes the peasants he sees "out in the fields hoeing the earth" as "Oppressed, down-trodden and soldier-ridden" (724). This, he speculates "doubtless is due to the oppressive system of taxation under which they labor—compelled to support a government which they detest; their hard earnings wrested from them to support a despotism that crushes them down, no hope for the future, and no inducements held out to them to better their condition" (724). He goes on to state that the "prevailing poverty and filth," the "misery," "oppression and decay" of the general environment and of the people is the worst he has seen "in all [his] travels" (725). To make matters worse, Browne claims that the Poles are under the constant surveillance of Austrian "spies" and they deal daily with "corruption in public places, malicious persecution, cruelty, and arbitrary dealing" (727).

If all references to Poland were removed from Browne's text, this could be a description of life under slavery in the United States. "Oppressed" laborers work in fields under the constant watch of overseers who, on the worst plantations, offer them no compassion but rather "malicious persecution, cruelty, and arbitrary dealing." Their existence

is solely to work to hold up a government and economy that exploit them and contribute to their suffering and "poverty." Hopelessness, travail and sorrow defined life under slavery. While those who escape to the north may be able to "better their conditions," even they must always be aware of who is watching.

As if the desolation of life in Poland Browne describes in the first half of his travel memoir isn't horrifying enough, the second installment, subtitled "Under-Ground," reads like a descent into Hades. In this half, Browne describes in decidedly gothic language his visit to Wieliczka, the famous Polish salt mine that has been in operation since the Middle Ages. About being lowered down the mineshaft, he writes, "The effect was indescribable—as if we were descending through chaos in a nightmare. The world seemed to be broken up, and we, a remnant of its inhabitants, sinking down through an everlasting obscurity among its fragments" (4-5). There is plenty of similar language describing the mine itself as something like hell, but it is Browne's description of the workers that is truly disturbing. He likens them to "gnomes" in "gloomy pits"; they are "naked to the middle, having nothing on but coarse trowsers and boots, and wrought with their crow-bars and picks by the light of a few grease-lamps held by grimy little boys, with shaggy heads . . ." (6). Staring at them in the dark, Browne wonders if "they might be monsters in reality" (6). Then, as he looks closer, he sees misery:

> After all there was something sad in the condition of these poor wretches—shut out from the glorious light of day, immured in deep dark pits hundreds of feet under-ground; rooting, as it were, for life, in the bowels of the earth. Surely the salt with which other men flavor their food is gathered with infinite toil and mingled with bitter

> sweat. Yet, strange as it may seem, I was informed by the guide that these workmen are so accustomed to this kind of life that they prefer it to any other. (6-7)

Trade the underground mine setting for one on a plantation in the American South, and you might have a description of slaves and a defense of slavery. In the brief passages above, there is the allusion that these workers are not quite human, a description of horrible working conditions, a report of not only men but children laboring, and a justification of the system based on the belief that the workers enjoy their "dreary labors" (6). The parallels to slavery are uncanny and horrifying. The publication date of this text puts it almost two years into the Civil War and a month shy of the Emancipation Proclamation. Despite the late timing, it accurately reflects American anxieties about the chaotic nightmare of slavery, the United States' own descent into hell.

Reading Poles as slaves in Browne's memoir would have been no great leap for U.S. audiences. It was not uncommon in early and mid-nineteenth century print culture to draw parallels between the slavery in the American South and the partitioning of Poland. One example is "Extracts from the Rev. Mr. May's Sermon on Slavery in the United States" published in the July 2, 1831 issue of *The Liberator*. May censures the "egregious inconsistency" of his fellow Americans. When it rises from Poland, he says, "the cry for freedom awakens in our bosoms the thrilling emotions of delight. We do not stop to ask the character, much less the complexion of those, who claim their birth right. 'Tis enough for us that they are fellow men" (106). Yet, he emphasizes, Americans ignore the "two Million Slaves, two Million human beings, to whom *our laws deny all the peculiar rights of man*" (106). Such willful ignorance means "we ourselves are implicated with the oppressors" of Poland, May continues (106). In this example, Poland is both a slave to Russia, Prussia and

Austria and a constant reminder to Americans of "the presence of the unfree" in the United States (Morrison 48). A later article not only condemns the hypocrisy of the United States in standing up against "slavery" in Poland while turning a blind eye to slavery in America, it exclaims that Poland's circumstances are a warning to the U.S. The author of "Methodist Episcopal Conference," another article in *The Liberator,* states that the partition was part of "the retributive justice of God on Poland, who is now a slave herself, for favoring the abominable system" of serfdom (74). The writer utilizes Poland's history as a cautionary tale, warning Americans that God's retribution could one day fall on the United States as a result of its persistent support of the "crime of slavery" (74).

Frequent newspaper comparisons of the slaveholding U.S. and partitioned Poland, along with the descriptions of Poles in "Poland Over-Ground and Under-Ground" and the absence of the beau ideal in the text, reveal both repressed American guilt over slavery and an implicit warning. The United States may not face the punishment of God for enslaving human beings. However, the nation is in danger of being more akin to the oppressors—Russia, Prussia, Austria, and even uncanny, unfree Poland, a keeper of serfs—than it is to its own beau ideal, that imagined nation of patriotic warriors for freedom.

From Beau Ideal to Foreign Other

Rather than offering a warning as the above texts do, Ellis Gray's "Dat Taddeus," published in *Harper's* in October 1873, registers American anxieties about the immigrant Other.[10] In this tale, young Ellie is in her yard relishing British author Jane Porter's 1803 novel, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, a tale about "The Russo-Polish War of 1792-3, or the War of the Second Partition as it was later called . . ." (Gray 687; Davies, vol. 1, 535). As Ellie's heart quakes at the "misfortunes of Thaddeus [Constantine Sobieski], the Noble, the

Glorious, the Injured," a "dirty foreigner" suddenly interrupts her (687). Seeing what Ellie is reading, the man quotes lines from the book to her, then claims in a thick accent, "'I am dat Taddeus!'" (688). Amazed, Ellie begins to converse with him and delightedly gives him food and money when he asks for it (689). She "brought her all and laid it in her Thaddeus's hand. It was a very dirty hand; and she didn't like the kiss with which he thanked her, for it smelled of rum and onions; but she was happy . . ." (689). Later, when the foreigner leaves, she finds out that she has been duped. The man was merely a Polish immigrant, a liar and a thief.

The first half of "Dat Taddeus" foregrounds Poland as America's beau ideal through the novel that Ellie is reading. The more engrossed Ellie becomes in her "romance," in fact, the more she idealizes the main character, Poland and Poles (687). She "weep[s] . . . over the sorrows and misfortunes of Thaddeus," her "heart throb[s] at the thought of the good King Stanislaus," and with "vengeance she recall[s] the Prussians and the cruel Cossacks" (687). The end of the story, however, makes a sharp distinction between the contents of Ellie's novel and the reality of the immigrant Other (687). Rather than the familiar and idealized Thaddeus Sobieski, the man who confronts Ellie is an uncanny, filthy Pole whom Gray describes in gothic language. Ellie first notices the stranger when a "shadow deeper than the flickering shade from the elm-tree fell athwart her book" (687); he comes out of the darkness of the unknown. He is "gaunt and silent," "ragged and unkempt"; he is "slouched," smells of liquor, has a "huge green patch over one eye" and is carrying "a small dirty bundle" (687). He is, again, a "dirty foreigner" (687). This description, coupled with his drunkenness and the fact that he takes advantage of Ellie, ultimately reveals American fears about foreigners and immigrants.

An implicit reference to the Russo-Polish War lies in "Dat Taddeus," but more helpful in decoding the "dirty foreigner" is a Polish rebellion which was in the news in the U.S. and which was more contemporary to the publication of Gray's text. Under the heading, "News of the Day," the February 13, 1863 issue of the *Boston Traveler* reported that "An insurrection has broken out in Poland, but the great mass of the peasantry have not as yet joined the insurgents. The Russian authorities will probably soon suppress the movement" (2). Contrary to the writer's calculation, the fighting, which began in early 1863, did not end quickly. However, the report's prediction about Russia overcoming the Poles eventually came true. As the Austrians had done before them, the Russians manipulated the situation by using the peasants against the landowners; they "liberated the Polish serfs in the midst of the struggle . . ." (Biskupski 27). The strategy was successful for the Russians and devastating for the Poles in a number of ways. First, the loss "dealt what seemed to be a final and fatal body blow to the cause of Polish independence" (Lukowski and Zawadzki 182). It also spurred "a new wave of exiles, as defiant but not as illustrious as their predecessors of 1831, [to seek] sanctuary in the west" (182). Finally, it resulted in a diminishing emphasis on the "Polish Question" in western minds (182).

Gladsky argues that negative representations of Poles in American literature did not become common until the last two decades of the nineteenth century. They were the result of the "2 million Poles [who] immigrated to the United States" in the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (34). Gladsky explains, "The new Poles were landless, poor, unskilled, ignorant tillers of the soil . . ." (34). Their "'strangeness' frightened and confused many native-born Americans" (34). Derogatory representations of Poles may have been uncommon before the 1880s, but they existed and were the result of the

smaller wave of Polish immigration after the 1863 insurrection. “Dat Taddeus” is proof, as are infrequent newspaper articles disparaging Poles.

Articles on Poland in United States newspapers from 1865 to 1872 focus less on support for Polish independence and more on Polish immigrants to America. These articles reveal a slow but steady change in attitude toward Poles and Poland. In the 1860s, most articles were largely positive, soliciting pity for the immigrant Poles and promising that the newcomers would help to prosper the United States.[11] In the early 1870s, there is a subtle change in the rhetoric about Poland. “Lager-Beer,” a story in the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer* most clearly exemplifies this. The article, which purports to give facts on the “Story, Use and Consumption” of lager, concludes with “a parting word” on “sobriety” (3). It explains that “drunkenness . . . is the disgrace of Russia, Sweden and Poland, where ardent spirits—*raki,* a strong brandy, and a mixture of acid and whisky—is the normal drink of the population” (3). In pinpointing the “disgraceful” drinking habits of people in these three countries, the article creates a stereotype of Russians, Swedes and Poles in their own countries as perpetually inebriated. It would not be a huge logical leap for readers to suppose that Russian, Swedish and Polish immigrants to the U.S. also partook excessively.

Articles like “Lager-Beer” worked to create and perpetuate the stereotype of the drunken Pole which manifests in “Dat Taddeus” and which became so common in later American literary representations of Poles. The presence of this stereotype in the story, in turn, reveals repressed American anxieties about the immigrant Other. Though few and far between before 1880, these pejorative depictions show the beau ideal fading further and further into the background. Poles were becoming strange(rs) to the United States.

Charting Uncanny Poland

"A New Year's View of Important Political Events," "The Shade of Wanda," "The Forgotten Grave," "Poland Over-Ground and Under-Ground," "Dat Taddeus," and the newspaper articles cited here chart the transformation of Poland as a familiar beau ideal to Poland as an increasingly uncanny presence in nineteenth century American print culture. All of the stories foreground this gothic presence, baring the dark underside of Poland as America's beau ideal. In doing so, instead of reflecting back to Americans an idealistic, romantic image of bravery, patriotism and democracy, these representations of Poland betray American anxieties about the preservation of culture, tensions between democracy and imperialism, the existence of slavery in a free society, the presence of the threatening Catholic immigrant Other, and the fragmentation of male identity resulting from economic ruin. My project will parse out these anxieties at greater length and in greater detail in works by both well-known canonical authors such as Herman Melville and less familiar, non-canonical writers such as E.D.E.N. Southworth and Anthony Walton White Evans.

In order to highlight America's cultural anxieties about imperialism, the first chapter of my project pairs Charles Brockden Brown's "Somnabulism: A Fragment" with Edgar Allen Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" as gothic texts that use sleepwalking and mesmerism respectively to encode Poland's significance for nineteenth-century America. Brown's short story, which was published in 1805, follows Althorpe, the unreliable sleepwalking narrator, as he dreams about saving a young girl from a murder that, in actuality, he commits in his sleep. The text begins with a "fragment" from a story in an Austrian newspaper about a similar event "At Great Glogau, in Silesia" (7). "Silesia" is a word that was fraught with meaning for Americans. In the mid-eighteenth century,

Americans were reading in their newspapers about the conflict over the Austrian territory, which Prussia took by force in 1740 (Clark 192). Thus, Silesia signaled imperialism for Americans. Because Silesia has a historical connection to Poland, the mention of the embattled territory moreover points to an imperialistic conflict more contemporary to Brown's era: Austria, Russia and Prussia's partitioning of Poland, a process that United States newspapers also covered heavily.

American interest in Poland's fate reflects their fears that the revolution they had just fought would end up being for naught and that the new republic would be swallowed up in the tensions they were experiencing in the 1790s with foreign powers France and England (Estes 15-31). The specter of Silesia in the tale's introduction is code for these fears; with Silesia and the hazy image of Poland looming in the background, "Somnambulism" is an allegory about Americans' anxieties about war and imperialistic takeover. It is a story that reveals the gothic terror beneath the conception of Poland as America's beau ideal.

In the other text in this chapter, Edgar Allan Poe's 1845 short story "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," a Polish character named Valdemar agrees to be mesmerized at the point of death in an experiment to see whether mesmerism can keep someone alive past their time. The "mesmeric trance" keeps Valdemar alive for a few months, but as time goes on, he begins to look more and more like a corpse (1237-8). Finally, after six months, the narrator wakes the sleeper up. Instead of coming out of the trance alive, however, Valdemar's body instantly decomposes into a "liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putridity" (1243).

As a Pole with "no relatives in America," Valdemar is coded as a refugee from a conflict that took place in partitioned Poland in the early nineteenth century (Poe 1234, Davies, vol. 2, 245). In 1830, a small number of Poles in Russia's section of partitioned

Poland started a firestorm against their oppressors (Davies, vol. 2, 231-6). The fighting spurred the Russo-Polish War of 1830-1831 (234). When news of the rebellion reached the United States, papers printed strong statements in support of Poland and in angry opposition to Russia. These reactions indicate American anxieties about imperialism in the nineteenth century. However, instead of representing anxieties about their country's survival and ability to fight off aggressors, the references to Poland in Poe's story represent very real and very vocal fears that the United States might itself become an imperialistic oppressor like Russia, Prussia, or Austria in its dealings with Mexico during the 1840s and in its desires to obtain transcontinental territory. Here, again, the cultural code of Poland signals the gothic darkness reflected back at Americans as they looked in the mirror at their supposed beau ideal.

In chapter two, I argue that Poland is a gothic figuration that represents American anxieties about slavery in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick.* Melville makes three important references to Poland in the novel. First, in a record of the world's major imperial events, Ishmael mentions the take-over of Poland by the "three pirate powers," Russia, Prussia and Austria (70). Later in the work, he refers to Poland (along with Mexico and India) as a "Loose-fish," a floating free-for-all, an object for the Russian Czar to claim as his own (435). Finally, in the "Ambergris" chapter, Ishmael mentions "amber" alongside the "curious substance" that the seamen extract from whale carcasses (446). From its source in the Baltic Sea, amber is a commodity that has been historically traded throughout Poland; therefore, it is an indirect reference to the country itself.

These references work together in the novel to make Poland a gothic presence that conjures up images of imperialism and commodification and ultimately represents American anxieties about slavery. Because Melville mentions Poland alongside Mexico, I examine

connections between the partitioning of Poland, Manifest Destiny, and the Mexican American War, which happened two years prior to the publication of *Moby-Dick*. The territories the United States won in the war naturally bring up the question of slavery because of the debates over whether those territories should be slave or free states. Newspapers of the time in Melville's native Massachusetts cement all of these connections: the connection between the imperialistic designs of the United States on Mexico and the imperialistic dealings of Russia, Prussia and Austria with Poland, as well as the connection between imperialism and slavery.

In Melville's novel, the ultimate symbol of this confluence is the whale itself. Partitioned Poland, like Mexico, is a national body that was pursued and cut apart by imperialistic aggressors; Poland can be seen in the text's images of whales which are hunted mercilessly for the profits that can be gained from commodifying their bodies. Such a symbol belies the fact that repeated references to Poland in *Moby-Dick* are cultural code for all that is good and just in America. Instead, they represent American guilt and anxieties over slavery, the sale of bodies for profit in the mid-nineteenth century United States.

Chapter three examines E.D.E.N. Southworth's *The Missing Bride* and Louisa May Alcott's "The Baron's Gloves," two works that include Polish characters. While Southworth's novel and Alcott's short story were published ten years apart, the Polish characters in the texts are strikingly similar; they are banished patriots, war heroes, and brave soldiers á la McLean's "idealized" Polish exile. Together, they constitute what becomes a popular, if little acknowledged, stock character in American literature—the romantic Pole exiled from his partitioned homeland. Yet, for both women writers, the courageous and dashing Pole has a gothic dark side; he is a Catholic and a foreigner with the disturbing

power to oppress or taint female characters. In this sense, the Poles are both familiar beau ideal and strange, frightening Other. Based on this dual status, other characters in the stories at once accept and reject the Polish immigrant/exile Other. This betrays the reality that anti-Polish sentiment had its start in the United States before the immigration of the 1880s and 1890s.

In the first chapter of her 1855 novel, *The Missing Bride,* E.D.E.N. Southworth introduces readers to Alexander Kalouga, "a Polish solider of fortune" who gave "years of military service wherever his hireling sword was needed" and who finally ends up in colonial Maryland (24). While Kalouga's character plays only a small part in the novel, Southworth presents him as the romantic patriarch of a family that practices an oppressive brand of Catholicism over women. The novel moreover marks Kalouga as a foreigner, as different and therefore threatening. Likewise, Alcott Others Casimer Teblinski, the Pole in "The Baron's Gloves." When Teblinski, an exile with a war injury, begins to court Amy, the story's heroine, Amy is hesitant to enter into the relationship because Teblinski is "an invalid, a Catholic, and a foreigner" (236). Her family moreover cautions her against the unacceptable nature of Casimer's Catholic-ness and Polishness. Clearly, with the inclusion of a Polish character who is a Kosciuszko-like war hero and exile, these two texts showcase Gladsky's beau ideal. However, the treatment of Poles as foreigners of whom to be wary also betrays American anxieties about the Other, whether that Other is different in terms of religion, bodily ability, or ethnicity. In the end, the coded Polish characters in both works expose the underside of Poland as America's beau ideal.

Chapter four focuses on *Memoir of Thaddeus Kosciuszko, Poland's Hero and Patriot, an Officer in the American Army of the Revolution and Member of the Society of the*

Cincinnati (1883), a text Anthony Walton White Evans was commissioned to write by the Society of the Cincinnati. While the work centers on the life of Kosciuszko as a whole, it places emphasis on the war hero's financial situation, especially his lack of money, and on the brokenness of his body—the injuries he received in various battles and uprisings, his discomfort with seeing his body represented in works of art, and the fact that his body was fragmented after death. As Evans explains, "His heart is buried under a monument at Zuchwil, in Soleure; his body was embalmed and placed in the vaults of the Jesuit Church" (39-40). Even on his deathbed, Evans does not portray Kosciuszko as a whole man, but rather describes the exile's life and deeds in terms of his body parts; Evans references "his strong hand," his "eloquent innocent tongue," and his "eagle eye, which had formerly thrown its piercing glance over the ranks of advancing hosts with a far-seeing vision" (38). While the fragmentation of the subject is usually seen as a concern of the modern era and modernist literature, I argue that the text's focus on money, wounds and the splitting of the body into parts represents American concerns about social and psychological fragmentation due to the increasing instability of the economy during the late nineteenth century. Thus, even in the character of the original romantic Polish exile, Kosciuszko himself, we see not Poland as America's beau ideal, but also its gothic underside.

In writing about Poland, Gladsky observes that early and mid-nineteenth century American authors "were after . . . nothing less than a version of history that would present a symbolic Poland whose fate was inextricably linked to America's" (17). For many writers, as Gladsky points out, that meant seeing Poles and Americans as beaux ideal who were "cultivated, pure in heart, noble in intention" and who would always fight for freedom and Christian and democratic principles (16). For Brown, Poe, Melville, Southworth, Alcott and

Evans in the texts that I consider, the histories of Poland and the United States are also connected. However, the link is not in the notion that Poland was America's beau ideal (though Poland is partially a beau ideal for some of the authors). Rather, for all of these writers, Poland is a gothic presence, which shows a more sinister relationship between U.S. and Polish history. Indeed, Polish characters and references to Poland register nineteenth-century American anxieties about the United States falling prey to imperialism, about the country becoming an imperialistic despot, about the existence of slavery in a free nation, about the Catholic immigrant Other, and about individual fragmentation due to economic loss.

Chapter 1: Hostile Take/Taking-Over:
De-Coding Poland in the Gothic Fiction of
Charles Brockden Brown and Edgar Allen Poe

"If ever the plea of undeserved visitations
could be put forward by a nation, the Poles are entitled
to all the sympathy it can give birth to,
and all the interest it can inspire" (Bowring 1).

Charles Brockden Brown introduces his 1805 short story, "Somnambulism: A Fragment," by claiming that the source for the tale of sleepwalking and murder is an actual event which took place in the then-Prussian territory of Silesia (5). In his 1845 story, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," Edgar Allan Poe reveals that the subject of a mesmeric experiment (Valdemar) is a Polish gentleman living in America (1234). In each of the tales—in the first of which the narrator murders his love interest in his sleep, and in the second of which, the narrator mesmerizes a dying Polish man in order to prolong his life—the minor details about Silesia and Poland easily get lost. The tendency to overlook them is reflected in the fact that they have been the focus of extremely little critical attention. In their respective discussions of "Somnambulism," Michael Cody and Sydney J. Krause only give the author's reference to Silesia cursory mention in the notes. Alfred Weber lends it a bit more significance by commenting briefly on Brown's source for the Silesian event in his 1963 introduction to the tale (qtd. in Krause 334).[12] Likewise, the reference to Poland in Poe's tale gets only scant consideration. In her 1994 study of irony in Roland Barthes' semiological

reading of "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," Tracy Ware mentions Valdemar's work with Polish translations in passing (477). Barthes himself only makes the parenthetical observation that "Valdemar is Polish" and states that the character's surname is "a socio-ethnic code and a (or the) symbolic code" (88).

He does not attempt to uncover the explicit meaning of the code in his analysis. Nonetheless, Barthes' brief remarks divulge a significant fact: the indirect reference to Poland in Poe's tale served as cultural code in the author's time. For contemporary readers of Poe's tale, the reference to Poland in the character of Valdemar called up readers' knowledge of the Russo-Polish War of 1830-1831, a major albeit failed Polish revolution against Russia and an event which American newspapers of the era reported on extensively. Similarly, Brown's reference to Silesia served as cultural code to early nineteenth-century readers in the United States. The mention of Silesia would have turned their minds to the Prussian takeover of the territory in 1740 and Prussia, Russia and Austria's partitioning of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795. Just as for the Russo-Polish War, United States newspapers transmitted the facts of these conquests to American readers, representing all three geopolitical events as hostile takeovers by tyrannical, imperialistic nations.

These events in Eastern European history, connected as they are to the central symbolic codes of Brown's and Poe's gothic tales—sleepwalking and mesmerism, respectively—take on a particularly uncanny quality. When a person sleepwalks or is in a mesmerized state, he or she is no longer in control of his/her own body—a foreign entity, whether the unconscious or another person, takes over the reins of control. The controlling entity is unfamiliar and may cause the controlled body/individual to do strange things he or she would not do if awake and conscious. In the stories of Brown and Poe, the structuring

gothic actions of sleepwalking and mesmerism become a metaphor for the horrifying reality of the takeovers of Silesia (which was Austrian territory before Prussia took it over) and Poland: an unwelcome foreign body (nation) took over and controlled each territory. In this way, the tales foreground the uncanny nature of conquest while Poland as freedom-loving, democratic and patriotic "beau ideal" of the United States is entirely absent (Gladsky 16, 20).

Yet, after all this, the references to Silesia and Poland are not about Eastern Europe. Instead, they act as gothic projections, revealing American anxieties about potential and actual hostile takeovers involving the United States. In "Somnambulism: A Fragment," sleepwalking becomes symbolic of the early nineteenth-century American anxiety that the vulnerable, new country would be gobbled up by a foreign despotic power and would no longer be in control of its own body, as was the reality of Silesia and Poland in the eighteenth century. In "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," mesmerism becomes representative of the concern that the United States, because of its dealings with Mexico in the mid-nineteenth century, was increasingly becoming the kind of despot that had overrun and repressed Silesia and Poland. Thus, Silesia and Poland serve as direct references to an uncanny nation-state for the United States and the transformation it underwent in the forty years between the two stories.

Silesia and Poland as Body Politic

Leslie Fiedler traces the American gothic back to Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly* and ties the genre, or "pathological symptom" as he calls it, firmly to the unconscious (116, 129). In *Edgar Huntly*, the eponymous narrator tries to solve the murder of his friend Waldegrave by following the suspicious Clithero, who, Edgar finds, is a sleepwalker. Much to his chagrin, Edgar later realizes that he is a sleepwalker too, after his somnambulism leads

him into all manner of strange dreamlike situations, from being trapped in a cave with a panther to coming upon the bloody scene of a recent Indian massacre. Using *Edgar Huntly* as a starting point, Fiedler argues that "the American gothic . . . identified evil with the id" (148). He continues,

> For better or worse, then, Brown established in the American novel a tradition of dealing with the exaggerated and the grotesque, which impose themselves on us, not as they are verifiable in any external landscape or sociological observation of manners and men, but as they correspond in quality to our deepest fears and guilts as projected in our dreams or lived through in 'extreme situations.' (142)

For Fiedler, the literary manifestation of America's "deepest fears and guilts" is the presence of Native Americans and African Americans in gothic and Romantic novels (148). In other words, "authors have traditionally used these figures . . . to project the darker impulses of the id" (148).

Sleepwalking is the structuring symbol in *Edgar Huntly* that ties the repressed fear and guilt of the unconscious to the external code of the "savage" (147). Fiedler uses a quote from the novel to explain: "'How total is our blindness in regard to our own performances.' Any man may wake to find himself at the bottom of a pit. *We are all sleepwalkers!*" (145). The implication here is that Edgar—and all humanity by extension—is not able to fully control his actions. His unconscious fear and guilt takes him over and drives him to do things he is unaware of when he is asleep. This "blindness" and lack of control is terrifying. As Fielder suggests, if we allow ourselves to be controlled by the id, we may wake up anywhere in the clutches of anything or anyone. In Brown's text, the external forces that threaten

characters come to symbolize their internal fears or guilt. Sleepwalking is the connection between the two—an external manifestation of an internal anxiety about lack of self-control.

Russ Castronovo similarly argues that various states of unconscious in literature can help us to interpret the body politic, and more specifically, the condition of citizenship in the United States. Pointing out that the "public body has long been analogized by complexes," Castronovo explains,

> Phobic concern for white men as sexual citizens stemmed from a belief that democratic health could be ensured by rendering the collective political body as a private physical body. U.S. cultural criticism remains equally disposed to diagnose the collective body in terms of individual psychology. Amid violence and wounding, natural body and national body collide . . . (101)

Reading this collision through the corpse-like bodies of female mediums, Castronovo claims that the "dead" bodies symbolize the resistance or inability of citizens to become involved in politics in productive ways (149). More specifically, "belonging, incorporation, and other processes of the democratic community produce social corpses" (149).

In the same way that Castronovo insists on the importance of "interpret[ing] the dead as making an active commentary on life in the U.S. public sphere," I argue that Silesia and Poland work as code for the body politic under the sway of some force outside of it (149). The sleepwalking and mesmerized bodies in the works of Brown and Poe represent the national bodies of Silesia and Poland, which have fallen under the control of other nations. Like mediums, Althorpe and Valdemar are "living corpse[s]" (Castronovo 150). While mediums are physically disengaged, though, somnambulists and mesmerized individuals act

physically without conscious knowledge because they are under the control of the unconscious or of another person.

As code for the United States in two different eras, Silesia and Poland, pointing as they do to imperialist aggression, "make an active commentary on" the anxieties of the American body politic regarding the fear of hostile takeover and guilt over the hostile taking over of other nations. The mention of Silesia in "Somnambulism" registers the fear that the United States is sleepwalking "into the Nineteenth Century" and thus is not aware of or prepared for external dangers to the nation's safety (Cody 47). Read through the act of mesmerism, the reference to Poland in "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" indicates the anxiety that the United States is becoming an imperialistic power that invades and dominates other nations. In other words, the revolutionary moment codes Brown's story while the emergence of United States imperialism codes Poe's.

Silesia and Poland Behind Brown's "Somnambulism"

On March 3, 1741, *The Pennsylvania Gazette* printed the "Declaration of His Prussian Majesty, Containing His Motives for Marching a Body of His Troops to Silesia." In this document, Prussian king Frederick II, claims "ancient" and "incontestable Rights" to the Austrian territory (2). The conquest happened in the end of 1740 and, unprepared for the assault, the Austrian territory offered Frederick II little to no opposition. As Frederick II's declaration states, the monarch publicly justified his action by declaring a historical familial claim to the land. However, he privately mocked others who used such claims to gain territory (Clark 192). Because of this, scholars look on his assertion "as a mere fig-leaf for naked aggression" (Clark 192).

At the time, other European countries also deemed Frederick II's action as hostile; they were both astonished and troubled by it. The "spontaneous and unprovoked attack" gained considerable criticism, especially from Vienna (Clark 196). In April of 1741, *The Philadelphia Gazette* ran a "declaration" written by Silesian Count Schaffgotsch which recorded the shocked and indignant response of Queen Maria Theresa to the actions of Frederick II. The article reports her inability to understand the Prussian monarch's purpose and motives, her hopes that he and his army will leave her territory immediately, and her threats to go to her European allies for support if the Prussians did not depart ("Berlin" 1). This she did. Austria and Russia formed "an anti-Prussian coalition capable of prizing Silesia out of Frederick's hands . . ." (Clark 197). However, other European tensions and wars demanded the concentration of the allies (Clark 192-206).

In 1742—almost a year later—another article in *The American Weekly Mercury* illustrates how little Maria Theresa's threats had done to change the situation. This article from Berlin notes "the most solemn manner" in which European monarchs finally bowed to the will of Prussia in the matter ("From Berlin" 1). Thus, Frederick II was ultimately successful. Materially, he gained the gold and resources of "one of the most densely industrialized areas of modern German Europe," as well as his most cherished and insatiable desire: more land (Clark 192, 183-96). In acquiring all this without any real contest, he entirely altered the power structure of Europe and won Prussia a seat at the table of nations (Clark 192-206).

In the 1740s, word of Prussia's quick takeover of Silesia was all over newspapers in the New World's east coast. For those of Brown's readers in 1805 who were familiar with important world events of the prior century, the mention of Silesia in "Somnambulism"

signaled Prussia's conquest of the territory. Whether United States citizens recognized it or not, their young country was a reflection of Silesia's 1740s image. Like the Austrian territory, the U.S. was a land with immense resources and possibilities for industry. It was also a land for which France, Britain and Spain had been competing for more than a century, a land over which a war for control had already been fought by the time Brown published his story. Because of these similarities, the appearance of Silesia in the tale can easily be seen as cultural code for American readers' anxieties about the future of the young United States.

Although the country had been victorious in the Revolutionary War some twenty-two years before the publication of "Somnambulism," it was not yet out of danger. Todd Estes notes, "The peace that came in 1793 [with Britain] was always rather shaky . . ." (15). After the war's end, the new U.S. government tiptoed between England and France, trying to become trade partners with both powers and, at the same time, trying to avoid another war. This kowtowing, however, had the opposite effect and almost caused the U.S. wars on two fronts (Estes 15-31).[13] The tensions between the three countries amounted to a very conscious anxiety that if America couldn't avoid war, the Revolution would have been for naught and the country would again fall prey to the authority of a stronger nation that believed it had a historical claim to the land (Wood 239-40, 275). In short, it would end up like Silesia.

Of course, the takeover of Silesia happened over sixty years before the publication of "Somnambulism." It is more likely that Americans knowledgeable about the fact that Silesia was a part of Prussia would have understood the coded allusion to Prussia as signaling a more contemporary event in which that country took a leading role in the 1790s—the three-step partitioning of Poland into non-existence. The partitioning of Poland was a process that

ended in 1795 (Davies, vol. 1, 492-521). While Poland was a thriving eastern European nation as late as the mid-seventeenth century, it was riddled with wars over territory and kingship from 1700-1717. In his seminal history of the country, Norman Davies notes that these circumstances eventually left Poland's leaders and citizens fatigued and at odds with each other. At this advantageous moment, Russia stepped in to mediate a dispute. In return, it gained an enormous amount of control over Polish politics and concerns (Davies, vol. 1, 492-521). This opened a door for Russia to have further power over the country, and looking on, Prussia found itself with a whetted appetite for more land. From that point on, "whenever the Poles took steps to put their house in order, both Russia and Prussia took counter-steps to see that nothing changed" (513). Then, fifty-five years after Russia initially became involved in Poland's politics, Frederick II of Prussia devised a plot for a partial partition of Poland, which aggressors Austria, Russia and Prussia carried out, slicing off three portions of Polish territory and dividing the spoils amongst themselves (492-521). The three powers' actions in relation to Poland were met with indignation and anger by the rest of Europe and with years of determined resistance in Poland. Eventually, Poland and Russia went to war in the early 1790s. The Russian victory led to the slicing off and dividing up of more Polish territory in 1793 (511-41).

From the time of this second partition, to the tragic final note of Thaddeus Koscuiszko's Polish revolution in 1794, Americans were reading all about Poland in their newspapers.[14] In Brown's native Philadelphia, newspaper reports made it very clear on whose side the United States stood. Papers decried Russia, Austria and especially Prussia as oppressors of freedom. *The Philadelphia Gazette and Daily Advertiser* of April 29, 1794 relates that "In Poland liberty is subverted; that fair portion of creation seized by the

relentless fangs of despotism . . .” (“Mr. Fox’s” Supp. 1). Two 1795 articles written after the revolution refer to Frederick II as “the despot of Prussia,” and another article declares all three nations “the plunderers of that fair country,” Poland (“Civic” 2; “Philadelphia” 2; “London, October 11” 2).

The same newspapers uphold the cause of Poland during the revolution and pity the country when all hope is lost. One report from London describes Poland as having a “revolutionary spirit” at the beginning of the uprising (“London, April 19” 2). A piece entitled “The Patriots of Poland” urges Americans to support their sister country:

> The time is arrived when assistance to the Polish Patriots would produce the most important advantages. Happily the Prussian King is disgracefully driven from his position. An ‘armed nation’ has convinced him how dangerous it is for a sovereign to trample upon the necks of his subjects—and the insulted majesty of a people will soon, we trust, inflict a severe and exemplary punishment on the insulting mightiness of a monarch. . . . Let us subscribe money for the purchase of such things as the patriots want—Let us buy arms for them—Let us send them scores and ammunitions—Let us negotiate a loan for them. . . . Let us do these things, and we shall deserve that noblest of all appellations—the Friends of the Human Race. (3)

Gallant and well meaning though this appeal may sound, by the time of the article’s publication in 1795, it was already too late for these “friends” to help Poland in any way. The revolution was over, and the third and final partition of Poland was already complete. Subsequent newspaper articles react in sadness, referring to the fallen state as “unfortunate,” “unhappy,” and “miserable” (“Epitomised” 3; “Salem” 3; “Cape” 3). One paper even remarks on the “dismemberment of Poland” (“Admiralty” 2). This description calls up

images of a human body brutally torn apart and implies the deep and long-lasting damage that a land-hungry empire can do to another state in thus ripping it limb from limb.

Both the newspaper articles and the events they discuss make it apparent that revolution is key to understanding Poland's coded meaning for Americans in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. This is not surprising. America's own revolution had recently ended, and citizens of the young country likely felt immediate sympathy for other countries fighting oppression. Besides this, a renowned freedom fighter—Thaddeus Kosciuszko—bridged the gap between the American and Polish revolutions. Thomas Gladsky points out that America's interest in Poland

> was, in part, a historical reflex extending back to the American Revolution when Poland had sent two of its most illustrious sons to help in the struggle for independence. The distinguished efforts of Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski, who gave his life in the cause of the Revolution, created an indelible impression in the mind of the nation. (11)

This cultural memory was just as strong in the 1830s as it had been in 1790s (11). The name of Kosciuszko and tales of his heroism in articles about him, the American Revolutionary War, and the Polish revolution kept the connection fresh.

The American affinity for Kosciuszko, Poland's revolution against despotic powers, and the other similarities between Poland and the United States that Gladsky observes may have solidified a "fraternal bond" between the two countries (Gladsky 24). However, the image of Poland that is beneath "Somnambulism" is not "the beau ideal for Western man" as it is in other pieces of nineteenth century American writing (Gladsky 16). Instead, Silesia serves as a direct reference to an uncanny nation-state for the United States. This is the dark

underside of Poland as America's beau ideal; it shows the fears of the United States' present in the reflection of "unfortunate Poland."

If the reference to Silesia in "Somnambulism" is code for the hostile takeovers of both the Austrian territory and of Poland, and if those conquests are projections of American fears, Brown's story of sleepwalking and loss of control implicitly poses a question: could America, too, fall under the control of a foreign power and lose its vaunted liberty and sovereignty? An analysis of the character of Althorpe gives a resounding affirmation to this question. As Rip Van Winkle's big sleep similarly shows, early Americans would rather repress the revolution than live through, and although revolution had already been won by Brown's time, there were still dangers to be faced and threats to be averted. If Americans fell asleep, they, like Althorpe, could risk losing control of the national body.

Undoubtedly, Brown knew all that Silesia would signal for his readers, and there is evidence that his reference to the territory in "Somnambulism" is more by design than by accident. The author prefaces his short story—or, as he calls it, his "fragment"—with what purports to be an actual sleepwalking murder case reported in "the *Vienna Gazette* of June 14, 1784," but the truthfulness of the news story is questionable (5).[15] As Sydney J. Krause points out in his footnotes that the "researches of a European scholar, Alfred Weber, have been unsuccessful in turning up a copy of the somnambulist item either in the *Gazette* or other journals of the time . . ." (334-5). Instead of finding the "fragment" at the beginning of his tale, it stands to reason that Brown might have invented it (Krause 335). If this supposition is correct, it is curious that he chose Silesia as the location for the fictitious crime. His choice of this specific space implies that he was familiar with the events that happened in Silesia in the mid-eighteenth century. It also implies that he understood the

coded meanings of both Silesia and Poland for his audience. Following this, Brown's choice of writing Silesia into a tale about sleepwalking is no coincidence either. As Brown surely knew, the pairing of sleepwalking with Silesia brings up questions of control and authority.

The act of sleepwalking is at the heart of Brown's "Somnambulism: A Fragment." Narrated by unwitting sleepwalker and villain, Althorpe, the story begins with Althorpe's guests, Mr. Davis and his daughter Constantia, learning of an emergency at home. After discussing the situation together, the Davises decide they must travel homeward immediately by night. Althorpe, motivated by an "inexplicable" feeling "that some unseen danger lurked in their way," urges the father and daughter to either postpone their trip until daylight or to allow him to accompany them (8). Doubtless, however, he is also unconsciously motivated by his desire for Constantia, who is engaged to another man. Waving away Althorpe's pleas and concerns, Mr. Davis and Constantia leave the narrator's house straightaway. As he watches them depart, Althorpe experiences fresh anxiety. Nevertheless, he soon falls asleep and dreams that he must protect Constantia from an assailant on the road. In the dream, he shoots and kills the attacker, and, upon waking up, he is no longer concerned about Constantia's welfare. He starts his day feeling revitalized and carefree, only to find out a few hours later that Constantia has been shot by an unknown villain during the night. The story ends with Constantia's death and Althorpe's refusal to admit to the truth that he committed the deed while sleepwalking (5-24).

Michael Cody posits that the 1805 tale is about the reality of living in the newly formed United States of America, "the dangers of democracy," "the inability of Federalist ideology to counterbalance these dangers," and the importance of being "educated and wide awake (conscious)" in order to survive (49, 51). Bound up in all of these ideas are issues of

control and the lack thereof. Cody first turns to Althorpe in this discussion of control, for, as Althorpe himself states, "My passions, when I allowed them sway, were incontroulable" (8). This lack of control on the narrator's part is one of the most troubling aspects of the story for Cody. He argues that Althorpe's actions while asleep attest to the fact that he is "inwardly a nightmare, like France during the Terror, of licentious freedom and irrational, radical democracy" (49).

As already noted, Leslie Fiedler exclaims in his reading of Brown's *Edgar Huntly,* "*We are all sleepwalkers!"* (145). Cody makes this point about "Somnambulism." The title, he argues, does not refer only to Althorpe and his condition. Though the narrator may be the only literal sleepwalker in the tale, Mr. Davis and Constantia are also, in a sense, somnambulists. In their hyper-rationality, they are unable to recognize warning signals from Althorpe, and so they convince themselves that there is nothing to be concerned about. Cody, by way of his title, likens their attitude to that of Americans in the early 1800s, who are also sleepwalking. Like Constantia and her father, United States citizens believed in the logic and predictability of existence, when in reality, they lived in a country that had the potential to be unexpectedly volatile and hazardous (49-51). As Cody sees it, this "Federalist" rationality plays out in Brown's story against the "radical democracy" and "romantic imagination" of the day, as personified by Althorpe (50).

Cody's emphasis on the inability of characters in "Somnambulism" and individuals in the early United States to perceive danger in their environment is in keeping with the way in which Brown would have understood the phenomena of sleepwalking. Allan Gardner Smith argues that in order to make his depictions of sleepwalking as realistic as possible, Brown relied on scientific thinkers of his day, such as Erasmus Darwin, who theorized about

somnambulism in both volumes of *Zoonomia, or the Laws of Organic Life* (Smith 3, 13). Instead of classifying sleepwalking as a disorder having to do with sleep, Darwin defines it as a type of "reverie" (vol. 1, 221). When in a reverie, he writes, "we cease to be conscious of our existence, are inattentive to time and place, and do not distinguish [our] train of sensitive and voluntary ideas from the irritative ones excited by the presence of external objects . . ." (220). In other words, individuals in a reverie are not aware of their immediate surroundings.

Of somnambulistic reveries specifically, Darwin observes, "Those persons, who are said to walk in their sleep, are affected with reverie to so great a degree, that it becomes a formidable disease, the essence of which consists in the inaptitude of the mind to attend to external stimuli" (Darwin, vol. 1, 221). While unaware of external reality and circumstance, sleepwalkers may have conversations with "imaginary persons," recite or sing things from memory, "walk about the room" and do other things as if awake and fully conscious (222). When the somnambulist returns to a conscious state, however, the person has no memory of what they have done or said (223).

Even so, Darwin asserts, sleepwalkers have some measure of control. In volume two of *Zoonomia,* he claims that "the ideas of the mind" and "the muscles" are "subservient to the will" of the sleepwalker because he or she is able to speak and function as if awake and conscious (336). The sleepwalker's brain, or "will," then, is able to send signals to his/her body to make it talk or walk or kill. But what controls the individual's will, or brain, during a reverie? Why can't the sleepwalker remember his or her actions? Why isn't he or she aware of his/her actual surroundings? These are questions that Darwin neither asks nor answers in *Zoonomia*. Yet they are questions that are implied by the "inaptitude of the mind to attend to external stimuli." The sleepwalker's actions, in other words, are not the result of conscious

choices. That is clear, though unstated. The will is under the control of something else, something that Darwin never puts his finger on.[16]

From reading Darwin's thoughts and observations on sleepwalking, Brown would have thus understood somnambulism as a state in which a person is dissociated from reality by some unexplained and unnamed force but still appears alert and able to function as if awake (Darwin, vol. 1, 222). The reality of the body being controlled by some other force is not merely a description of sleepwalking. It is also a description of the height of American fears in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As an individual can be ruled over and controlled by the unconscious, the United States had anxieties about being ruled over and controlled by a despotic foreign power with foreign interests, laws and tactics. For Brown, Silesia is code for these fears. Quickly and violently taken over by Prussia and thereafter under the complete control of a foreign monarch who inflicted his own interests on the territory, Silesia represents the full measure of the United States' anxieties. By further signaling the events in Poland in the 1790s, Silesia has a double significance. Having been thrice partitioned, having entered into a costly but fruitless revolution, and having been forced under the control of three separate powers, Poland presented Brown's readers with an even more troubling and accurate picture of American post-revolutionary anxieties.

Like Cody, I also read a double meaning in "Somnambulism." Yet, while Cody reads the story as an allegory of the clashing political parties and ideologies in early nineteenth-century America, I argue that the specter of Silesia in the tale's introduction tells a different story. "Somnambulism" is an allegory of Americans' anxieties about war and other external threats. Cody implies that Constantia figures as America in this allegory (50). However, this interpretation is problematic. Constantia, unlike the United States, is unsuspecting of any

danger whatsoever. Despite signs on the road and her father's misgivings that something is wrong, Constantia, at least by her words, remains unconvinced that any threat assails her. When she sees "some one" in front of the carriage who suddenly runs "across the road, and disappear[s]," she merely treats the strange presence as "a topic of abundant speculation" (12). Later, when Mr. Davis suspects that the unknown person may have been Althorpe following them and ready to do them some "terror," Constantia refuses to believe Althorpe would do her any harm other than "fall[ing] in love" with her (13). At the returned presence of the obscured individual on the road, she still insists that her father "be no disturbed" (13). While Constantia "involuntarily start[s]" the first time she hears the "scream, dismally loud, and piercingly shrill" of the person she and her father believe to be the mad Nick Handysides, she yet believes she has "no personal injury to fear from him" (16-7). For this reason, she convinces her father to go for help alone and leave her with the carriage after it breaks down even though he has reservations about the "impropriety of leaving a woman, single and unarmed, to the machinations of [a] demoniac" (17). Mr. Davis's worries prove correct, of course, while Constantia is horribly wrong in her pragmatism and rationality. An attacker shoots her as soon as her father begins walking down the road.

It is important to consider the gendered implications of Constantia rationalizing away a sense of danger. In conventional romance plots, the heroine faints or cowers at signs of physical threat while the hero (in this case, her father) reassures the heroine and, usually, rushes to defend her. In "Somnambulism," the opposite is true. As Constantia's father, Mr. Davis's role is to be a self-assured and composed protector, but in betraying anxiety, hesitance and concern for his own and his daughter's safety, he takes a backseat role to Constantia who becomes the heroine. Even in the face of Nick's nighttime shenanigans, she

remains confident and undaunted. By calming her father and persuading him to leave her when the wagon gets stuck, she moreover easily takes charge of the situation. In all this, she takes on a leadership role not normally given to women in early nineteenth-century romances.

In her confidence and rationalism, it is also easy to see Constantia, as Cody does, as a metaphor for America. However, if the United States is sleepwalking in the same fashion as Constantia is—entirely unafraid and hyper-rational—Brown's story implies that the country is either unconsciously repressing or altogether ignorant of the dangers posed by international wars and outside threats to its economy. This couldn't be further from the truth. As the history of America's close calls with France or Britain show, the United States was very much aware of and anxious about external dangers to its well-being. America was concerned about an attack by its own Nick Handysides or Althorpe.

Instead of Constantia, Althorpe, the somnambulant murderer himself, is the link between the Silesia and the United States. The narrator first speaks about his out-of-control "passions" when he is still awake and before Constantia and her father depart (8). Though he makes his comment matter-of-factly, it is an exaggeration. Althorpe, it is clear, is able to control his "passions" to a certain extent when he is awake. When he is conscious, he can turn his desires off and not give "them sway." As we know, it is not when he is awake that he chases after Constantia, although he clearly expresses a desire to follow the travelers and keep them safe (8). Similarly, Althorpe is not conscious when he kills the girl. He performs both acts in a "profound slumber" in which he has a semi-awareness of the tragedy that he misinterprets and remembers as a dream (11). In the vision,

> The images were fleeting and transient. . . . I was summoned, methought, to defend this lady from the attacks of an assassin. My ideas were full of confusion and inaccuracy. All that I can recollect is, that my efforts had been unsuccessful to avert the stroke of the murderer. . . . I imagined myself engaged, for a long time, in pursuit of the guilty, and, at last, to have detected him in an artful disguise. I did not employ the usual preliminaries which honour prescribes, but, stimulated by rage, attacked him with a pistol, and terminated his career by a mortal wound. (11)

Even through the "confusion" and "fleeting" impressions of what Althorpe believes to be a dream, he remains in control of his "passions." He defends Constantia from a violent assailant and shows no signs of being a jealous lover. Of course, the "dream" is merely a screen memory of what Althorpe actually does in his sleepwalking state; he kills Constantia, and his repressed guilt distorts the memory.

It is in this somnambulant state that Althorpe is, for the first time in the story, literally out of control. For, what else is sleepwalking but a state in which one is not in control of one's own body, a state in which one is ruled by the "foreignness of the unconscious?" (Brewster 133). Being in such a state of helpless subjection to another power is truly disturbing. This is the reason that Althorpe is "aghast" when he learns of Constantia's shooting (13). He guesses the horrible truth—that he, under the control of some strange force, is the perpetrator. Yet, it is not the action he took that is most unsettling. Rather, it is the thought of being controlled by something else, the thought of being in such a vulnerable and powerless state. Althorpe ultimately fears being controlled by his admittedly overpowering "passions" (9). Though it is clear that he can and does control his "passions" when he is awake, he confesses more than once before the Davises leave that his "conduct . .

. was characterised by precipitation and headlong energy" (9). Indeed, the only manner in which he is out of control before Constantia and Mr. Davis leave is in his insistence that they stay and in his "incontroulable" feeling of "terror" (9). He persistently maintains that his feelings of discomfort at their departure arise from the "possibilities . . . that a tree, or ridge, or stone unobserved might overturn the carriage; that their horse might fail, or be urged, by some accident, to flight . . ." (9). Though it is true any of these things "were far from being impossible," it is nonsensical for him to be in "terror" of them (9). A lame horse or overturned carriage is not cause for terror, as Constantia points out, and Althorpe himself admits, "I had [not] been able distinctly to tell what it was that I feared" (10). This is because the real "evil that was menaced" is Althorpe's subconscious sense of what he might do to Constantia when he is asleep and out of control (10). In other words, the only thing to fear in the tale is Althorpe's "passions." His "passions" are the only thing he describes as ultimately "incontroulable," without limit, and able to cause harm; these passions are Althorpe's subconscious desires taking control of his actions (9). While screaming Nick Handysides is merely a harmless "mischief-loving idiot," Althorpe's unmeasureable "zeal" and "headlong energy" are the true "uncommon danger" (15, 8, 9).

Poland Behind Poe's "Valdemar"

Forty years after the publication of Brown's "Somnambulism: A Fragment," Poe published his short story, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar." While the gothic genre and the uncanny nature of sleepwalking and mesmerism link the two tales, small references to Eastern Europe also connect them. Instead of Silesia, Poe's story includes an indirect reference to Poland. And, for Poe's American readers, this reference served as cultural code

for the troubles Poland experienced in the mid-nineteenth century, troubles that United States newspapers reported on comprehensively.

On December 17, 1830, New York's *Commercial Advertiser* ran the entire transcript of the recent "Great National Republican Meeting." Most of the speeches centered on supporting Henry Clay as a candidate for the presidency, but politicians also spoke out against president Andrew Jackson's plans for removing Native Americans from Georgia and confiscating their lands. One speaker compared the removal "with the partition of Poland, the conquest of Mexico, and the subjugation of India," stating that if such an action were taken, other nations would henceforward doubt America's "high pretensions to justice and moral integrity" (2). In making this statement, the political leader put the partitioning of Poland on par with some of the greatest U.S. injustices of the early nineteenth century.

Alluding to events in the Polish past, what the speaker could not have realized was that, in a matter of weeks, contemporaneous events in Poland would again saturate American newspapers. In the final days of 1830, a small number of non-military Poles in the Russian section of partitioned Poland, spurred by political upheaval and independence movements all over Europe, took part in an ill-planned revolt against Russia. Thus began the Russo-Polish War of 1830-1831. After this initial thrust, the rebels were unable to carry out further attacks successfully, and Polish leaders took control of the uprising (Davies, vol. 2, 231-6). However, they did not support the rebellion and thus strove to settle the matter peacefully with Russia. To their dismay, "Patient negotiation . . . yielded nothing" (235). Russian Czar Nicholas was completely unwilling to make peace; instead, "from the very beginning he determined to crush the Poles by force" (235). In reaction, Polish political leaders declared independence from Russian rule. They believed this would incense the Russians, and they

were right. Early in 1831, Russian troops marched into Russian Poland. Though the Poles won several battles outright, they experienced a crippling defeat in May, in which most of their best soldiers were killed or captured. The war lingered on until autumn of that year, but the springtime defeat marked the beginning of the end (231-6).

When news of the rebellion reached the United States, papers printed strong statements in support of Poland and in angry opposition to Russia. In late January of 1831, one news writer condemns Russia's harsh treatment of the Polish subjects, whom he states, "were almost the only unemancipated slaves in Europe" ("Ten Days" 2). Following this censure, he speaks in defense of the Polish cause, declaring, "Every mind of common feeling must rejoice at the attempt made by such a people . . . to regain their freedom" ("Ten Days" 2). Only a few days later, the writer of another article refers to Russia as "the unrelenting hand of despotism," and expresses hopes that "the Russian Czar who has so recently exhibited symptoms of lording it over the earth, will be brought to a sense of his own condition . . ." ("Europe" 2). The words of these and many other articles written about the subject, cemented America's friendship with Poland and antagonism toward Russia. Americans were, in fact, so hopeful about a victorious outcome for Poland, that when the news of defeat came, the *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser* called it "disastrous" ("Wednesday" 2).

The aftermath of the rebellion was in some ways worse than the war itself. According to Davies, Russia took its still-burning anger out on the Poles within its territories by imprisoning, deporting and executing known leaders of the uprising; taking land from Poles; imposing heavy taxes; and "suspend[ing] . . . all civil rights" (vol. 2, 242-4). Before and during this time of cultural suppression, American newspapers expressed their support for

Poland, but voices from other quarters rang out just as loudly. According to Thomas Gladsky, before the rebellion ended, some Americans "volunteered to join the Polish forces; others marshaled aid through proclamations, meetings, and fund raisings" (12-3).[17] Edgar Allan Poe joined in. While the uprising in Poland was raging, Poe was a student at West Point (Hutchisson 25). Well aware of the rebellion, he had great sympathy for the cause. In the spring of 1831, he wrote a letter to Colonel Thayer, asking permission

> to proceed to Paris with the view of obtaining through the interest of the Marquis de La Fayette an appointment (if possible) in the Polish Army. In the event of an interference of France in behalf of Poland this may be easily effected . . . (Poe, "To Colonel" 44-5)

Despite his apparently strong sentiments, Poe never followed up on his intention. In fact, shortly after writing his letter, he left West Point for Baltimore and seems to have forgotten all about his plans to enter the fray. Poe biographer James M. Hutchisson argues that Poe didn't come through because the thought of fighting for the Poles was only a passing whim in the first place (23-31).[18]

Whatever the case, Poe's feelings were clearly indicative of "the times and the country's attitude toward Poland" (Gladsky 11).[19] As it had been earlier in its history, the United States was fascinated with and felt akin to Poland. According to Gladsky, Americans believed the Polish people were "[c]ourageous, compassionate, patriotic, self-sacrificing, educated, cultured, adventurous, high-minded," and they believed that Poland's "destiny" was tied up with that of the U.S. (16, 15). While American feelings toward the partitioned country were all "positive," Gladsky also astutely notes that the events of the early 1830s held "a warning" for the United States (15). This warning, he seems to suggest, is very

similar to the haunting fear of Brown's United States—that if Americans were not vigilant, they too could lose their freedom (11-20).

However, the coded warning in the events of 1830-1831 in Poland is not about the loss of freedom for the United States. Rather, it is a warning for America to beware of using its power to impose its will on other nations—namely Mexico. If the nation failed to heed the warning, it could become, like Prussia and Russia had in the eyes of the rest of the world, a despot. This is a warning much more fitting and realistic for Poe's historical moment. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, many political leaders in the United States had their minds set on one thing that was good for America, but detrimental to Mexican government, people and interests: expansionism (Merry 69, 95).

In 1845, when Poe wrote and published "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," the poster child for manifest destiny was Texas, a territory settled by American citizens in the 1820s, but claimed by Mexico as a rightful part of their country. Prior to 1845, politicians had been unsuccessful in their efforts to annex or buy the territory. However, during the summer of 1845, at the prodding of President James K. Polk, Texas finally voted to be annexed with the United States (Merry 67-74, 145-158). Mexico saw this as "an act of war," and throughout the rest of 1845, tensions between the two countries ran extremely high (Heidler 45). Despite America's attempts to settle the dispute over Texas and "negotiate the purchase of Alta California and New Mexico" late in 1845, the Mexican American War began in spring of the next year (Heidler 51, 56).

Instead of echoing the experience of Poland in the 1830s, America's lust for land, power, and economic advancement sounds strangely similar to the motivations of Prussia and Russia in partitioning Poland in the 1790s. There are other similarities between late

eighteenth century Prussia and mid-nineteenth century America. Robert W. Merry describes President Polk's actions in regard to Texas, and later California, as extremely "reckless" (159). Christopher Clark uses similar words to describe the Prussian king's actions in Silesia, stating that they were marked by "a spontaneity verging on recklessness" (Clark 196). Historians David and Jeanne Heidler note that Polk was not above using trickery and/or political manipulation to meet his goals. Indeed, before the end of the decade, the president

> had already set in motion a secret initiative that he hoped would turn California into another Texas by inciting an indigenous rebellion there, overthrowing Mexican authority and requesting U.S. annexation (52).

Likewise, both Prussia and Russia used political manipulation to keep Poland in a subservient position until they could entirely partition the country between themselves and Austria (Davies, vol. 1, 512). Furthermore, like Russia's attitude to Poland in the 1830s, the United States seemed to be more than willing to put down any opposition to their aims on the Mexican territories of Texas, California and New Mexico by force and strength of the numbers. The United States was turning into the very kind of despot that it had censured ceaseless times in its own newspapers in the 1790s and the 1830s.

As if mesmerized, some followed Polk as he chased wildly after his "expansionist ambitions" (Merry 179). Others trembled at the aims and actions of the country. Henry Clay, for one, emphatically opposed the annexation of Texas, partly because he felt that it promoted "an ideology of conquest and hence . . . [foreshadowed] the destruction of the fundamental principles underlying the republic" (Merry 75-6). For Clay, the fear of the United States becoming a land-hungry despot was all too real. Thus, at the Great National Republican Meeting in support of Clay's candidacy for president in 1830, the equation of the

nation's actions in Mexico with Russia and Prussia's in Poland was an apt metaphor. Both Clay and his audience of political supporters would have been familiar with the story if they regularly read U.S. newspapers. For them, the reference to Poland signaled power-hungry despotism. Likewise, Poe's readers were familiar with the story. Thus, the mere mention of Poland in Poe's tale signaled the oppressive actions of Russia and Prussia. Poland acts as the dark underside of the beau ideal, reflecting back to America its own oppressive actions in Mexico.

Just as Poe's readers would have been aware of events in recent Polish history, they would have also been familiar with the animal magnetism, or mesmerism, craze sweeping the United States in the wake of Charles Poyen's demonstrations in the late 1830s of what he believed to be the "hidden secret of human happiness and well-being" (R. Fuller 18). Poyen followed in the footsteps of the French practitioners of mesmerism such as Marquis de Puységur, who practiced a "revised" version of Franz Anton Mesmer's "magnetic healing" (18, 11, 10). While Mesmer asked patients to imbibe special drinks with iron in them and waved magnets near their bodies in order to control and "restor[e] to equilibrium" the patients' animal magnetism, which he theorized was "an invisible energy, or fluid," Puységur "magnetized his patients only to have them fall into unusual sleeplike states" in which they were "much more interesting," "far brighter and much more perceptive" (3, 2, 10). Similarly to Mesmer, the purpose of mesmerism for Puységur was healing, but instead of focusing on the magnetic fluids, he emphasized "the special rapport established between patient and healer" and "the operator's ability to gain some sort of nonverbal control of the patient's will" (11).

This was the brand of mesmerism that Charles Poyen practiced. In stage shows, he attempted to heal individuals by putting them into a "mesmeric sleep" and waving his hands over their bodies (R. Fuller 19). Those in such a trance often exhibited that they had reached a "higher consciousness" by "perform[ing] feats of clairvoyance and extrasensory perception . . ." (19, 20). When they woke up, though, they had no memory of the procedure or their own actions (20). Thus, it appeared as if they had unconsciously done certain acts while under the control of the magnetizer.

As the craze spread, Poe was paying attention and intensely interested. Voraciously, he read the widely circulating literature about mesmerism, and he even attended several demonstrations (R. Fuller 36). From his observations and from reading texts like Puységur's *An Essay of Instruction, on Animal Magnetism,* Poe would have understood mesmerism to be a state in which, according to practitioners, "the magnetizer [has] an absolute empire over his patient. . . . in all which concerns the well being and health of the patient; he may also be able to obtain from him, things indifferent in themselves, as to make him walk, talk, drink, write . . ." (Puységur 67). In other words, the mesmerizer as a foreign body professed to control patients' actions, words, and decisions; they fully took over the will of the mesmerized. With all of Poe's knowledge about mesmerism, however, he was not a devout believer in its powers (R. Fuller 36). In his writing, he "caricatured" mesmerism's "ecstatic flights of the soul" (36). In order to toy with a public whom he found all too credulous about the healing "science," he wrote "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" as if the mesmeric events in it had actually happened. Because of the tale's true-to-life characters, its believable setting, its timely subject matter of mesmerism, and its "journalistic" style, readers took the bait

(Jiménez González 99, 104, 106). The story "created widespread controversy," and, according to Fuller, Poe "enjoyed the furor immensely" (R. Fuller 37, 38).

In "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," the mesmerist-narrator wants to be the first person to mesmerize someone "*in articulo mortis*" in order to halt "the encroachments of Death" (1233). For the experiment, the narrator chooses his "friend, M. Ernest Valdemar, the well-known compiler of the 'Bibliotheca Forensica,' and author . . . of the Polish versions of 'Wallenstein' and 'Gargantua'" (1234). Valdemar accepts the narrator's proposal, and sometime later, when he feels death coming upon him, calls the narrator so the experiment can commence. To the narrator's delight, the experiment is successful; Valdemar is "in an unusually perfect state of mesmeric trance" (1237-8). In his "trance," Valdemar speaks to the narrator several times, telling the narrator that he is "dying" (1239). With time, he begins to look more and more like a corpse, although he is still alive. After having several conversations with Valdemar and keeping him in a mesmerized state for over six months, the narrator wakes him up (1233-43). Instead of coming out of the trance alive, however, Valdemar's body instantly decomposes into a "liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putridity" (1243).

This synopsis of Poe's story contains two significant points. First, it is important to note Valdemar's refugee status. He is representative of the many Poles who fled Russian Poland after the defeat of the Polish rebels in 1831 (Davies, vol. 2, 245). The tale's focus on the mesmeric state is another point of significance. In fact, most recent criticism of Poe's tale focuses on mesmerism, either exploring it psychoanalytically or symbolically connecting Valdemar's disembodied voice with technologies of the nineteenth century, like the telegraph or the phonograph.[20] However, in Poe's text, there is more to the all-pervading presence of

mesmerism than that. It reveals two distinct things about Americans in the mid-nineteenth century. One speaks to America's lack of ability for accurate self-reflection and analysis. Castronovo likens the American democratic system of government in the mid and late 1800s to mesmerism, a phenomenon that was sweeping across the country early in the century. Demonstrations of "sleepwalking," "hypnosis," and "clairvoyance" were so popular in the United States that they eclipsed the "democratic [duty to pay] attention to social issues" (105). Anyone and everyone could participate in the "celestial" sphere with the help of mediums and mesmerizers; thus, action against social injustice was no longer necessary (131). The nation's craze of spiritualism, then, "reflect[ed] an occult sphere of citizenship" in which people chose to "feign unconsciousness and sleepwalk past historical conditions that create social division" (105, 119). Most of the "conditions" that Castronovo discusses are intra-national; he remarks on slavery, as well as labor and class divisions within United States borders (103-31). By becoming willfully mesmerized and asleep to such social inequities, citizens allow injustices to continue.

Yet, mesmerism in the nineteenth-century United States—and in Poe's tale—clearly links to American attitudes about events involving other countries. Specifically, it relates to the nation's "expansionist ambitions" toward Texas, New Mexico and California, no matter what the cost to Mexico. While it is true that some Americans vehemently pointed out that these ambitions smacked of "an ideology of conquest," others were in a mesmeric trance regarding the inherently problematic nature of Manifest Destiny. Like Valdemar, who chose to be mesmerized rather than to face the grim actuality of death, a majority of American citizens chose to live in a hypnotized state, refusing to see their nation for what it was becoming: an imperialistic despot. They fancied that they resembled romantic Poland, in its

desperate fight for freedom and independence. In reality, though, they were "necro citizens," to use Castronovo's term, comfortably asleep to the fact that the United States now looked and acted much more like Russia or Prussia than Poland.

Seen in another sense, the United States was, like Poe's narrator, experimenting with mesmerism. Discussing "Valdemar" through a psychoanalytic lens, Scott Brewster explains that when a person is hypnotized, he or she is no longer in control, but is taken over by the "foreign body or agency" of the "unconscious" (121, 133). Similarly, the United States became a literal and calculating "foreign body" in seeking to possess and control Mexican territory. Thus, a dramatic change took place in America from the time of Brown's story to that of Poe's. In literature, Poland no longer signaled American anxieties about being controlled. Rather, it became code for anxieties (sometimes conscious and sometimes willfully ignored) about being *controlling*, or "lording it over" other countries and becoming a mirror image of Russia and Prussia.

Besides providing a revealing picture of American attitudes toward Mexico, the focus on mesmerism in Poe's story also brings to light American attitudes toward Poland. Treating "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" in his article, "Mesmerism and the Electric Age: From Poe to Edison," Anthony Enns links mesmerism with the act or idea of preservation. He compares Valdemar's mesmeric speeches to sounds over the phonograph, ultimately suggesting that both voices are "separated from the body and preserved over time" (72). This connection between mesmerism and preservation speaks to the American desire to keep Poland "alive" after the three partitions of the eighteenth century and the defeat of the rebellion in 1830-1831. Seeing an earlier image of their own country in Poland, Americans sought to resuscitate their beau ideal through literature, as Gladsky points out (12). Poe is

doing the same thing in his story. As the narrator endeavors to extend the life of Valdemar through mesmerism, Poe expresses his own wish to lengthen Poland's life after the failure of its uprising.

In the end, though, Poe's narrator is ultimately unable to preserve Valdemar's life beyond half a year. All of his efforts at mesmeric preservation fail. This symbolizes the fact that America's attempts to keep Poland alive also failed. Despite offering money, weapons and soldiers to aid in the uprising, the United States was incapable of making a difference in Poland in any tangible or lasting way. Having witnessed the events of the 1830s and having had a profound interest in the rebellion's outcome, Poe would have felt keen disappointment at this failure. Like the newspaper writers of the day, he would have seen the Polish defeat as "disastrous." The closing of his tale further suggests his coming to believe that, American endeavors notwithstanding, Poland's end was inevitable. His denouement implies that, in reality, Poland and the United States were merely trying to defer an unavoidable reality that must at sometime come to all individuals and civilizations: death.

Conclusion

The coded histories of Silesia in Brown and Poland in Poe hold lessons for the United States about empire. The reference to Silesia in Brown's gothic tale served as an uncanny reminder to the country not to sleepwalk through history and thus run the risk of being taken over by foreign powers. The reference to Poland in Poe's mesmeric yarn warned readers not to become "necro-citizens" and turn a blind eye to the reality that their country may itself be turning into a despot. While contemporaneous readers may have seen in Poland a romantic notion of all they thought their country was, Brown and Poe seem to warn them through the mirror of Silesia and Poland that America's reflection was not all that flattering. Instead, it

was downright terrifying; it was the underside of the beau ideal. And if Americans ultimately wanted a resolution, they had to stay conscious and to act.

Chapter 2: "Three Pirate Powers" and "Fast Fish":

Poland as Specter of Empire and Slavery in Melville's *Moby-Dick*

June 25, 2014, saw the premiere of *Moby Dick,* an opera version of Herman Melville's classic novel, at Warsaw's *Teatr Wielki Opera Narodowa*, Poland's national opera. Composed by Eugeniusz Knapik with libretto by Krzysztof Koehler, the work was in English ("Moby Dick," par. 1). The *Teatr Wielki* website introduces the opera by summarizing Melville's text:

> *Moby Dick* (1851) is . . . the story of Ishmael who, after several voyages on merchant ships, decides to go on a whaling expedition. The skipper is the mysterious and grim Captain Ahab whose sole purpose is to take revenge on a legendary white whale. Is this pure madness? Or dreams coming true? Transcending the boundaries of life and death? (par. 7)

Fittingly couched in the gothic rhetoric of "madness," "dreams," mystery, and "revenge," this is an apt synopsis of the novel.

The opera comes seven years after the city of Szczecin hosted the first Melville Society Conference ever to be held in Poland. For Pawel Jędrzejko, Conference Co-Chair and self-defined "wannabe Americanist [and] Melville fan," the conference was a dream that came true in August 2007 (76). When he first came up with the idea, he had serious doubts that it would ever happen. He writes,

> Face it, Pawel: thou art a veritable emperor of nonsense. Melville makes but a few more or less accidental references to Poland—and, in all probability, to a Poland he could only imagine in the aftermath of his reading of Jane Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw.* Hopeless . . . How do you convince the Melville Society Executive

> Committee that it actually might make sense to organize a conference across the Ocean, in a country of no importance to the writer or his work? (77)

Not only did the conference take place. It was a great success, hosting "over 150" attendees and presenters, resulting in an issue of the *Leviathan*, the journal of the Melville Society, devoted to the event; and spurring a flurry of Melville scholarship and popular "promotion of Melville" in Poland (79).[21] In all probability, the conference and the subsequent attention to Melville also paved the way for Knapik's opera version of *Moby-Dick*.

Just as Melville means something to Jędrzejko and, now, to Poland, Poland meant something to Melville in the mid-nineteenth century. To him, the partitioned nation was something more and something darker than a national beau ideal. Melville's references to Poland in *Moby-Dick,* though likely born partly from reading Porter's novel—which was in Melville's personal library—were not "accidental" (Sealts 86).[22] While they might easily get lost in *Moby-Dick,* such a dense novel full of "elaborate verbal patterns including etymology, philosophy, anatomy, cetology, theology, cartography, allegory, drama, and poetry," the references are of great significance to the work (Otter 68). They are a key to help us to understand that Poland is a gothic presence that represents American anxieties about a nation based on the pillars of imperialism and the commodification of human beings. In all in *Moby-Dick,* Melville mentions Poland two times. First, in the beginning of a list of conquests in the chapter entitled "Nantucket," Ishmael refers to the partitioning of Poland by "the three pirate powers," Russia, Prussia and Austria (65). Next, in "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish," he likens Poland (along with Greece, Mexico, and India) to a "Loose-Fish," an object for Russia to chase and conquer (310).

These two references work together in the novel to make Poland a gothic presence that conjures up images of imperialism and slavery. Because Melville twice mentions Poland alongside Mexico, I examine connections between the partitioning of Poland, Manifest Destiny, and the Mexican American War, which ended three years prior to the publication of *Moby-Dick*. Inextricably knotted into the questions the war raised about America's imperial status are questions about slavery. From 1848 through the last months of 1850, when Congress reached the Compromise of 1850, politicians had heated debates about whether the territories the United States had won in the war should be slave or free states. Newspapers of the late 1840s and early 1850s in New York and Massachusetts cement the connections between Poland, the Mexican American War, and the day's debates over slavery and territory. Frequent references to Poland in American print culture indicate that to Melville's mid-nineteenth century readers, few of them though there were, Poland would have signaled the issues of territorial conquest and human bondage in the United States.

Besides Melville's two direct references to Poland, Ishmael mentions amber twice, which directly implies a connection to Poland. In "The Blanket" chapter, he associates sailors' bodies "frozen into . . . fields of ice" with insects "found glued in amber" (247). Later, he compares "amber" and "ambergris," the valuable and "curious substance" which seaman extract from whales and sell for eventual use in "perfumery, in pastiles, precious candles, hair-powders, and pomatum" (317). Amber, long used to make jewelry and other valuable objects, is a commodity that was historically gathered, mined and traded throughout what was partitioned Poland and East Prussia in the nineteenth century (Spekke 9-10). Alongside Melville's other mentions of Poland, it is difficult not to see amber as metonymic of the Eastern European country.

Melville's amber-ambergris connection, analyzed through the history of the amber trade in Poland and references to Polish serfdom in American print culture, enables a reading of ambergris as a metonymy for slavery in *Moby-Dick*. Ishmael ultimately defines amber as a product. In order to gather this product, the amber trade of the early nineteenth century relied on human "bondage," or the forced labor of the peasant class (Spekke 9). Amber, then, is code for serfdom in Poland and East Prussia. Besides the obvious historical parallels that can be made between serfdom and the South's reliance on slavery to grow and make products, the issue of serfdom was very much part of American news in the mid-1840s. During the years leading up to the Mexican American War, United States newspapers saw a discussion of serfdom and serf insurrection in Poland both in general and as they related to American slavery. Such discussions, alongside Ishmael's direct comparison of amber to ambergris—a product made from the bodies of whales—allow us to read ambergris as code for slavery, specifically for the commodification of the human body for profit. Taken together, Melville's references to Poland and to amber ultimately represent American anxieties about a democratic nation extended through the conquest of other nations and supported by slavery.

Reading "Unfortunate" Poland Behind *Moby-Dick*

If Herman Melville indeed read Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw,* he found in its pages an account of Poland and Thaddeus Kosciuszko that, even though penned in England, reinforced the American feeling that Poland was its beau ideal. Though the title character is not Kosciuszko himself but Thaddeus Constantine Sobieski, a descendant of one of Poland's most revered kings, Jan Sobieski, Kosciuszko is a significant figure in the novel. The plot begins in the early 1790s, when Russia, "A formidable and apparently friendly State[,] envied the effects of a patriotism it would not imitate; and . . . 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 liberty of its too trusting ally" (22). [23] In the war that ensues, Kosciuszko is a key player, and Porter represents both him and Thaddeus Sobieski as heroic and patriotic figures that fight for their nation's freedom against the imperial foe of Russia. The novel follows Thaddeus Sobieski through the war, the second partition of Poland, and, finally, into exile in Great Britain, ending with a scene in which Kosciuszko gives Sobieski's son a blessing "from the heart of a hero" (451). From beginning to end, Porter's Poland is a "martyr to oppression," and her Poles stand for all of the values befitting the "beau ideal of Western man": they are "Courageous, compassionate, patriotic, self-sacrificing, educated, cultured, adventurous, [and] high-minded . . ." (Gladsky 12, 16).

Certainly Melville gained some of his ideas about Poland from Porter's novel, but in the years before he published *Moby-Dick,* it is also probable that newspaper articles and features shaped his understanding of Poland. While he was living in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and writing his great novel during the "summer of 1850," Melville stayed up-to-date with current events "through the local Democratic paper, the *Pittsfield Sun*" (Delbanco 153). In perusing this newspaper, Melville most likely read references to Poland. Although no significant uprisings were happening from 1850-1851 in the territories that had made up Poland in the eighteenth century—the three partitions by Russia, Prussia and Austria were completed by 1795 and there were significant uprisings in 1831, 1846 and 1848—the Eastern European country was still very much in the news, both in the *Pittsfield Sun* and in other newspapers in Massachusetts that Melville might have read.

In fact, if Melville read the September 26, 1850 issue of the *Pittsfield Sun,* he would have come across the transcript of Massachusetts's "Democratic State Convention"

("Democratic" 2). The printed record of the convention includes the speech of "Mr. Griswold, the president" of the Democrats (2). In addressing his political party, he states,

> we represent here to-day the party whose keenest sympathies have been elicited in favor of freedom through all its bloody struggles with despotism in Greece, in Poland, in France, and Hungary, or wherever else the sun in its course looks down upon the image of God struggling to break the chains of his oppressor; of the party which has never proved false to the honor and glory of our country; which has never withheld the protection due to every American citizen, whether a brave seaman impressed into British service, or a no less brave soldier shot down upon the banks of the Rio Grande. . . (2)

In using the name of Poland in a string of European countries that readers would have recognized for their wars for independence, Griswold evokes a rhetoric of liberty and revolution. By suggesting kinship with those "struggling to break the chains of the oppressor" in Poland and in other countries, he seeks to elevate the values and purposes of the Democratic party.[24] The very word *Poland* conjures for his listeners images of courage and freedom, of America's beau ideal. If his party is for Poland, it is also for liberty, he suggests. Griswold's images of struggle against oppression continue with the mention of the "brave seaman impressed into British service," an allusion to the "6,500 US citizens" forced to serve in the British Navy before the War of 1812 (Rodger 565-6). In this example, Griswold stamps England as the force of oppression, a configuration that would have been familiar to U.S. readers as they looked back to the American struggle against Britain in their own revolution.

The oppressed/oppressor dichotomy in the speech, with the Democrats (and/or the nation) as the oppressed (or identifying with the oppressed) against the cruel and tyrannical oppressor/conqueror (Great Britain, Austria, Russia), ends abruptly with the image of the "brave soldier shot down upon the banks of the Rio Grande." The line refers to U.S. soldiers killed in the Mexican American War, which had ended two years before and which some newspapers and politicians represented, as we have seen, as a war of conquest founded on lust for land and an action which paralleled the injustice of Russia, Prussia and Austria's partition of Poland. Thus, Griswold, on the one hand, praises his party for its support of the oppressed and, on the other hand, upholds a war that many believed established America as a force of oppression.

The moral confusion that marks Griswold's speech continues in other Massachusetts newspapers as debates raged over whether the territories the United States gained in the Mexican American War should be slave or free states. Unlikely as it may seem, the name of Poland surfaced in these debates, and America's beau ideal found itself the subject of a rhetorical tug-of-war. The January 23, 1850, issue of the *Daily Evening Transcript* contains a report on earlier Congressional proceedings. Referring to a pro-slavery politician, the author writes, "Mr. Clingman spoke one hour. He would rather see dissolution—rather the South, like Poland, would be under the iron seal of a conqueror, than yield her rights" ("Congress" 2). Four months later, the *Daily Atlas* recorded an anti-slavery speech by the "Hon. Robert C. Winthrop" given in California's "House of Representatives" ("Speech" 1). In regard to the debate over territories turned over to the United States in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Winthrop says,

> Sir, the territories which have come under our guardianship are, in my judgment, of more worth than to be made the mere *make-weighs* in the scales of sectional equality. They are entitled to another sort of consideration, than to be cut up and partitioned off, like down-trodden Poland, in order to satisfy the longings and appease the jealousies of surrounding States. (1)

In yet another example, a July 19 opinion piece in *The Liberator* notes that if the U.S. government allows New Mexico to become a slave state, "we shall have repeated the crime of the partition of Poland. . ." ("Slavery" 116).

Without a doubt, the presence of Poland in these transcripts of speeches tells us that Poland and its past was a significant and recognizable part of American political discourse in 1850. All of the speakers use Poland to appeal to pathos, whether the ultimate aim is to uplift a political party, argue in support of slavery, or argue against new territories becoming slave states. Notwithstanding the propagandizing of Poland for multiple and disparate political purposes, the American reading public would have understood three things from references to the beau ideal. First, Poland signaled acts of imperialism. No matter what side of the political debate, the representation of Poland was the same. "Down-trodden Poland," "cut up and partitioned off," was the victim of "despotism," and the act of partition was an imperialistic "crime." Second, the history of Polish partition and oppression correlated with the Mexican American War. Although this is not the case with the first example above, used as a metaphor for the "struggles" of "freedom" against imperialism and oppression, Poland most often indicated what America's military involvement in Mexico was *not*. As I establish in chapter one, there were nineteenth-century newspaper writers who equated the crime of the partition with the United States' imperialist designs on Mexico, which, spurred on and

justified by ideals of Manifest Destiny, culminated in the Mexican American War. Third, Poland informed the American debate over slavery. Both proponents of slavery and abolitionism invoked the beau ideal's democratic values and history of oppression in speeches about rights, justice and freedom.

Because Melville most likely would have been familiar with the political discourse of his day and would have read some of the many allusions to Poland in newspapers, we can assume that his references to Poland in *Moby-Dick* are not a coincidence or a mere tip of the hat to Porter. Instead, he is echoing the political rhetoric of his day, and he too is making a political statement. The first two mentions of Poland in the novel are a statement about imperialism. On the surface, they concern the colonizing of the sea. However, because Melville alludes to the Mexican American War immediately following each of the first two references to Poland, the beau ideal becomes, in these two instances, a gothic figuration revealing American guilt about its imperialistic acts. In other areas of the text, the gothic presence of Poland signals American anxieties about slavery.

Numerous critics have discussed imperialism in *Moby-Dick.* Hardack contends that Melville focuses on the ocean to illustrate nineteenth century attitudes about the "universaliz[ation] of American culture" (53). Specifically, Melville's representation of native Pacific islanders as simply "versions of the American. . . . reflects [his] growing concern over the way America abstractly homogenizes, and so colonizes, everything with which it comes in contact, particularly the Pacific" (55). In his concern, Melville offers harsh criticism of the imperialistic tendencies of the United States (55). Ultimately, however, he is unable to imagine the ocean and the planet as anything other than "American" (77). Thus, he reinscribes American imperialism even as he evaluates it negatively (55, 77). Similarly

focusing on the United States as an imperialistic power, Mackenthun writes, "*Moby-Dick* . . . wrestles with America's . . . uncanny colonial past and imperial present" (557). While Ahab's doubloon, for example, stands as a symbol of an economy built on slavery, the seamen on *The Pequod* seem neither to be troubled by nor to recognize the terrible connection between the two things (538-9). Next to his more explicit text, "Benito Cereno," *Moby-Dick* has an "evasive attitude toward explosive political realities" (539). Nonetheless, the novel registers such realities, Mackenthun argues, through characters like Pip and "overcharged" symbols such as the ship itself (552, 554).[25]

In contrast, Long discusses imperialism not only in terms of the United States but of the world. He even refers to one of Ishmael's lists including Poland and other countries, noting that in it is a commentary on the way dominant countries use colonizing projects to gain land and assert their power over peoples (J. Long 75). Long reads the reference to Poland as part of a longer passage in the "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish" chapter which characterizes *Moby-Dick* "as a transnational text that aims to create a reader whose identity lies not with a specific nation, but instead within the world's oceanic order" (75). This viewpoint from the sea offers Melville a unique way to consider and evaluate "land-based world view[s]," ideas, and beliefs (69).

Rasmussen, too, looks to the "oceanic order" in the novel, and in doing so, she moves the focus of inquiry about imperialism in *Moby-Dick* from explorations of how it speaks to U.S. territorial struggles to what it has to say about Western modes of colonialism that took place during oceanic crossings, such as the reality that "in the aftermath of colonial conflict . . . alphabetic script was not only hegemonic but often so dominant as to render other forms of writing illegible and all but invisible" (114-5). She contends that *Moby-Dick* "is a text that is

the result of cultural and textual boundary crossing" (137). The cultural "crossing" happens most clearly between Western Ishmael and indigenous Queequeg. Their friendship, she claims, is "one that does not require the erasure of difference; rather, it rests on a sharing of each other's cultures and circumstances," also shores up her claims (133). The "textual boundary crossing" happens between the respective modes of writing of these two characters. Considering Melville's knowledge from his travels that "Marquesan tattoos" and "Polynesian . . . forms of inscription" had meaning, as well as the ways in which Melville's novel legitimizes indigenous forms of "non-alphabetic writing" such as that on Queequeg's body and coffin, Rasmussen argues that the novel ultimately "undermines the distinction between a literate West and a non-literate colonial 'other'" (120, 121, 113, 137).

As all of the aforementioned arguments evidence, imperialism is a major concern in *Moby-Dick,* and most scholars agree that in Melville's great novel it is a process that plays out on the ocean. Even before Queequeg and Ishmael set out on their journey, Ishmael remarks that while other nations and peoples may colonize the land, New Englanders colonize the sea. He resolutely claims, "two thirds of this terraqueous globe are the Nantucketer's. For the sea is his; he owns it, as Emperors own empires . . ." (65). Later on, Ishmael, continues to tease out his analogy, exclaiming, "Whaling is imperial!" (100). The Nantucketer's imperialism relies on the conquest of the sea and exploitation of one of its key resources: whales. And the profit margin is huge; Ishmael remarks, "every year [whaling] import[s] into our harbors a well reaped harvest of $7,000,000" (98). Besides bringing in capital, whaling paves "the way for the missionary and the merchant, and in many cases carr[ies] the primitive missionaries to their first destinations" (99). In the movement of

money, resources, and humans across the water, Ishmael illustrates how the empire of whaling paves the way for the growth of American empire overseas.

Melville's two lists including Poland, however, imply the same process on *terra firma*. In the first list, Ishmael compares the sea-colonizing New Englanders to nations involved in history's most notorious conquests on land:

> And thus these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits issuing from their ant-hill in the sea, overrun and conquered the watery world like so many Alexanders; parceling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers did Poland. Let America add Mexico to Texas, and pile Cuba upon Canada; let the English overswarm all India, and hang out their blazing banner from the sun . . . (65)

What connects Poland to Mexico, Cuba and India is that they are all colonial projects in the eyes of "so many Alexanders." Very clearly, the partitioning of Poland in the end of the eighteenth century was a bid for land, as evidenced by the way in which Prussia, Russia and Austria continued to gobble up pieces of the country over a twenty-two year period until independent Poland no longer existed. All three countries benefitted financially from controlling the former kingdom's resources including industry, salt and various crops (Davies, vol. 2, 107, 118, 143).

The reference to the conquest of Poland is telling on its own, but framing and informing it in Ishmael's analogy of the colonizing of the sea are references to the conquests of other lands. The United States' annexation of Texas and its incursion into Mexico in 1846 were in large part the result of the campaign for Manifest Destiny by Andrew Jackson, John Tyler, James K. Polk and other political leaders. This lust for land led to what many citizens believed was an unjust war, and upon American victory and the signing of the Treaty of

Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, added the territories of California and New Mexico to the United States (Merry 452-3). Also in the mid-nineteenth century, many in the American South seriously considered the idea of acquiring Cuba because of the island's slave economy. For the South, an additional slave state would mean increased influence and political representation in Washington (Guerra Vilaboy and Loyola Vega 15). Finally, though British occupation of India began in the seventeenth century, true British colonization of the country did not start until the mid-nineteenth century (Walsh 102, 117). It was then that the English began to confiscate land; they "were [now] ready for . . . the creation of an empire" (Walsh 117). It makes no difference whether powerful nations annex land, acquire it, overpower it, or partition it; to Ishmael, all are acts of imperialism. All show the process of colonization—or at least the attempt at it—through the conquest and control of land.

In all of his references to empire-building, Ishmael uses language that illustrates the gothic terror of imperialism. His use of the verbs "overrun" and "conquer" to describe the Nantucketers' subjugation of the ocean implies the violence and aggression of their actions. Ishmael likens them to ants, which, like imperial armies, overwhelm and take by force the resources and lands they desire. They are also "Alexanders," conquerors akin to Alexander the Great, who built an immense empire with the help of his formidable and overpowering military. Not only are they ferocious imperialists of the sea, but after they have conquered it, the Nantucketers take part in "parceling [it] out." They divide it up, dismembering the earth's great bodies of water and deciding who gets what. As Ishmael points out, this action is comparable to the violence of Austria, Russia and Prussia's partitioning of Poland. Indeed, Ishmael refers to the imperial European nations as "the three pirate powers."[26] Like unscrupulous buccaneers, he suggests, they plundered Poland and then divided the loot—the

land, the resources, and the people—they had won by force. Not only this, but according to Ishmael, readers should understand all of the imperial projects that follow his reference to Poland—America's involvement in the Mexican American War, the South's would-be annexation of Cuba, and Great Britain's cultural and economic dominion over India—as similar acts of ruthless piracy of nations, riches and lives.

In the chapter entitled "The *Pequod* Meets the *Virgin*," Melville allegorizes the violent process of imperialist takeover through a whale hunt. Specifically, he dramatizes the partitioning of Poland, with a sperm whale playing the part of Poland, and Queequeg, Tashtego and Daggoo playing Russia, Prussia and Austria. In the scene, Ahab's ship crosses paths with a Dutch vessel, the "Jungfrau or the Virgin" (277). While men from both ships are talking, a few whales surface, among them "a huge, humped old bull" (277). Immediately, a competition begins between the two ships. Whoever kills the whale first will win the prize (277). It is an even hunt until mid-chapter, when "the three tigers—Queequeg, Tashtego [and] Daggoo" burst forth in pursuit, with their "three boats," "three lines," "three ropes," "Three such thin threads," and "three bits of board" (280-1). The repeated threes of the passage echo Melville's earlier allusion to the "three pirate powers"—Austria, Russia, and Prussia—that overtook Poland, and like the word "pirate," "tiger" implies the ferocity and aggressiveness of an attack on prey.

With their combined strength and determination, the "three tigers" finally succeed. And the resulting attack on the whale is vicious. Ishmael describes the scene as "pitiable" (282). After the "three tigers" harpoon the whale, "the utmost monster of the seas . . . writh[ed] and wrench[ed] in agony" (281). Blood "poured from him in incessant streams," shooting from him and "bespattering [the whale hunters] . . . all over with showers of gore . .

." (282). At this point, Ishmael observes the 'old' whale closely, realizing that he is deformed. He has "strange misgrown masses," "blind eyes" and a "strangely discolored bunch or protuberance, the size of a bushel" on his underbelly (282).

As they chase and harpoon the whale, the "three tigers," Queequeg, Tashtego and Daggoo enact the partitioning of Poland. The violence of the whale hunt is representative of the violence of severing a nation and its people into three parts. It also symbolizes the blood and gore of revolutions and insurrections in Poland between and after the partitions. Ishmael's remark that the whale is "pitiable" is akin to proclamations of "unfortunate Poland" in U.S. newspapers in the mid-nineteenth century. Finally, the aged and misshapen whale may be seen as Poland before the partition, an old kingdom that was slowly decaying from the inside when the "three pirate powers" took advantage of it, chopping up its body piece by piece, partition by partition (Davies, vol. 1, 492-521).

While the violence toward the whale is troubling, the end of the chapter is even more haunting. Unlike the three pirate powers, the harpooners do not get their prize. The whale sinks into the depths of the ocean before Queequeg, Tashtego and Daggoo can haul it back to the *Pequod,* tie it up and cut it apart to get at the ambergris. Not only does it sink, it almost drags the whaleboats down with it (283). For imperial powers like Russia, Prussia, Austria, England and the United States, Poland as sinking whale offers a gothic warning about the terrifying dangers of hunting after other nations in order to control lands and peoples. The violence and viciousness of such imperial projects, Melville seems to say, have the potential to eventually destroy the oppressor as well as the oppressed.

A few chapters after "The *Pequod* Meets the Virgin" is the second direct reference to Poland in *Moby-Dick.* The passage in question is another list of nations, and in it, Ishmael

juggles the references to international conquest, dropping one example (Cuba) and adding two (America and Greece). This time, Ishmael compares the conquered nations to "Loose-Fish," or whales that have been killed by whalers, but which have somehow gotten away from the ships and are floating in the ocean, "fair game" for any other whale ship that happens by (308). He questions,

> What was America in 1492 but a Loose-Fish, in which Columbus struck the Spanish standard by way of waifing it for his royal master and mistress? What was Poland to the Czar? What Greece to the Turk? What India to England? What at last will Mexico be to the United States? All Loose-Fish. (310)

Long correctly points out that this passage reflects "the process by which nations and other figures of power engage in imperialist ventures designed to seize control of other groups or territories" (J. Long 75). Just as Russia (Ishmael leaves out Austria and Prussia this time), England and the United States saw Poland, India and Mexico respectively as loose-fish to chase and on which to enact their imperialist designs, so Ishmael points out, Columbus and the Turks interpret the Americas and Greece as loose-fish, lands free for the taking. Columbus, of course, claimed Atlantic islands such as Hispaniola and others as Spanish territory during all three of his voyages to the Americas. Subsequently, he set up Spanish colonies in order to control the islands' resources and native peoples (Heinl and Heinl 10-5). The Ottoman Empire invaded areas of Greece as early as the fourteenth century (Fleet 43). Turks thereafter colonized it, ruling over Greek territories and peoples for hundreds of years (Fleet 156). Knowing their history of oppression, Ishmael characterizes all of the conquered/colonized lands in his list—the Americas, Poland, Greece, India, and Mexico—as loose-fish, "fair game for [any nation] who can soonest catch [them]" (308).[27]

The gothic nature of Ishmael's list of "imperialist ventures" lies in the comparison of colonized lands to loose-fish. Metaphorically, Ishmael represents the Americas, Poland, Greece, India, and Mexico as dead whales adrift in the ocean. To the imperial powers, the lands are no more than deceased, but still valuable, bodies to be possessed and used. Followed to its logical conclusion, the metaphor shows the terrifying and oppressive nature of imperialistic undertakings. A dead body—whale or otherwise—cannot protect itself from attack and takeover. Neither does a dead body any longer host breath or a soul. There is no life in it. The imperialist nations, it follows, perceive the aforementioned lands as vulnerable and empty. While people groups occupy all the lands in reality, the imperialist nations do not acknowledge life in them. They only hunt down and capture the loose-fish. Inevitably, the loose-fish become fast-fish; lands, people and resources become the property of imperialist nations.

Even more haunting is a historical reality that ties almost all of the loose-fish-turned-fast-fish together and to which Ishmael indirectly alludes before his second list: slavery or human servitude. Ishmael points to bondage as a reality in two of the imperialist nations in his lists. He questions, "What are the sinews and souls of Russian serfs and Republican slaves but Fast-Fish, whereof possession is the whole of the law?" (309). Although Ishmael's query points to the common knowledge of serfdom in Russia and slavery in the United States' South, the American reading public would have known that Polish nobles kept serfs, that slavery was common in ancient Greece, that Indian culture rested on the caste system, and that slavery was a significant part of Cuba's economy (Cartledge 101). Though Ishmael does not specifically point it out, the gothic specter of slavery haunts most of the nations he

mentions, whether *Moby-Dick* presents those nations as imperialist whalers, loose-fish or fast-fish.

Clearly, Melville connects imperialism to slavery in the "Fast-Fish" chapter, and this connection is apparent in many of the nations in Ishmael's lists.[28] Why, then, is Poland and not some other country the gothic presence that haunts *Moby-Dick*? The answer lies partly in the fact that America still recognized Poland as its beau ideal. While the imperialist histories of the other nations were common knowledge, the American cultural affinity for Poland makes the reference to the partitioned nation stand out. Poland is also a gothic presence because Ishmael mentions it alongside Mexico in both lists. The double reference to Mexico would have drawn American readers' minds to the imperial event closest to home—the Mexican American War. Alemán posits that Mexico is the United States' gothic other. Although the Monroe Doctrine resisted a definition of the United States as an empire such as the Spanish empire that conquered Mexico, it "made the hemisphere subject to the New World imperialism" (91). Representations of Mexico haunted nineteenth-century American literature, betraying a "fear that the republic is an unhomely empire" (91). Represented in Melville's lists as overrun by three foreign nations, Poland is more akin to Mexico than to the imperialistic United States. Like Mexico does, the Eastern European nation registers American fears of their nation becoming a colonizer. Poland, then, is Mexico's colonized double in *Moby-Dick.* However, unlike Mexico, Poland is doubly uncanny in the United States, betraying not only anxieties about imperialism but about slavery as well. U.S. newspaper writers in the 1850s employed the popular trope of "down-trodden" Poland to both argue for and against slavery in the territories gained from Mexico in the Mexican American War. Melville furthermore alludes to the reality of human servitude in all of the

nations in his second list—including Poland. Finally, as we shall see, abolitionist discourse in American newspapers in the 1840s associates U.S. slavery with serfdom in Poland, and more importantly, insists that the historical realities of partitioned Poland hold a warning for the United States about slavery. Thus, the references to Poland in Ishmael's lists register not one, but two American anxieties—imperialism and slavery—in marked ways that the other nations do not.

Reading Polish Serfdom and the Amber Trade Behind *Moby-Dick*

In the May 23, 1844 issue of the *Boston Recorder*, the anonymous Y. Z. responds to the thoughts of the similar pseudonymous A.B., who, in an earlier issue, had compared "the condition of the slave" to that of "the serfs of Russia," "Poland" and other countries ("Reply to" 81). Though Y. Z. ultimately disagrees with this point of comparison and A. B.'s argument as a whole, the correlation between European peasants and Southern slaves in the newspaper is indicative of a common analogy made in anti-slavery discourse in mid-nineteenth century New England. According to Pettey, not only Poland, but all of the other countries mentioned in Ishmael's list in the "Fast Fish and Loose Fish" chapter were part of the "political rhetoric of anti-slavery in Massachusetts" (49). Abolitionist writers and speakers used the history of injustice in various nations as examples in arguments about why U.S. slavery should end. A May 1844 article in the *Liberator*, for instance, notes that one speaker at a conference explained his conviction that the fall of Poland to Russia, Prussia and Austria was God's punishment for the partitioned nation's complicity in the system of serfdom ("Methodist" 74). The implication, of course, is that if the United States did not end the institution of slavery, it too would be punished.

A more direct appeal from a Pole for America to end slavery is in the January 14, 1848 issue of *The Liberator.* The appeal comes from "Count Holinski, exiled from Poland for his attachment to Freedom" (6). After attending the "Fourteenth National Anti Slavery Bazaar," the count "could not but sympathize with American Abolitionists" (6). The article quotes from his letters, as he looks back on Polish history and hopes that the United States will be able to accomplish what Poland could not: true freedom. He writes,

> Never would my country have become the prey of Russia, Austria and Prussia, if, instead of opposing to these three powers only a chilvalrous nobility, she had marshalled a whole people—But we had in our lands millions of serfs to whom the word independence was utterly without significance—and we succumbed. . . . If a hope now remains to us, it is in the rational re-constitution of Europe. The example offered by America would have hastened the hour of deliverance to her oppressed nations, if America were not sullied by that monstrous anomaly. A liberty that is smothered under slavery, can never be contagious. Speedily, then, may the day dawn when abolitionism, triumphant, shall have destroyed the obstacle which prevents the new world from influencing the old. (6)

The perpetuation of serfdom in Poland, the count insists, has kept the entire country from freedom. In wishing that America would not make the same mistake of impeding the liberty of the nation by keeping an entire people enslaved, the count implies, as the maker of the speech at the Methodist Episcopal Conference suggests, that Poland's history of serfdom holds a warning for the United States. A nation that boasts freedom while it keeps slaves and relies on a slave economy can neither expect to influence other nations nor expect to remain invulnerable. True liberty and unity of purpose must reign among all classes in America, not

hypocrisy and oppression, or the results could be disastrous. If God does not punish the nation for the sin of slavery, as the conference speaker warns, the United States may in some other way be divided and rendered impotent like Poland.

While Melville lived in New York state when the above articles ran in Massachusetts newspapers, it is likely that both he would have been aware of the abolitionist discourse relating Southern slavery to serfdom in partitioned Poland. Pettey, in fact, argues that "Melville would have been aware of the historical oppression suffered by" Poland and the other countries in Ishmael's list *because* of the prominent references in abolitionist discourse (49). Melville's readers, also familiar with the rhetoric of abolitionism, would easily have made the logical leap beside the author in comparing the two institutions. As economic systems, slavery and serfdom were, in general terms, similar. Many large estates in areas of Europe where serfdom existed functioned by the labor of peasants who received little, if any, pay (G. Robinson 13). In Russian Poland, serfs "could be sold . . . given away, rented, or sent as a punishment to Siberia" during the partition years (Wandycz 18). The conditions and treatment of many serfs was also comparable to that of slaves. Most children born to peasants became serfs with little chance of ever gaining freedom, economic or otherwise (Hagen 309). Many peasants lived in "impoverished" conditions, suffering from "unrelenting hunger, starvation, and disease" at the worst of times (Stauter-Halsted 21, 22). Additionally, serfs, especially those in Russian Poland, often had to endure harsh punishment and public humiliation from the nobility whose land they worked. There are accounts of Polish lords and their Polish workers tarring, flogging, verbally assaulting, raping and beating serfs (Beauvois 9). At one "sugar factory" in Russian Poland, the manager treated serfs "in a wholly inhuman fashion. . . . None of the local peasants were paid; they received only blows and insults, had

their heads shaved, were sent off to the army . . .” (Beauvois 38). Even the Polish word for the system—*poddaństwo*—implies the weight of slavery; “’subjection’ is its literal translation” (Hagen 309).

The above image of serfdom in Europe seems incredibly grim, but it is important to note that serfdom was not a “uniform” system (Wandycz 6). The conditions and experience of serfs in Poland largely depended on the era (whether before or during the partitions), for whom peasants worked, and where they lived. Before the partitions, for instance, serfs in Poland who worked on the land “belonging to the crown” had “more firmly established rights” and “lighter labor obligations,” while those who worked for nobles or on land with religious affiliations had fewer privileges and did more hard labor (Wandycz 6). Wandycz explains that “in some western and northwestern parts of Poland there were peasant farms that were altogether free from labor obligations; and. . . . In areas that had too many peasants the peasants could occasionally buy themselves out from labor obligations” (6-7). After the partitions, serfs in Austrian Poland worked and lived under, on the whole, “more moderate” conditions but were subject to “heavier taxes, and compulsory military service” (13). In Prussian Poland, conditions were similar, but peasants had more protections and “right to the land” under the law, if not always “in practice” (16). In stark contrast, the conditions for serfs in Russian Poland, as I have explained in the paragraph above, were quite severe (18).

Even keeping the complexities of the system in mind, the similarities between the harsher brands of serfdom and slavery are uncanny. Besides noting the parallels of the two systems, though, an examination of newspaper articles about the 1846 “people’s war” in Cracow, Poland, is also essential for understanding the manner in which serfdom in partitioned Poland haunted mid-nineteenth century Americans and registered anxieties about

slavery (Lukowski and Zawadzki 169). During this time, when Melville lived just outside of Albany in Troy, New York, he likely read about the revolution in Albany papers. On April 14, the headline "THE POLAND REVOLUTION—VERY IMPORTANT" ran in the *Albany Argus.* The article explains, "On the 20th of February, disturbances broke out at Cracow.—The Augsburg Gazette says;--'At ten o'clock at night, a sky rocket was sent up a short distance from the Botanic Gardens, and was generally regarded as the signal for revolt'" (2). Over the next few days, news of what came to be known as the Cracow Uprising continued to unfold in Albany's newspapers, and on April 17, the *Albany Argus* printed a clear and detailed account of the insurrection:

> The city of Cracow, the capital of Poland under its former kings, the descendants of the Jagellons, had . . . for four days been the seat of a new government entitling itself the—'Provisional Government of the Polish Nation.' It was on the 22nd [of February], the day on which the Austrian troops and the Senate evacuated the town, that the new power has constituted and installed itself. . . . The new government, immediately upon its instalment, published a manifesto to the Polish nation, in which it dwells upon the suffering of the Poles, and calls upon the people to rise *en masse* throughout the whole of ancient Poland. ("The Polish Revolution" 1)

Immediately below the article is the aforementioned "Manifesto," which uses egalitarian language in an effort to stir the patriotic spirits of both nobles and peasants alike. It reads,

> 'Poles, the hour of insurrection has struck. The whole of mutilated Poland rises and becomes great. . . . We are 20,000,000. Let us rise as one man, and no violence can crush our power. We shall enjoy a liberty which has never been known on earth. Let us endeavor to obtain it, and a community, in which every man shall enjoy his share

> of the fruits of the earth, according to his merit and his capacity. Let there be no more privileges. . . . All forced labors and other burdens cease, and those who shall devote themselves in arms to the cause of their country shall receive a property in land as an indemnity. Poles! From this moment we acknowledge no distinctions. Let us henceforward be the sons of one mother, Justice—of one father, God, who is in heaven.' (1)

Stirring and full of promises about a free, utopian society after the revolution, the manifesto's call to arms against the partitioning powers nonetheless failed. The next day, the *Albany Evening Journal* cited the "*Gazette de Cologne* . . . of the 26th [of February]" to report that "The whole of the country people are enraged, because the Austrian government has offered a premium on every head of a landowner brought in, which has encouraged the peasants to massacre 200 lords of manors" ("Polish Insurrection" 2).

"Cracow Occupied by the Austrians," the headline of the very next article in the *Albany Evening Journal* of the same day, sounds the death knell of the revolution. It brings news that Austrian troops ousted the rebels from Cracow on the 2nd of March (2). At the end of the article, a dreary "P S" adds, "It is not likely that anything positive respecting the movements of the insurgents in Galicia will be known for several days" (2). Indeed, no positive news of the revolution followed.

Thus began and ended the insurrection that Emerson indirectly references in "The Ode to W. H. Channing" and that gives context to "The Forgotten Grave" and Ellet's "The Shade of Wanda." The roots of the insurrection lay in the years before 1846 when "Henryk Kamienski and his nephew Edward Dembowski, two 'penitent' noblemen" attempted to garner support throughout partitioned Poland for "a 'people's war'" by promising dissatisfied

peasants equality under a socialist government after the revolution was won (Lukowski and Zawadzki 169). The success of the revolution hinged on the backing of the serf population, and the strategy was for various uprisings to happen in different areas of partitioned Poland with the end result of throwing off the yoke of Russian, Prussian and Austrian power entirely. Due to betrayals and other setbacks, the only area where the revolution went forward was the Republic of Cracow (169). However, the noblemen in the lead did not fully understand the deep-seated resentment the peasants had for the nobility, and the "people's war" failed "in a horrifying and tragic fashion" (169). It ended with peasants massacring over one hundred members of the Polish nobility and Cracow falling under the control of Austria (170).

Besides telling the story of another failed Polish revolution for which Americans pitied their beau ideal, the news of the 1846 Cracow Uprising held a darker and more terrifying reality for American readers. The United States reading public would have understood that the insurrection's failure was due in part to the violent reaction of a class of people who had been living in servitude long before and after the partitioning of Poland. In the midst of a revolution against imperialism, this peasant class, upon whom the Polish gentry called for help against what they thought to be a common enemy, had, when provoked by Austria, turned against the nobility and slaughtered a great number of them. Regardless of the manifesto's promise of equality, land and freedom, the serfs turned viciously on their masters. The *Evening Post* quotes M. Montalembert's report of the horrific details. Even he, though an Austrian, seems taken aback at the result of what he clearly knew was a "secretly fomented revolt of the Polish peasantry against their nobles . . ." ("The Polish Revolution" 2). He remarks that the nobles "'were killed—executed, for that is the term—without trial,

without defence, without accusation and without crime, but not without executioner'" (2). While some of these nobles had been cruel to their serfs, he continues, "'Among the earliest of the Proprietors who fell victims were those who were the most popular, the most philanthropic, the most benevolent men in the country'" (2). One even went by the title "'the Father of the Peasants'" (2). Worse still, Montalembert exclaims, hundreds of children were left without parents, and "'Even the women were not spared. They were victims of the most horrible outrages . . .'" (2). He furthermore notes that trade suffered: "'The country remains almost wholly untilled—the peasants naturally refusing to work . . .'" (2). All of this "'bloody drama'" he firmly lays at the door of "'the Austrian government'" (2).[29]

No matter the cause, no matter who was ultimately to blame, the result—the massacre of hundreds of Polish nobles by serfs—was uncannily akin to slave insurrections in the United States South in the early nineteenth century. In the early 1820s, Denmark Vesey, a free black who lived in Charleston, South Carolina, came up with an intricate plot to kill the city's bureaucrats and politicians; slay all the city's white inhabitants, regardless of age or sex; "burn . . . [Charleston] to its foundations"; and finally, escape the continent (Robertson 3-5). Despite his meticulous planning and "nine thousand" followers, Vesey's plot did not succeed (4-5). However, if it had, it "would have been the most violent" slave insurrection in United States history (4). By 1851, when Melville published *Moby-Dick,* that honor went to Nat Turner's rebellion. Turner's insurrection happened late in the summer of 1831 in Virginia (Higginson 163, 172). The rebellion began with less than ten slaves invading every dwelling they saw and murdering every white person they found there. As the violence continued, more and more slaves joined. By the time Virginia slave owners put the rebellion down, Turner and his men had killed "fifty-five whites . . . without the loss of a single slave"

(172-4).[30] One hardly needs to mention Melville's interest in slave rebellions, an interest most clearly evident through the insurrection on board the *San Domingo,* which forms the center of "Benito Cereno" and refers to the 1791 slave rebellion in Haiti.[31] Though it did not take place in the United States, the Haitian revolt, just like the ill-fated Denmark Vesey plot and the terrifyingly successful Nat Turner rebellion, horrified Americans, especially those in the South. Dimock writes, "Such bloody episodes of vengeance were kept very much alive in the public memory in the decades before the Civil War" and they were "horrible to contemplate" (198).

Besides signaling American anxieties about slave insurrection, articles about the Cracow Uprising and the reasons for its failure—especially one article in particular—held a message for the United States about slavery. In 1848, when Melville lived in New York City, the *Evening Post* printed an article in reaction to some recent lectures given by Dr. Baird on the subject of Poland. The author introduces the response article, writing that it "contained so many mistakes that an emigrant from that unfortunate country, himself a distinguished actor in the revolution lately suppressed [the 1846 Cracow Uprising], has desired us to give place to . . . [some] corrections" ("Poland—Its History" 2). One of the corrections is in relation to the lesson that the United States could glean from the events in Poland. The Polish emigrant rejects the idea that the message for America in the Cracow Uprising is "'The eternal rule of retaliation'" (2). Instead, the article quotes him as saying, "'Special privileges secured to individuals or to classes, have annihilated liberty, encouraged despotism, and brought ruin upon Poland. This is the great lesson of Providence inculcated upon America by the history of Poland'" (2). If not for the manipulating schemes of Austria, who "placed the patricidal knife in the hands of the peasants to butcher the nobles who were about to raise this very

class from the condition of slaves to that of freemen," the article explains, the revolution could have ended very differently (2). The implicit lesson that the failed Polish revolution of 1846 holds for the United States, in other words, is that slavery should be abolished—before something terrible happens.

Taken together, references to Poland in American print culture of the 1840s—including direct comparisons of serfdom in Poland and slavery in the United States and news of the 1846 Cracow Uprising—indicate that Polish serfdom constitutes a gothic presence for America in the mid-nineteenth century. These references very clearly register American anxieties about slavery, especially the horrifying consequences of allowing slavery to continue in a free republic. If Americans did not abolish slavery, the result could be the destruction of the republic through the punishment of God or the staggering loss of life through the violence of slave insurrection. Both were haunting possibilities.

While Melville offers a commentary on slave insurrection in "Benito Cereno," he approaches the subject of slavery differently in *Moby-Dick.* Through Ishmael, Melville makes a comparison between slavery and serfdom, choosing to represent both as systems that commodify the body. He does so by comparing ambergris, the "soft, waxy. . . . substance" that sailors extract from whales' bodies, to amber, the "hard, transparent, brittle, odorless substance" and valuable commodity traded through areas of partitioned Poland in the nineteenth century (317). Amber historians Spekke and Ley make clear that the history of the amber trade in the environs of the Baltic Sea is the history of serfdom (Spekke 9; Ley 26). The trade relied on the "forced labor" of bodies that gathered the semi-precious substance from the sea and its beaches (Ley 26). Amber, then, is code for the amber trade and the system of "Amber bondage" that propped the trade up (Spekke 9). Similarly, ambergris, a

commodity made from the bodies of whales, is code for a system of forced labor that propped up the imperial United States, of which the *Pequod* is the novel's main representative: slavery. In this metaphor, whales—those that are "fast-fish"—become slaves whose bodies are used to make profit.

Compared to his spouting about ambergris, Ishmael says very little about amber. However, his comments speak volumes; first, they indicate Melville's knowledge of amber. Ishmael's statements that "amber [is] . . . a problem to the learned" and that "amber, though at times found on the sea-coast, is also dug up in some far inland soils . . ." indicate Melville's knowledge of the science of amber that was just coming into vogue in the 1850s (317). Written record about the amber trade and the gathering of amber on the shores of the Baltic Sea has existed since Roman times (Ley 6). From the mid-thirteenth century to the 1830s, the amber trade changed hands multiple times; alternately, it was under the control of the Order of the Teutonic Knights, a private merchant in Gdansk (Danzig), the government of Prussia, and then private ownership again (Ley 5-26).[32] While there were theories about the origins of amber earlier than the 1850s, those who owned the monopoly from the 1200s on restricted access to the Baltic coastline in areas where amber harvests were rich. For fear that they would steal amber, not even scientists were able to gain entrance to shores (29). Restrictions were markedly severe and rigorously enforced during the almost two centuries that the state of Prussia controlled the amber trade (17). Ley notes that "To walk on the beach where amber might be found was forbidden . . . One needed a special permit to approach the seashore. Those living at the seashore, like fishermen, had to swear the Amber Oath every third year. . . . To administer the oath and to deal with culprits there was the Amber Court"

(17). When the amber trade opened in 1836, suddenly anyone could access beaches and harvest amber, even scientists (26, 29).

From the late 1840s on, scientists made significant progress in amber research. Before this point, scientists referred to the mysterious origins of the semi-precious stone as "the amber problem" (Ley 22). They knew amber came from trees, but they could not pinpoint or even find in existence the type of tree that produced the substance (21). They knew storms washed great quantities of amber up onto the shores of what was East Prussia in the nineteenth century and thus that amber was at the bottom of the Baltic, but they couldn't comprehend why it was under the water if it came from trees (21, 23). Finally, they knew that there were deposits of amber on land and that these deposits could be mined, although it was extremely dangerous and impractical to do so. The origin of this amber was even more puzzling (26).

When Melville was writing *Moby-Dick*, scientists were just beginning to answer the questions surrounding the amber problem. In 1848, *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History,* a British publication, printed an article by "Dr. Karl Thomas of Konigsberg, who is perhaps better known as a metaphysician than as a naturalist . . ." (Berkeley 380). In the article, Thomas writes about his study of amber deposits on land. Focusing on an area near the Baltic Sea, he examines "the strata of mottled and blue amber-earth, streaks of sandy loam about two feet thick . . . ," where scientists and harvesters of the time found a "great abundance of amber" (376). Though he begins the process of answering questions, he admits that "a perfect examination of this more recent member of amber-formation has at present not been made" and that "the occurrence of amber [farther inland] . . . cannot be explained" (377). While there is no clear evidence that Melville read this particular article, it is within

the realm of possibility that he did. From late 1849 to early 1850, Melville was on a "four months' journey to London and the Continent" (Delbanco 120). He could have come across the publication during his time in Great Britain. Regardless of whether he did or not, one thing is certain. By 1850, Melville was aware enough of the geological questions about amber to point them out specifically in the "Ambergris" chapter of *Moby-Dick.*

Besides furnishing proof of Melville's knowledge of the amber problem, Ishmael's comments also directly imply a connection to Poland. The area on which Thomas focuses in his study of amber beds is the area of Baltic coastline that historically produced the largest quantities of amber. In the nineteenth century, that area was East Prussia; the Romans knew it as the peninsula of Samland. To the west of Samland lay the Baltic coastline of what was Poland from the mid-fifteenth century until 1772. It, too, gleaned sizable amber harvests. During the Roman era, amber trade routes existed from Samland all the way to what are now the Mediterranean nations (Ley 6). A major route went from the "Elbe to the Vistula," straight through what was to become Poland (12). From its inception as a nation, Poland had a profound influence on the amber trade. Polish monarch Casimer IV was responsible for "grant[ing] . . . the city of Danzig the right to found and maintain" amber guilds "in 1480" (15). From that time until it became part of Prussia, the Polish seaport city of Gdánsk was an influential center of the amber market, housing many amber guilds. Ishmael's mention of amber is thus an allusion to the geographical area of Poland and to Poland's part in the amber trade.

It is also, as I have mentioned, code for what Spekke calls "Amber bondage" (9). From the 1200s to the early nineteenth century, those who controlled the amber trade and market—the Order of the Teutonic Knights, Polish merchants and amber guilds in Gdansk,

and the Prussian state—used oppressed groups to harvest amber (Spekke 8-10). Doing labor that was difficult and sometimes dangerous, peasants harvested amber for the profit and gain of others. Workers gathered amber from the shore after storms, fished for amber with "special . . . nets" called "'amber catchers,'" "rake[d] the bottom of the sea" for amber, and worked in extremely unstable amber mines near the sea (Ley 23, 24, 25). Only in 1837 did amber harvesters begin to do their work "as free men" (26). At this point, "For the first time in history, there was no forced labor and no smuggling" (26). It is true that by the time Melville published his novel, "Amber bondage" was no more. Still, the history of human servitude propping up the amber market is long, and it haunts the references to amber in *Moby-Dick*.

Finally, Ishmael's comments about amber indicate that he ultimately sees the stone as a commodity. After he classifies it by appearance, touch and smell, he defines it as a "substance, used for mouth-pieces to pipes, for beads and ornaments" (317). Though it is only a semi-precious stone, amber—especially if pieces of it contained moss or insects—had the potential to be incredibly valuable. Just like in Melville's time, throughout the history of the amber trade, artisans commonly used the substance to make jewelry and other kinds of ornaments. Some were of great worth. Rice explains, for example, that "workers in the Danzig Guild . . . produced a crown carved from a single piece of amber" for "John Sobieski, King of Poland" (58). In the Middle Ages, amber "acquired a very special use, both laudable and profitable: it was the raw material for rosaries" (Ley 14). In the end, both history and Ishmael tell us that amber is a product.

Ishmael's comparison of amber and ambergris and his explanation that "ambergris is but the French compound for grey amber" indicates that the two substances are analogous

(317). On the surface, Ishmael clearly defines ambergris, like amber, as a product. He refers to the whale as commodity numerous times during his narrative. He speaks of the uncountable "spermaceti candles" and the "reservoirs of oil in every [New England] house" (42). Whale bones are useful for making "teeth. . . . canes, umbrella-stocks, and handles to riding-whips" (264). Other whale parts are, Ishmael says, used in lady's dresses, "organ . . . pipes" and even "carpets[s]" (266). Finally, he comes back to the most valuable commodity from whales—ambergris, or oil—and continues listing products. Ambergris "is largely used in perfumery, in pastiles, precious candles, hair-powders, and pomatum. The Turks use it in cooking, and also carry it to Mecca. . . . Some wine merchants drop a few grains into claret to flavor it" (317). Products made from the bodies of whales, in other words, enrich whalers and help to run the economy.

Furthermore, as amber is code for the history of forced labor and serfdom in Poland and areas of Prussia, so ambergris is code for human servitude, or slavery, in the U.S. More specifically, the sale and consumption of ambergris, a product Ishmael explains that whalers make from whale's bodies through a process of mutilation and extraction, represents the commodification of slaves' bodies (244). Whales, then, are a metaphor for slaves in the parts of the text with which I am dealing. The commodifying of whales' bodies spurs the economy, as I mention above; slaves' bodies do the same for the American South. Just as people make ambergris into various saleable products, slave owners in the South use and abuse the bodies of slaves to reap harvests of tobacco, rice, cotton, and more, growing wealthy as a result. Besides these connections, this reading, in which whales figure as slaves, relies on Ishmael's comparison of both "Russian serfs and Republican slaves" to fish, and on the commonly made comparison of serfdom and slavery in nineteenth century American

newspapers. There is also precedent for reading whales as humans in Melville's novel. Pettey writes, "Fish, sharks, and whales often function as metaphorical substitutes for mankind in *Moby-Dick*; as most readers recognize, the anatomy, dissection, and consumption of the whale thinly veil analogies to human beings" (33). In fact, Pettey identifies the "whale held fast to [one] ship, set adrift or made loose, then recovered by another ship . . ." in the "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish" chapter, as a slave set upon by "fugitive slave" hunters (47).

In addition to Pettey, various other scholars have explored Melville's commentary on slavery in *Moby-Dick.* Referencing the chapters "The Sermon" and "The Town-Ho's Story," along with Melville's letters and his close relationship with Lemuel Shaw—a judge with clear antislavery leanings—Foster argues that the author's "final intention [was] to make *Moby-Dick* a democratic, an antislavery fable" (21). The end of the novel in particular should be read as a "passionate" commentary against slavery (35). Berthold calls attention to the ways that *Moby-Dick* mimics "the strategies and tropes of American slave narratives," coming to the conclusion that the novel is a "palimpsest" of earlier captivity narratives (135, 145). Exploring references to cannibalism and slavery in the novel, Pettey argues that Melville attacks the capitalistic system of the United States as one that divides humans into the categories of "exploiter and exploited, cannibal and slave" (51). Finally, Kopacz contends that Melville's aim with the text was to write "the epic history of the American Worker" (74). For Melville, who denounced "exploited labor" in general, the "American Worker" meant the sailor, the factory worker, *and* the slave (75). Focusing on the repeated examples of "Exhausting physical labor," Melville uses the language of bondage to criticize all forms of "abusive work" (82, 87). This, Kopacz insists, is his "strongest and most enduring protest against slavery . . ." (87).

In making their respective arguments, most scholars pay ample attention to the "The Town Ho's Story." The general consensus is that the tale dramatizes, through Steelkilt's rebellion, a mode of "revolt against" oppression (Foster 23). For Foster and Berthold, this oppression is slavery; Berthold moreover likens the story to a "slave narrative" and Ishmael, as "recorder and editor" of the story, to "William Lloyd Garrison" (138). Kopacz broadens the view to interpret the story as Melville's critique of all oppressive systems of work, including manufacturing, whaling and slavery (87). Rather than "The Town Ho's Story," however, I argue that Melville's most damning critique of slavery is in the chapters "Stubb Kills a Whale," "The Shark Massacre," "Cutting In," and "The Blanket." If we read whales as slaves, these chapters offer a graphic and disturbing illustration of the violence one must do to slaves' bodies in order to turn them into products.

In the first chapter aforementioned, Ishmael recounts the *Pequod*'s first kill, a "gigantic Sperm Whale" (230). Describing the violence of the chase, he reports that as the whale begins to weaken because of several injuries, the harpooners "darted dart after dart into the flying fish" until, finally, "his tormented body rolled not in brine but in blood, which bubbled and seethed for furlongs behind in their wake" (232). As the passage continues, things only get bloodier. After Stubb gives the death blow, "the monster wallowed in his blood" and "At last, gush after gush of clotted red gore, as if it had been the purple lees of red wine, shot into the frighted air; and falling back again, ran dripping down his motionless flanks into the sea. His heart had burst!" (233). The chapter ends with Stubb "eyeing the vast corpse he had made" (233). The physical violence of this scene recalls and magnifies the violence done to slave bodies in the South, and the blood that permeates everything—whale, whale hunter, and ocean alike—is representative of the influence of slavery that Frederick

Douglass says "prove[s] as injurious" to slaveholders as to slaves (31). Moreover, that Ishmael describes Stubb as having *made* the corpse instead of having killed the whale, emphasizes the importance of reading whales (and slaves, by extension) as products to be "made" and sold, not bodies to be respected.

The violence on the whale's dead body continues in "The Shark Massacre" chapter. Sharks appear in the Pequod's vicinity of what Ishmael calls the "Southern Fishery," or the South Pacific Ocean (242). With "wondrous voracity," they begin to eat away the "moored carcase" (243). When the whalers' usual practice of "vigorously stirring [the sharks] up with sharp whaling-spades" doesn't deter them, the scene quickly becomes a ferocious battle of whalers versus sharks for the whale's body (243). In the reference to the ocean as a fishery, Ishmael, once again, represents whales as commodities. The ocean is stocked with fish for the whalers' hunting pleasure and financial gain. If whales are slaves, the fishery is the U.S. South and slaves are also products that exist to be stocked, caught and used for slave owners' pleasure. The battle over the whale's body is a symbol of the political battle over slave and free states in the mid-nineteenth century United States, a battle that ignored the needs of the beaten and bruised slave bodies already present in America.

Immediately following "The Shark Massacre," Ishmael explains the process of "cutting in," or breaking the whale's body apart into pieces that can be sold (244). It starts with the whalers "cutting a hole in the body for the insertion of the hook just above the nearest of the two side-fins. This done, a broad, semicircular line is cut round the hole, the hook is inserted, and the main body of the crew . . . commence heaving. . . ." (244). What comes loose from the whale after this effort is "the disengaged semicircular end of the first strip of blubber" (244). Ishmael continues, "Now as the blubber envelopes the whale

precisely as the rind does an orange, so is it stripped off from the body precisely as an orange is sometimes stripped by spiralizing it" (244). Spiralizing done, what is left of the whale in the water is a "prodigious blood-dripping mass" (244). The mutilation continues in "scientific" fashion, the workers "singing" all the while (245). The violence enacted on the whales' body in order to commodify them is, like the other bloody and graphic scenes that come before it, indicative of the brutal mistreatment of slave bodies in the South that, once beaten into submission, became living commodities that earned money for slave owners.

In the next chapter, "The Blanket," Ishmael soliloquizes about "the skin of the whale" (245). Here, he defines the whale not as a once-living creature, but as a product. He explains,

> Assuming the blubber to be the skin of the whale, then, when this skin as in the case of a very large Sperm Whale, will yield the bulk of one hundred barrels of oil; and, when it is considered that, in quantity, or rather weight, that oil, in its expressed state, is only three fourths, and not the entire substance of the coat; some idea may hence be had of the enormousness of that animated mass, a mere part of whose mere integument yields such a lake of liquid as that. Reckoning ten barrels to the ton, you have ten tons for the net weight of only three quarters of the stuff of the whale's skin. (246)

One whale, then, is one hundred barrels of oil; the worth of the body is in the amount of product whalers can manufacture from it and the amount of capital it returns to them. Likewise, the worth of the body of one slave is in the amount of labor he can do and in the return the owners get for their investment.

It is no coincidence that this chapter ends with a reference to amber. Like the sailor who falls "overboard" and is "sometimes found, months afterwards, perpendicularly frozen

into the hearts of fields of ice . . . ," so is "a fly found glued in amber" (247). In the amber market, stones with flies, other insects, or moss in them are the most valuable and sought after pieces. The comparison is one of human to stone, man to product. And we, as readers, are left with the horrifying realization that the amber mentioned here has more monetary value than the frozen sailor. Likewise, it is worth more than the life and freedom of the man or woman who may have gathered it in partitioned Poland or East Prussia, perhaps even more than a slave in the United States South. Whales, serfs, slaves—all of these bodies are in the end, Ishmael suggests, just like amber and ambergris. In representing products made from bodies and the work of bodies as more valuable than the bodies themselves, the gothic presence of Polish serfdom behind references to amber in *Moby-Dick* reveals American anxieties about slavery and the commodification of human bodies.

Conclusion

Melville's references to Poland and amber in *Moby-Dick* haunt the novel, revealing the dark underside of America's beau ideal and registering anxieties about empire and slavery. The mention of Poland falling to the "three pirate powers" and the comparison of Poland to a "loose-fish" for Russia serve to highlight the fact that the United States is not much like its beau ideal after all. In his lists of conquests, Ishmael classes America not with Poland, but with Russia, Prussia and Austria, because of the United States' dealings with Mexico. Thus, he offers a chilling indictment of America as imperial oppressor. Yet, America is more than an empire conquering other nations; it is an empire that stands on the bloodied backs of slaves. The coded history of serfdom behind Melville's references to amber, as well as mid-nineteenth century references to Poland in discourse about slavery in

America, reveal American anxieties about the commodification of bodies through slavery in a free republic.

Chapter 3: Playing Polish: The Gothic Nature of the Catholic "Other" in E. D. E. N. Southworth's *The Missing Bride* and Louisa May Alcott's "The Baron's Gloves"

In early 1848, Margaret Fuller was in Rome in the midst of an Italian demonstration against Austrian occupation (Marshall 316).[33] "I have seen the Austrian arms dragged through the streets of Rome and burned in the Piazza del Popolo," she wrote on March 29 in a letter to the *New York Daily Tribune*, for which she was working as a "correspondent" ("Letter XXIII" 452; Koropeckyj 364). Describing the scene more fully, she continued, "The Italians embraced one another and cried, *Miracolo! Providenza!*" while "Adam Mickiewicz, the great poet of Poland, long exiled from his country or the hopes of a country, looked on" ("Letter XXIII" 452).

Mickiewicz, author of the internationally popular epic poem, *Pan Tadeusz* (1834), was a personage worthy of note and focus in the crowd of revolutionaries. Fuller, however, had personal reasons for observing his presence. She and the Polish poet were close friends (Koropeckyj 366). They had met in Paris in February 1847 (Koropeckyj 364-6). About him, Fuller confessed to Emerson, "In France, among the many persons that brought me some good thing, it was only with Mickiewicz, that I felt any deep-founded mental connection" ("To Ralph" 261-2). It seemed more than a mental connection, though. In response to a letter from friends Marcus and Rebecca Spring asking whether she loved Mickiewicz, Fuller wrote, "I answer he affected me like music or the richest landscape, my heart beat with joy that he at once found beauty in me also. When I was with him, I was happy . . ." ("To Marcus" 263).[34] This profound "attraction" was mutual. Mickiewicz was deeply impressed with Fuller's intellect and spirituality (Koropeckyj 367). After their initial meeting, "The two managed to see each other often during the ten days that remained before Fuller had to leave Paris for

Italy," and in their absence from each other, the two corresponded frequently, he acting as a "self-styled spiritual advisor" for her (Koropeckyj 367, 378).

Now, a little over a year later, the two met each other again for the first time since their separation when "Mickiewicz arrived in March with a small 'squadron' of Polish exiles on their way home to make revolution, planning to recruit any of his countrymen living in Rome" (Marshall 317).[35] In the midst of his revolutionary activities, Mickiewicz found ample time to visit Fuller (Koropeckyj 378). When he departed for Florence, Fuller followed his progress, writing of him again in "Letter XXIV" to the *New York Daily Tribune* on April 19, 1848:

> The Poles have also made noble manifestations. Their great poet, Adam Mickiewicz, has been here to enroll the Italian Poles, publish the declaration of faith in which they hope to re-enter and re-establish their country, and receive the Pope's benediction on their banner. (461-2)

In the letter, she also included a full copy of a speech Mickiewicz had made in Florence in April about Poland's forthcoming resurrection and calling to "'serve her sister nations'" in the cause of revolution (463).[36] Mickiewicz delivered his words with "powerful eloquence" and "magnetism," Fuller wrote (462). He lamented that Poland, the victim of "'despots,'" was "'dead, slain, buried,'" before exclaiming confidently, "'Poland will rise again!'" (463). When, "'Poland, as a crucified nation, is risen again . . . ,'" he continued, Poles would fight for its "'liberty'" and that of other nations (263). Mickiewicz ended his speech by invoking God's blessing, after which, Fuller reported, "All the people followed the Poles to the church of Santa Croce, where was sung the Benedictus Dominus . . ." (464).

For American readers of Fuller's *Tribune* letter, Mickiewicz's words surely evoked feelings of sympathy and fraternity toward their nation's beau ideal. The letter, after all, supported beliefs that Poland stood for freedom, independence and patriotism, values Americans held dear. Yet, Fuller's letter also included details about Catholicism that may have been unsettling for some. Fuller wrote that Mickiewicz, a representative of America's beau ideal, had sought out the Pope's blessing on the Polish cause, he had praised the Pope for his part in "rous[ing] Italy" to revolution, and he had ended his speech in Florence by directing the audience into a Catholic church to pray ("Letter XXIV" 462, 463, 464). During a time of fierce, and at times violent, anti-Catholic sentiment resulting from fears that Catholicism and Catholic immigrants were a threat to American Protestant and democratic values, these details, presented in such an objective way, may have seemed shocking to American audiences (Griffin 4).

Fuller was not Catholic. As a Transcendentalist who believed in "a pervasive, all-suffusing, ever-rejuvenating 'Creative Spirit,'" neither was she a traditional Protestant (Marshall 311). While she was certainly a product of a society that resisted Catholic tradition, it was perhaps her open-mindedness to non-normative and non-Protestant religious views and experiences that allowed her to develop an admiration for Catholic devotion during her time in Europe. Her respect stemmed in part from her observations of Catholics at devotion in Rome (about which she wrote with deep respect) and in part from her exposure "to the deeply held religious convictions of revolutionaries like . . . Mickiewicz, reared in the Catholic Church, who fused [his] native faith with radicalism . . ." (Marshall 311). For Fuller, it seemed, Catholicism was a different worldview than her own, but one to be valued nonetheless.

In writing of the Polish poet's ties to Catholicism, Fuller may seem to merely be recording historical fact as it was her job to do. However, the subject matter of her article distinguishes her from most of her literary peers who wrote about Poland and Poles. Although a number of mid-nineteenth century authors idealized Poles as "champions of freedom, defenders of Christianity, and martyrs to oppression," besides Fuller, only a handful broached the subject of Polish Catholicism (Gladsky 20, 21). Among them were two other women writers, E. D. E. N. Southworth and Louisa May Alcott.[37] Southworth's 1855 novel *The Missing Bride, or Miriam the Avenger* (also titled *The Fatal Vow*) and Louisa May Alcott's 1868 story, "The Baron's Gloves; or, Amy's Romance," both include a courageous male Polish character that, similar to Mickiewicz, has been exiled from his homeland, *and* they both discuss these characters in conjunction with the Catholic faith. As gothic tales, however, these two stories register mid-nineteenth-century American anxieties about the Polish Catholic Other in a way that Fuller's text does not. While Fuller's writing idealizes her Polish friend and reports objectively on his cause and religious faith, Southworth's and Alcott's texts express the double nature of the Polish exile by simultaneously embracing him as the "beau ideal of Western man" and keeping him at arm's length as an uncanny foreign Catholic Other (Gladsky 16).

As a Polish war hero akin to Kosciuszko or Pulaski who sacrifices all for "honor and glory," Alexander Kalouga, the first character Southworth introduces in *The Missing Bride*, initially seems to embody the beau ideal of the United States (24). However, he is beau ideal only in his courage and military prowess. His negative traits of character—recklessness, selfishness, and greed—which Southworth associates with his Polishness, mark him as a threatening Other as well.[38] Alexander's religious faith moreover marks him as a looming

threat; he is the patriarch of a family whose various male members—all of the Catholic faith—go out of their way to oppress, punish, and curb the freedom of others through religious means. Seen in this light, Kalouga and his descendants, with their Polish Catholic heritage, are terrifying.

Similarly, in "The Baron's Gloves," Alcott represents Casimer Teblinski, an injured Polish exile, as brave and passionate about his country's freedom. An imitation of Kosciuszko, he is the embodiment Poland as America's beau ideal. However, Casimer is also a character whose illness, Polish ethnicity, and Catholic faith mark him as inferior to Amy, the story's title character, and unfit to marry her. Amy's family members and even she herself, feel anxious that Casimer's ethnic and religious difference will taint the heroine if she enters into a relationship with him. Though Casimer is not outwardly menacing as the characters of Polish heritage in Southworth's work are, his difference is an insidious force which, other characters imply, would threaten to damage Amy's reputation and her Protestant faith and values if she were to marry him.

The acceptance and admiration of Polish immigrant/exile characters as the beau ideal followed by the rejection of the same characters based on their foreignness and Catholic-ness evidences the uncanny nature of Polish Catholics in the texts of Southworth and Alcott. As beaux ideal, they are familiar, yet as Catholics and foreigners, they are strange. This sameness and difference, Griffin argues, is "What makes Catholics so uncannily threatening to Protestants in America" (8). Because Protestant churches share a "historical relationship" with Catholicism, "Catholics are . . . at once familiar and unfamiliar, homely and foreign" (8). Keeping this in mind, and reading the texts of Southworth and Alcott alongside the history of mid-nineteenth century anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States and American

newspaper articles about Catholicism and Poland and the growing anxieties surrounding immigration generally, I argue that the two texts in question betray mid-nineteenth century American anxieties about the Polish Catholic immigrant/exile Other.

The Missing Bride and "The Baron's Gloves" are texts full of gothic terrors. Southworth's novel boasts, among other things, threats of a kidnapping; a gloomy and stormy beach scene accompanied by the stabbing of the chaste and honorable heroine who is presumed dead but who later shows up alive; a conscience-stricken hero who is haunted by the past; a villain who becomes a devilish monster in his all-consuming jealousy; and a mentally ill woman who seems to whisper prophecies about other characters' futures. Alcott even supplies a castle in ruins. By transporting the American gothic to Germany and Switzerland, she also throws in some leering foreign boys, a "Radcliffian" chateau full of secret doorways and terrifyingly "life-like" wax statues (one is a "monk" and another is a "ruffian"), one fainting heroine lost in the labyrinthine passageways beneath a haunted castle, another the victim of a train wreck in an alpine meadow at night, and two heroes, both "foreign-born" and romantic (240, 243-4).

Most of these elements are conventions of traditional gothic novels and thus mark Southworth and Alcott as American gothic writers who borrowed heavily from the British tradition. According to Maggie Kilgour, as the gothic novel developed, many British writers of the genre, such as Ann Radcliffe, used

> stock characters and devices which are simply recycled from one text to the next: conventional settings (one castle – preferably in ruins; some gloomy mountains – preferably the Alps; a haunted room that locks only on the outside) and characters (a

> passive and persecuted heroine, a sensitive and rather ineffectual hero, a dynamic and tyrannical villain, an evil prioress, talkative servants). (4-5)

Other conventions of British gothic texts include fainting scenes when the heroine comes upon something frightening, some kind of sexual threat to the heroine, kidnappings, and secret passageways. A main concern of the British gothic is "the rise of the middle class" (Kilgour 11). Kilgour contends that gothic novels "Attack[ed] a dehumanising modern world" which prompted "materialistic individual[ism]," cutting humans off from one another and causing "deadly oppositions and struggles between victors and victims" (12).

"Once imported to America," Teresa Goddu observes, "the gothic's key elements were translated into American terms, and its formulas were also unfixed" (*Gothic America* 4). American writers blended the gothic form and its conventions with different "literary forms" and altered it to deal with American concerns and subjects (4). This "more flexible form" makes the American gothic challenging both to delineate and categorize (4). Even so, the difference in its common conventions and concerns is clear. While some traditionally gothic elements such as kidnappings and sublime natural scenes found their way into American gothic texts, others dropped out almost entirely. Very few authors wrote about crumbling palaces, for instance. Instead, the haunting elements of the American gothic were components of American reality (4). For Charles Brockden Brown, "incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western wilderness" were the most fitting subjects to haunt American gothic texts (Brown 3). In the background or foreground of other texts are, among other things, the horrors of war, the threat of slave rebellion, the generally known secret of miscegenation, and the presence of the African Other. Goddu argues that such ghosts

betrayed American anxieties about race, "revolution, Indian massacre, the transformation of the marketplace," and "slavery" (*Gothic America* 3).

While the texts of Southworth and Alcott have many conventional similarities with the British gothic, they are also distinctive in several significant ways. First and most obvious, as American gothic works, *The Missing Bride* and "The Baron's Gloves" register American cultural guilt and fears, as I will show. Next, Southworth's heroines are not "passive" victims; of the five heroines in her text—Edith, Henrietta, Marian, Jacqueline, and Miriam—one stands up to a band of British soldiers about to invade her uncle's home, the second ignores her husband's whims and does whatever she can to help women who are in trouble, the third gives testimony in court and effectively saves the life of her husband, the fourth rebelliously play tricks on men who try to control her, the fifth avenges the alleged death of a beloved friend, and all have and speak their own minds. As Baym argues, Southworth's main concern in her entire body of work is "the struggle of good women against the oppressions and cruelties, covert and blatant, of men," and *The Missing Bride* is no exception (115).

Similarly to Southworth's heroines, at least one of the female characters in "The Baron's Gloves" is not a passive victim. Helen, Amy's cousin, works to aid the wounded almost immediately after she is in a train wreck, resists the urge to be consumed with fear when she sees what she believes to be a "ruffian" with "fierce black eyes . . . full of malignant menace" in a room next to hers, and uses logic to nearly figure out the game played by two men wearing "masks" (244, 242, 269). Moreover, Alcott's heroes are not ineffectual. Karl Hoffman, the German "courier," saves Helen and other characters after the train wreck, and Sidney Power (who later pretends to be Casimer Teblinski) easily rescues

Amy when she is lost in the passageways under a ruined castle (191). Most importantly, the two men, in large part, stage the gothic as a performance in the text. When Amy "sighs" at the beginning of the story, disappointed that her "journey" in Europe lacks "novelty, romance, and charming adventures," the two young heroes overhear her and become determined to give Amy and Helen the romance they are missing (179). While the train wreck and Amy's wanderings underneath the castle happen spontaneously, the two heroes manipulate the events to give the girls romantic "adventures" right out of a British gothic novel. In the end, we find that they have even disguised their identities. The Polish exile and the German courier reveal themselves, respectively, as Sidney Power, a young British man, and Sigismund Palsdorff, a German baron. The men's performance of gothic romance reveals Alcott as an author who is not only consciously borrowing from but also playing with British gothic conventions.

Clearly, *The Missing Bride* and "The Baron's Gloves" intersect with each other and with the British and American gothic in various ways. One of their major sites of intersection is their anxiety about the Catholic Other. The preoccupation with Catholicism is not rare in American mid-nineteenth century literature. Griffin writes that in many novels of the time, both British and American,

> women were . . . kidnapped from confessionals, imprisoned and raped in convents; Jesuits practiced their time-honored treacheries; nuns posing as governesses corrupted Protestant children; priests hovered at deathbeds, snatching away family fortunes; Papal emissaries plotted to overthrow government power; Mother Superiors tyrannized over helpless girls, barring all parental intervention. (1)

These terrifying specters are fictional representations of several American cultural anxieties about Catholicism. First, the presence of Catholics in the United States meant "foreign infiltration" (Griffin 4). Many Americans feared Catholic immigrants, thinking of them as subversive and disloyal to the nation because of their ultimate loyalty to the Vatican; Catholicism, Americans believed, was "a religion without a country" and Catholic immigrants would thus never become fully integrated into the nation (Griffin 4). Americans moreover had theological differences with Catholicism stemming back to the Reformation. They saw "Romanism as a religion of forms and surfaces" or "a religion which is theatrically performed" rather than being "genuine" and defined by "individual reading of the Bible and personal experience" (4-5). Finally, as aforementioned, Protestantism's "historical" connection to Catholicism was "uncannily threatening" (8).

Yet, the Catholics to fear were "variously, Irish, German, Italian, French" (Griffin 4). They were seldom Polish. Although it was widespread knowledge that "Catholicism [was] synonymous with the Polish nation," American authors in the early nineteenth century "rarely mentioned" the religion in conjunction with Poles (Gladsky 21). Their admiration for their beau ideal was so great that most "ignored" Polish Catholicism in the same way they overlooked the historical shortcomings of Poland: "The allegiance of certain Polish leaders to foreign monarchs, the petty squabbling of the gentry, the failure to accommodate itself to the age of exploration, science, and industry, the day-to-day life of the people . . ." (21). This attitude is in stark contrast to the last two decades of the nineteenth century when American prejudice against the Pole as "an animal, violent, drunken, a nationalist and breeding machine whose fecundity was a threat" began in earnest due to the floods of poorer Poles that immigrated to the United States (Goska 105). Polish immigrants' deep cultural connection to

Catholicism was one reason for that prejudice; their perceived position as "racially inferior" was another (105). Through their use of the gothic genre, both Southworth and Alcott create Polish immigrant/exile characters who, because they are simultaneously familiar beau ideal and strange foreign Catholic Other, register anxieties that Americans had about the Polish Catholic presence in the United States long before 1880. Indeed, the texts of both authors betray mid-nineteenth American century fears about the uncanny nature of Polish Catholicism.

Southworth and the Specter of Polish Catholic Heritage

In the decade leading up to the publication of Southworth's *The Missing Bride* in 1855, Poland remained the beau ideal of the United States. Yet, this categorization of Poland began to become unsettled amid the political upheaval and religious and class tensions that rocked America and Europe in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Various revolutions raged in Europe during 1848 and 1849, a long hoped-for revolution in Poland did not come, an increasing number of immigrants—Polish Catholics among them—came to American shores, spurring anxiety about how they would change the nation; nativism surged, and anti-Catholic sentiment turned violent. During this time, Southworth created in *The Missing Bride* a Polish Catholic patriarch who is simultaneously familiar beau ideal and uncanny foreign Catholic Other, who contaminates future generations with negative racial traits and an oppressive religion (Gladsky 21). Her novel reflects continuing American admiration of Poland as beau ideal while also registering American fears of the Polish Catholic Other that mid-nineteenth century United States writing about Poland and Poles generally does not.

Seven years before the publication of *The Missing Bride*, American papers exploded with news of revolutions in Europe. Many newspaper writers expressed hope that Poland

would be among those nations to shake free from oppression. One article in the April 13, 1848 issue of Washington, DC's *Daily National Intelligencer* brought the thrilling news of revolution in Austria and proclaimed the wish that "Poland may be again Poland" ("From our European" 2). Nine days later, the *Daily Union* printed further exciting news:

> The fine packet-ship *Duchesse d'Orleans* brought us this morning the most astounding news yet—'Prussia is a republic!' This is indeed an event in the world! When the strongest military despotism in Europe, except Russia, has been upheaved and overturned by the rising of the people—there is home for freedom everywhere, even in the depths of Russian barbarism and darkness. Poland—noble, chivalrous Poland—Poland crushed to the earth, bleeding at every pore from her last mighty struggle—Poland's day cannot be far off. ("From our New York" 3)

On the same day and on the same page, the *Daily Union* also ran the news that "Poland is in a state of insurrection . . ." ("Still Later" 3).

As these articles suggest, 1848 was a "Year of Revolution" in Europe. Led by "crowds of working class radicals and middle-class liberals," the revolutionary movement began in Palermo in January, made its way through other parts of Italy, and then to Paris in February (Rapport ix; Ellis 27-8). Ellis explains, "From there, the effects spread quickly to other capital cities: to Munich (4 March), Vienna (13 March), Buda-Pest (15 March), Venice and Cracow (17 March), Milan and Berlin (18 March) . . ." (28). As did other groups, Poles saw the revolutionary fervor as an opportunity to once again revolt and fight for the independence of their nation (Rapport x).

But this was not to be. When Prussian Poles made efforts for military and governmental independence in the region around Poznan after what "seemed to [be] the

collapse of absolutism in Prussia," authorities in Berlin refused (Lukowski and Zawadzki 171). Eventually, "the Prussian army restored full control" of the area in spring of 1848 (170). In Austrian Poland, Cracow "proclaimed [itself] a republic" on March 18 and, according to an article in the *Daily National Intelligencer,* fell again to Austria a little over a month later ("Extracts" 3; Lukowski and Zawadzki 171). Though these defeats dashed their hopes, throughout the year many Poles stayed true to their "internationalist slogan of 'For Your Freedom and Ours'" and fought for liberty in "Italy, western Germany and Hungary in 1848-9" (Lukowski and Zawadzki 172).

The excitement that pervades the announcements of revolution in Washington, DC newspapers evidences the support many Americans felt for the movements of independence and liberation in Europe. The repeated exclamations of hope for Polish nationhood are also telling. Poland was still as much as ever America's beau ideal. Admiration for the dismembered nation was, in fact, still so strong that according to an article in the *Daily National Intelligencer* of July 6, 1850, a man named Mr. Custis mentioned Thaddeus Kosciuszko in his speech for the "Fourth of July" celebration at "Monument Place," the area where the building of the Washington Monument was about to commence (3). The newspaper reported that some dirt "from the great monumental mound in Krakow, in Poland, reared to the memory of the brave Kosciusko . . . was placed on the Washington block . . . to enter into the cement which should bind the stone in its place and form a part of the monument to the Pater Patriae" ("Fourth of July" 3). Clearly, the people and government of the United States still felt grateful for the part Poland played in their own Revolutionary War.

Any discomfort that United States citizens had with the Polish Other was clearly not rooted in knowledge of the Poles' actions in the 1848 revolutions or in Poland's historical

connection with the U.S. Rather, it was partly rooted in the more general anxiety about the increasing number of immigrants coming to American shores. When most of the 1848 revolutions in Europe ended with more of a whimper than a bang, "a myriad of political exiles [came] to America" (Pula, *Polish* 8). United States newspapers reflected American uneasiness with the flood of foreigners. In one article reporting immigration numbers for the "*first five months of 1849*," the author opines,

> As no subject is of more importance to the well-being of our country than that of the character of so rapidly increasing emigration to its shores, I am careful to note everything going to throw light upon it. It is destined to give us much trouble in after years if not properly managed; while, as heretofore, if the great mass of foreigners scatter themselves among our own people, learning in all things to think and feel as Americans, the more arriving in the next fifty years, the better it will be for the United States. ("Correspondence" 3)

The article goes on to warn that in future years the number of immigrants could be in the "millions" rather than "hundreds of thousands, as at present" ("Correspondence" 3). Fear of the Other is palpable in this article. If such large numbers of immigrants did not fully assimilate, the article suggests, differences in worldview or disloyalties would either forever alter or destroy the nation.

Beneath the article is a list of immigrants to the United States in the first half of the year. The list does not single out Poles as more or less dangerous than other immigrants, but it does note their presence: "35" Polish immigrants landed in New York during the beginning months of the year ("Correspondence" 3). More followed. From the "Year of Revolution" to 1851, "some 300-500 Poles arrived in the United States, with many, about 200, settling in

New York" (Pula, *Polish* 8). In another three years, "some 800 individuals" established "the first truly permanent Polish settlement in America," Panna Maria, Texas (8). While Poland was still America's beau ideal, it is undeniable that Polish immigrants constituted a part of the growing force that Americans feared could be subversive if not entirely assimilated: the foreign Other.

But Poles were not merely foreign; they were—most of them—Catholic. As American novelists of the early mid-nineteenth century resisted connecting Polish characters with Catholicism, though, newspaper writers in the early 1850s resisted connecting Polish revolutionaries and exiles with the religion. In a November 1851 article in the *National Era* entitled "Priestcraft in Europe," the author writes, "Revolutionists in Poland . . . found Priestcraft always in alliance with Absolutism" (182). Unlike those involved in the revolutionary movements, priests denied "*the Manhood of the individual*" (182). "Spiritual Despotism," another article in the same newspaper in February 1852 warns against Jesuits as "an insidious Foe among us, hating our institutions, covertly using the privileges they confer to undermine and destroy them . . ." (26). By nature, the article continues, Jesuits stand against "the Protestant Principle—*the Sacred Right of Independent Judgment* and . . . the Republican Principle—*the Right of every People to govern itself*" (26). Thus, the author insists, "The Catholic who battles for Freedom is either an Infidel, or a Protestant without knowing it . . ." (26). Revolutionary Poles were this type; though Catholic by faith, they "marshalled themselves with Protestants against the exactions of Despotism . . ." (26).

Due to the very public American anti-Catholic sentiment in the 1840s and 1850s and the violent outbursts at the time towards Catholics in the United States, it is no wonder that newspaper writers desired to distance Poland as the nation's beau ideal from a connection

with the Catholic faith. As more and more Catholic immigrants came to the United States in the 1830s and 40s, and as Catholic culture began to blossom in the nation, "anxiety among native-born Americans" grew (Reimers 10). Most Irish Catholic immigrants were poor, and Americans feared that they would "drive down the wages and status of American workers" (10). Besides anxieties about economic changes and theological differences, Americans also feared what they "perceived" as the Catholic immigrants' "anti-Enlightenment lifestyle or anti-individualism" (Oxx 30). Catholics, as Lyman Beecher, an "anti-Catholic Protestant minister" preached in 1834 and as many nativists believed, "posed an immediate and serious danger, not just to the current and next generation of Protestants, but to the future of America" (32).

The American fears of and prejudice against Catholic immigrants eventually boiled over into nativist violence against Catholicism. In "the first large-scale [episode of] anti-Catholic violence in the country," nativists burned down "a Catholic convent" in "Charlestown, Massachusetts in 1836" (Oxx 25). More violence came in 1844, this time in Philadelphia. Oxx writes,

> in two separate conflicts which each lasted a number of days, every Catholic church in Philadelphia was threatened with attack. Two were burned to the ground and one was badly damaged. Two libraries, two rectories, a schoolhouse, and multiple blocks of homes were also torched. About thirty people were killed and hundreds injured. (54)

The violence culminated in Washington, DC ten years later with the destruction of "the 'Pope's Stone,'" a block of marble the pope had sent to America to be placed in the Washington Monument (84).

E. D. E. N. Southworth, who was living in Georgetown in Washington, DC in 1854, was surely aware not only of the nativist attack on the marble from the Vatican but also of the other anti-Catholic violence that came before it. Nonetheless, she, unlike other American writers of the time, was not hesitant to link the Polish characters in her novel with the Catholic faith. From the first chapter of *The Missing Bride,* she identifies her Polish characters, as well as those American characters of Polish heritage, as Catholic. Given the anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States, the violent acts against Catholics which happened in the years before Southworth published her novel, the American cultural knowledge that Catholicism was the major religion of partitioned Poland, and the American cultural resistance to defining Poles as Catholic, the combination in Southworth's text is, perhaps understandably, fraught. Poles and characters of Polish heritage like Alexander Kalouga and Commodore in *The Missing Bride* are admirable beaux ideal for their military heroism and courage to stand for freedom, and, at the same time, they are greedy, rash, and self-interested foreigners who practice a forceful, oppressive brand of Catholicism. They pass their religion and their negative traits, which Southworth associates with their ethnicity, down to their descendants, creating a Polish lineage that is both familiar and strange at once. This concurrent acceptance and rejection of the Poles in Southworth's text, based on their sameness and difference to Americans, makes the Polish Catholic immigrant Other and Polish lineage uncanny figurations of the beau ideal—attractive and repulsive; desirable and detestable at the same time in much the same way the discourses of Polish revolution circulated with support in the US even as the arrival of poorer immigrants—Poles and otherwise—was met with reluctance.

Other than a brief mention by Gladsky, there is no scholarship that discusses the character of Alexander Kalouga or his descendants' Polish heritage with any significance. *The Missing Bride,* in fact, like most of Southworth's novels, has garnered very little critical attention. No full-length articles exist on the text, and only three scholars discuss the novel beyond simply referencing it. Their commentary, however, is brief and does not employ a gothic lens. Nina Baym points out that Thurston Willcoxen, a main male character in the text is a "type" that Southworth recycles in different novels (124). For the first half of the novel, he is "a young man full of himself, impetuous, exacting, and unreasonable," and it is because of these faults of character that he loses Marian, the woman he loves (124). Over the course of the rest of the story, like other male characters of Southworth's, he undergoes a "transformation" and begins to recognize Marian "as a human being entitled to possession of herself, to respectful treatment, rather than an object for use, pleasure, or exploitation" (116). Only then do the two find happiness together.

Homestead and Washington briefly discuss *The Missing Bride,* comparing it to "George Eliot's *Middlemarch,* with both novels encompassing multiple families within a community" (xxiv). They also point out that in the novel Southworth "portrays dominating husbands and fathers as vampires who drain the life force and soul from their daughters and wives . . ." (xxv). This nod to the gothic that Homestead and Washington give makes sense for a reading not only of this particular novel, but for many of Southworth's texts which employ gothic elements and center on the social anxieties that haunted male and female mid-nineteenth century Americans: "the social and legal issues surrounding marriage, capital punishment, and slavery . . . poverty, the struggles of orphans and widows, unwed mothers and their 'illegitimate' children, social class and conflict between the classes, and conflicts

between Euro-American settlers and the Native Americans on whose lands they encroached" (xxv). Even so, only one scholar—Beth Leuck—discusses Southworth's work through American gothic criticism, and her article focuses on "racial stereotyping, fears of miscegenation, and the uneasy tension between master (or mistress) and slave" in *Retribution* (107).

Though a gothic text in which Polishness and Catholicism are ultimately haunting, *The Missing Bride* begins with the beau ideal. In the first chapter, Southworth introduces Alexander Kalouga, "a Polish soldier," who, "previous to his final emigration to the New World, passed through a life of the most wonderful vicissitudes . . ." (23). A man of "bravery," this hero engaged in "years of military service," gaining "wounds and scars, honor and glory" but no riches (24). After putting down his sword, he settled in Maryland, where he had "received" Luckenough, a "manor," and a land grant from "Cecilius Calvert, Baron of Baltimore, first Lord Proprietary" of the colony for having once been "some time in [his] service" (23-4).

A man recognized for courage in battles in different areas of the world, Alexander seems at first to be the double of the original beau ideal, Thaddeus Kosciuszko. He is a military hero who was "born in one quarter of the globe, educated in another, initiated into warfare in the third, and buried in the fourth" (23). Born in Poland, Kosciuszko received his education in Paris, fought in a war on the continent of North America, and died in Switzerland (Storozynski 3, 12, 19, 278). Both men received battle injuries, wounds, and the "honor" of their contemporaries; and both, for their courage in battle, received land grants from political leaders in the New World (Storozynski 208, 235).[39]

As the Polish patriarch of the family around whom the story centers, Alexander Kalouga only appears in the opening pages of *The Missing Bride*; by the time we get to the novel's main plot and characters, three generations of the Kalouga family have passed away, the Polish surname has disappeared, and the male head of the family is Nickolas Waugh. Though Kalouga seems to have vanished from the story, his influence does not. The traits of the beau ideal stay alive in later generations. When Nickolas Waugh, for example, goes to sea for his own military "adventures" (30), Southworth writes that he seems possessed by "the spirit of old Alexander Kalouga" (29). In the American Revolution, he

> took service with Paul Jones, the American Sea King. . . . He performed miracles of valor—achieved for himself a name and a post-captain's rank in the infant navy, and finally was permitted to retire with a bullet lodged under his shoulder blade, a piece of silver trepanned in the top of his skull, a deep sword-cut across his face from the right temple over his nose to the left cheek—and with the honorary title of Commodore. (30)

In fighting for American independence, performing courageous feats, and receiving various scars—especially the scar on his face—the Commodore, just like his ancestor Alexander Kalouga, recalls Thaddeus Kosciuszko and represents the beau ideal through his Polish heritage.[40]

Despite these examples of characters of Polish heritage embodying the traits of the beau ideal in the novel, however, not all the attributes that Alexander Kalouga passes down to his descendants are ideal. He also passes down negative traits that Southworth associates with Polishness, as well as a Catholic faith that proves to be oppressive to others in practice. Thus, Alexander is once familiar beau ideal and strange Polish Catholic Other. The first sign

that there is something not quite ideal about the Polish warrior and patriarch is in the details Southworth gives about his military career. Though brave, Alexander Kalouga was a "soldier of fortune," who did not fight for freedom and independence as Kosciuszko did, but fought "wherever his hireling sword was needed" (24). Although he "[drew] his sword in almost every quarrel of his time," there is no evidence that he was loyal to any cause except money (24). Shoring up this supposition is the fact that "he led, for years, a sort of buccaneer life" in "Spanish America" (23-4). This apparently long stint as a pirate suggests that his life was one of violence based on greed.[41]

Southworth attributes Alexander's avarice, as well as his other negative traits, to his Polish ethnicity through a description of Nickolas Waugh's character just before he took part in the Revolutionary War. The Commodore, the son of the "heiress of Peter Kalouga," Southworth notes, "had the constitution and character not of his mother's, but of his father's family—a hardy, rigorous, energetic Montgomery race, full of fire, spirit and enterprise" (29).[42] His mother, the last bearer of the Kalouga name before her marriage, was lazy and domineering (29). To get away from her and the "tedium of Luckenough," Nickolas "broke through the reins of domestic government, escaped to Baltimore, and shipped as cabin boy in a merchantman" (29). At sea, Nickolas seems possessed by his Polish heritage (29). Before the Revolutionary War, which "turned the brighter part of his character up to the light," Nickolas "went through many adventures, served on board merchantmen, privateers, and haply pirates too, sailed to every part of the known world, and led a wild, reckless and sinful life . . ." (30).

The distinct binary between Polish and Scottish traits in the drawing of the Commodore's heritage and character is striking. The characteristics Nickolas gains from his

father's side of the family are entirely positive and associated with the brave, hardworking and entrepreneurial American spirit; on the other hand, the traits from the Polish side of his family—rashness, laziness, and immorality—are entirely negative and correlate with the darker "part of his character." The "spirit of old Alexander Kalouga" thus stands not only as an ancestor bestowing the gift of the beau ideal's bravery on his descendants but also as a looming ghost conferring destructive personality traits linked to Polish ethnicity, traits which characters of Polish heritage use to bully others (29).

Furthermore, the specter of Alexander Kalouga also passes down to his descendants a Catholic faith that seeks to force others into submission. Besides the fact that he is Polish and the fact that his descendants are Catholic, there are only two hints in *The Missing Bride* about Alexander's faith. First, Southworth notes that in his youth, Alexander "engaged in the gunpowder plot" with Guy Fawkes in 1605 (23). Kalouga's participation in the plot, "an attempt by Roman Catholic conspirators to blow up the English Parliament" and the Protestant king and then "secure a Catholic England in the wake of the destruction," marks him as a member of a branch of Catholicism that is menacing, violent, and subversive (Sharpe 1, 41, 54). The second hint to Alexander's faith is in the manner in which he settles in the colony of Maryland. After obtaining his land grant from "Cecilius Calvert," Alexander "met with Leonard Calvert, and embarked with him for Maryland . . ." (23, 24). With the references to Leonard and Cecilius Calvert, who were early governing figures in Maryland, Southworth sets the beginning of her tale in a historical moment that allows us to know that Alexander Kalouga came to the New World in 1634 with "nearly two hundred" other emigrants who, as Catholics, were seeking "a refuge from persecution for those of the faith then proscribed in England" (Scharf 63). These two hints about Alexander's faith function

together to tell readers a backstory beneath the backstory: Alexander traveled to the colonies to escape persecution for his Catholic faith after, in effect, planning to terrorize the British nobility and government by violently coercing them to accept Catholic leadership. It is this kind of Catholicism that he brought to Maryland with him, the kind of faith that mid-nineteenth century American nativists feared.

The disastrous effects of Alexander's negative ethnic traits and forceful brand of Catholicism come to bear not in the generation of the patriarch himself but in the times of Commodore Nickolas Waugh and his nieces and nephews. In this period, the Kalouga line produces two Catholic men who possess the Polish ethnically associated traits of rashness, self-interest, and greed and who employ these attributes along with their religious faith in a coercive and tyrannical way against young women in their small Maryland town. The first of these men is the Commodore himself. As a wealthy man, the Commodore is in a position to help his many "impoverished relations" (30). Elderly, miserly, and without an heir to which to pass his "great estate," Nickolas is, however, only interested in financially aiding one female relative on the condition that she will marry Professor Grimshaw, his illegitimate son (a fact known only to himself for the majority of the text) (30, 86, 486). When his first choice, Edith Waugh, chooses to marry a British officer instead, the Commodore disinherits her, leaves her and her new husband without hope for a decent future, and, when her husband dies, refuses to take pity on her (86, 121). When his second choice, Jacquelina L'Osieau, refuses as well, the Commodore sends her to "the convent-school" of "St. Serena" as a punishment (227). Eventually, when she is at home again, Nickolas deceives her into believing that there is no other way to care and provide for her poor and ill mother than to marry Professor Grimshaw, which she finally does (277).

In the case of both Edith and Jaquelina, Commodore Waugh shows his uncanny double nature. He is beau ideal, a man of Polish blood who earned repute by bravely fighting for American independence. Yet he is a man who uses his position to terrorize and coerce young female members of his family, attempting to divest them of their freedom of choice in order to further his own selfish desires. Though familiar man of faith, Nickolas is also menacing Catholic Other, employing his religion to punish Jacquelina for going against his wishes. In using a convent as a temporary holding cell for her, the Commodore in fact is a substitute for the "Mother Superior tyrannizing over helpless girls" in a Catholic institution, a stock character of both the American and British gothic novel. In the place of a nun, Southworth gives us stingy and autocratic Nickolas, a man of Polish Catholic heritage and a haunting figure in the lives of Edith and Jaquelina.

The other man of Polish Catholic descent in *The Missing Bride* who exercises coercive authority against a young woman is Thurston Willcoxen, a distant relative of Nickolas Waugh. Unlike the Commodore, Thurston is not a recognizable representation of the beau ideal even though he shares the lineage of Alexander Kalouga. He, however, does exhibit traits of character that Southworth associates with Polish ethnicity and he uses his faith to punish. A "very careless and desultory attendant, sometimes upon the Catholic chapel, sometimes upon the Protestant chapel," Thurston is only nominally Catholic (301). That is, until he meets and falls in love with Marian Mayfield, a beautiful, pure, and devout Protestant young woman (301). Because Marian is poor and Thurston will risk being disinherited if he connects himself with a woman of no fortune, the two marry in secret (332, 376). When one day Marian resists Thurston's embraces in public because she believes them to be indecorous, Thurston grows angry with her (403-4). To punish her, he refuses to see

Marian, stops attending the Protestant church, and "gradually [begins] to frequent the Catholic chapel" (423). Later, he tries to make up with Marian by asking her to accompany him on a journey abroad (430). At her refusal because of the impropriety of it, Thurston again becomes angry and eventually decides to have Marian kidnapped so he can take his secret wife on the trip against her will (431-2, 470-1). This plan ends in disaster with Marian being stabbed on the beach by another man as she waits to meet Thurston (481). By the time Thurston hears of it and rushes to the beach, the body is gone and all believe Marian to be dead (494, 499).

The "spirit of old Alexander Kalouga" looming over him and his family, Thurston, with his negative attributes of rashness and selfishness and his ancestral faith, becomes a menacing specter of the Polish Catholic Other to Protestant Marian. Thinking only of his desires and unwilling to understand Marian's fears for her reputation or to respect her personal sense of right and wrong, Thurston reacts impetuously to her resistance to a public show of affection. He uses his Catholic faith to punish her, denying her—his wife—access to himself by putting the Catholic chapel between them. This reaction to Marian, however, is merely one of childish self-interest on Thurston's part in comparison with his plan to have her kidnapped when she refuses to go on a journey alone with him. Showing him to be cut of the same tyrannical and egocentric cloth as Nickolas Waugh and Alexander Kalouga, this reaction marks Thurston as a Polish Catholic force of oppression haunting his Protestant wife.

The characters of Alexander Kalouga, Nickolas Waugh, and Thurston Willcoxen function in Southworth's *The Missing Bride* to create an uncanny Polish Catholic lineage with a double nature. The presence of traits of the beau ideal in Alexander and, several

generations later in Nickolas, reveal the still-strong mid-nineteenth century American admiration and sympathy for Poland. However, the negative traits associated with Polish ethnicity, which appear from generation to generation, and the pattern of use of the Catholic faith to punish or to force, betray mid-nineteenth century American anxieties about the Polish Catholic immigrant Other (158). The ethnically associated characteristics of Alexander, Nickolas and Thurston, so threatening to the safety, freedom, and purity of other characters, disclose a fear of foreignness—specifically of Polishness—as potentially destructive to American national interests and values. Furthermore, the oppressive faith of all three men registers a fear of the tyrannical nature of Catholicism, which Americans felt concerned would seep into national character and threaten freedom of choice. Finally, the absence of the beau ideal from the character of Thurston, shows the fear that, with time or as more lower income immigrants came to the United States, the beau ideal would disappear entirely, leaving only the morally corrupt and religiously despotic Polish Catholic immigrant Other.

Alcott and the Taint of Polish Catholicism

In the United States, the 1860s saw the final failed Polish revolution of the nineteenth century, foreign relations decisions that isolated Poland from American support, and an increased connection between Polishness and Catholicism in American print culture, all of which contributed to a fading image of Poland as America's beau ideal. Alcott's 1868 short story, "The Baron's Gloves," reflects the weakening, though still apparent beau ideal through the Polish exile character, Casimer Teblinski, who is at once Kosciuszko-like courageous and wounded exile, and uncanny, threatening Catholic Other registering American anxieties about Polish Catholics in the United States.

On February 13, 1863, the *Boston Traveler* reported, "The news from Europe is important. An insurrection has broken out in Poland" ("News of the Day" 2). The next day, the *Boston Herald* proclaimed the headway the Poles were making: "The telegraph and railway lines between Warsaw and St. Petersburg have been injured. Collisions between troops and insurgents have occurred. . . . Two thousand rebels were posted at Ostroyaka. . . . Warsaw students accompanied the rebels . . ." ("Additional" 4). Article after article followed, as papers doled out the news of this latest Polish revolution. However, while coverage of the insurrection was immense and widespread, it lacked the enthusiasm that marked coverage of Polish rebellions earlier in the century. One early article stated, "[The insurrection] was an act of desperation on the part of the insurgents and will probably be ultimately suppressed" ("The Insurrection" 2). Another predicted, "we fancy the people of the United States will not be half so swift to sympathize with rebellion as heretofore . . ." (1). Nonetheless, this article continues,

> Sympathy with the Poles is an inheritance. Our nationality was forming in 1772, when Polish nationality, by the partition crime, was first broken; and there was one general burst of sympathy here for this people. Then came the hero work of Koskiusko for our cause. There was no resisting the effect of this. Down in the depths of the American heart is a love for the struggling nationality of Poland. ("European" 1)

Sympathy and support for Polish revolutions may have begun to flag, but open admiration for the beau ideal certainly had not. Despite the fact that the United States was forming a national friendship with Russia, American newspapers still pitied "unhappy" Poland, praised

"the sentiment of nationality among the Poles," and descried "Austria, Russia, and Prussia['s] . . . flagrantly wicked treatment of Poland" ("European" 1; "Review" 4).[43]

The Polish insurrection of 1863-1864, or the January Uprising, began after "the round-up and conscription into the tsarist army of 12,000 urban [Polish] youths known to the police for their radicalism" (Lukowski and Zawadzki 178). In response to the conscription, a group of rebels who called themselves the "Reds," set up a "'Provisional National Government,'" "declared war on Russia," and demanded that Russia free all Polish territory under the czar's control (178). From the outset, the Reds were outmanned and outgunned. Landowners were hesitant to join the insurrection, and the peasants did not share the same enthusiasm for it as the Reds did (178). Eventually, "The insurrection turned into a guerrilla war in which no more than 30,000 insurgents at any one time pitted themselves with little more than shotguns and scythes against the largest army in Europe" (178-9). Incredibly, despite facing such adversity, the insurrection went on for over a year before being "snuffed out" by Russian authorities (180).

Besides certainly reading about the January Uprising in Massachusetts newspapers in 1863-4, Alcott had a more personal knowledge of the insurrection through her relationship with Ladislas Wisniewski. While traveling in Europe in the fall of 1865, Alcott had met Wisniewski, who "had recently fought in the Polish insurrection and had become ill while imprisoned" (Eiselein and Phillips 348). Impressed with the "young Pole" and surely influenced by the American "inheritance" of "sympathy with the Poles," Alcott wrote in her journal in November 1865 that she found Ladislas "very gay & agreeable" and "struck up a friendship" with him immediately (*The Journals* 144). Over the next few months, their friendship blossomed. In November, Alcott noted in her journal, Wisniewski played "the

beautiful Polish National Hymn" for her birthday celebration in Vevay, and in December, Alcott had a "little romance" with him: "Pleasant walks & talks with him in the chateau garden & about Vevay. A lovely sail on the lake, & much fun giving English & receiving French lessons" (Alcott, *The Journals* 145). After leaving Vevay and separating paths, the two met again in Paris in May where Alcott stayed a "very charming fortnight . . . the days spent in seeing sights with Laddie, the evenings in reading, writing, hearing 'my boy' play, or resting" (Alcott *The Journals* 151).[44] When Alcott returned home from Europe, she and Wisniewski corresponded, and the two saw each other again ten years later when Ladislas visited her after "turn[ing] up in N.Y. alive & well with a wife & 'little two daughters' as he says in his funny English" (Alcott, *The Journals* 153; "To the Luken" 178).

Alcott so admired her young beau ideal that she wrote several characters after him. Her "sketch 'My Polish Boy' is closely based on Wisniewski's life . . ." (Eiselein and Phillips 348). Through the character of Vladimir Prakora in the sketch, Alcott describes Wisniewski, his part in the January Uprising, and his later struggles. The only "major" difference between Vladimir Prakora and Ladislas Wisniewski is that Prakora "dies in the story, while the real Wisniewski was alive for many years after its publication" (348). Besides being the subject of "My Polish Boy," Wisniewski was also the partial inspiration for the "gay whirligig half" of Laurie in *Little Women,* as Alcott admits in an 1869 letter ("To Alfred" 120).[45] Finally, Alcott mentions Wisniewski in "the autobiographical sketch 'My Boys,'" and "He is also the model for Sidney Power in 'The Baron's Gloves' and is mentioned in 'Life in a Pension'" (Eiselein and Phillips 348).

Given Alcott's feelings for Wisniewski and most novelists' reluctance to mention Catholicism in connection with Polish characters in fictional works, it is surprising that

Alcott not only refers to Casimer Teblinski, the seemingly Polish character, as a Catholic several times in "The Baron's Gloves," but that she also uses it as a reason for reluctance on the part of Amy and her family for Amy to enter into a relationship with Casimer. The surprise diminishes, however, upon inspection of connections between Poland and Catholicism in contemporary Massachusetts newspapers. The Catholic church had a significant role in the January Uprising, as the March 3, 1863 issue of the *Boston Traveler* notes: "The statement is made that the Catholic priests are at the head of the insurrection, which indicates that it is of a grave character" ("Review" 4). Whereas this article ultimately expresses sympathy with the Poles, another article in the December 4, 1863 issue of *The Liberator* declares that it is best for Poland to remain subsumed under Russian control. In reaction to a suggestion that France could free Russian Poland "by erecting a French monarchy . . . under the rule and police of the Catholic Church . . . ," the writer of the article exclaims, "it is better to have Poland as a Catholic Romish power intimate with Popery, under the dominion of Russia and the Greek Church, than to have it an *independent active enemy*" ("To Workingmen" 195). As long as Poland remained under Russia, the article suggests, the Catholic Church would be restrained in using its power "against the freedom of the people" (195).

On February 12, 1864, another article in *The Liberator* warns that the "genius of the Roman Catholic system is assuredly despotism . . ." ("Letters from England" 25). Continuing, the writer asserts that the Church supports the Confederacy in the American Civil War because "It hates the United States for its Protestantism, and, therefore, gives its countenance to her rebellious subjects" (25). Similarly, the Church was "indifferent to the fate of Protestant Hungary; but they are endeavoring to excite the European powers to go to

war for Catholic Poland" (25). Finally, in an interview between a committee of the Fenian Brotherhood and "the Roman Catholic archbishop of Chicago" in an 1863 issue of the *Massachusetts Spy,* the committee balks that the Catholic Church will not support its plans to "overthrow . . . British rule in Ireland" when many "cardinals, and even our holy father, the pope, offer up their prayers for the success of the Poles" as "the national government of Poland" engages in "secret" and violent strikes against Russian enemies ("The Fenian" 3). This government, the committee insists, "condemns a man to death, and immediately he is found stabbed or put to death in some mysterious manner" (3).[46]

While the worst and most public demonstrations of anti-Catholic violence in the United States happened more than a decade before Alcott penned "The Baron's Gloves," anti-Catholic prejudice clearly still remained in the 1860s. If the Catholic Church, as the above newspaper excerpts suggest, was a devious, secretive, and underhanded institution that used its power only for the good of itself, and worked clandestinely against human liberty during political, national and international conflicts, surely, then, it was a subversive threat to the freedom, safety, and unity of the United States. None of the articles conflates Poland with the Catholic Church as a subversive force. However, the fact was more than clear that partitioned Poland was largely Catholic. Add this to the fact that during the 1860s, thousands of Poles, the majority of whom were Catholic, were immigrating to the U.S. (Pula, *Polish* 9). Although Polish Catholic immigrants were not the target of prejudice in the direct and vocal way that Irish and Italian Catholics were in the 1860s, and although there is no direct evidence that Americans of the time discriminated against Polish immigrants *because* they were Catholic, the fact remains that American support for the Polish cause began to dwindle in 1863 and 1864 because of the United States' "new friendship" with Russia (11). This

alliance and the "eventual failure of the January Insurrection . . . signaled a dramatic shift in U.S. policy and public opinion. While the United States would empathize with Poland now and again in the future, the infatuation of the antebellum era would never be rekindled" (12). Because of the more general, intense anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States, it is not difficult to imagine the Catholic faith of the majority of Poles had something to do with the still-present but fading image of Poland as America's beau ideal. Alcott, in fact, may have used her story to make commentary on the beginnings of a cultural reluctance to view Poles as equal or wholly trustworthy because of their Catholic faith.

To date, there is no critical response to Alcott's "The Baron's Gloves," and of the handful of scholars that have considered Alcott's gothic and sensational fiction, only three explore the implications of race and ethnicity. Derrickson "trace[s] the racist discourse" about Russians in Alcott's "Taming a Tartar" (46). It is significant, Derrickson argues, that Alcott marks the "domestic tyrant" of her tale not only as male but also as Russian (45). He is barbaric and "explosive," and the tale attributes all of his "terrible and menacing" qualities to "the foreign blood . . . that colors his veins" (45). By analyzing this character and others, Derrickson "unveil[s] the racist ideologies that undergird the systems of power operating in the work—systems of power that vilify and dehumanize signs of genetic and national difference . . ." (57). On the other hand, through her reading of "The Abbott's Ghost, or Maurice Treherne's Temptation," Ransdell recognizes Alcott for the subversive nature of her work against dominant racial ideologies. She argues that Alcott's story is "an historical allegory" that "concerns American politics of the Reconstruction" (573-4). Specifically, the tale, which ends with the marriage of a "symbolic, displaced black" to a white woman, Alcott "advocates integration of amalgamation or biracial marriage, in a stunning allegory that

presents resolution to the ghostly crime of slavery" (594). Finally, Monika Elbert contends that Alcott revises the gothic nature of Catholicism in her novel, *Moods* (1864). In the character of Ottila, "the Cuban beauty," Alcott works to "expose the evils wrought by Catholicism in the New World through the earliest institution of slavery and conquest by the Spanish Catholics" (119, 117). However, she also utilizes Catholicism, through Ottila's "passionate nature," "as a means by which to attack an overwhelmingly Puritan sensibility, with its unimaginative world view and sensual repression" (120, 116).

In pointing out that "The Baron's Gloves" is dismissive and disparaging to the Pole as foreign Other and critical of the Catholic as unworthy of a Protestant beau, my reading of Alcott is similar to the arguments of Derrickson and Elbert. However, I argue that Alcott tempers any prejudice against Polish ethnicity in her story by falling back on the familiar trope of the Pole as beau ideal. Unlike the Russian male of "Taming a Tartar," Casimer Teblinski is rather benign. There is nothing terrifying or menacing about him. Rather, Alcott marks the reason for his unworthiness as being based partially on ethnic inferiority. She similarly tempers any negative comments about Catholicism with Amy's eventual desire to marry Teblinski despite his faith. The presence of the beau ideal and of love that seemingly overcomes difference, however, does not negate the xenophobic underpinnings of the text. In fact, the ending of "The Baron's Gloves," when Alcott reveals that the Pole was never really a Pole but an Englishman performing the Polish Catholic exile Other for the sake of "romance," serves to reinforce the text's underlying implication that the foreigner is subordinate. In this way, the story ultimately reveals mid-nineteenth century American fears of Polish Catholicism in the U.S.

There is no doubt that the notion of Poland as the beau ideal of the United States plays a major role in Alcott's "The Baron's Gloves." Shortly after Amy's admission that she is enjoying her European tour, but that she "want[s] adventures and romance of some sort to make it quite perfect," she, along with her cousin Helen and their uncle, meet romance personified (180). Sitting with them on the train "from Heidelberg to Baden" is "a young man, wrapped in a cloak, with a green shade over his eyes, and a general sigh of weariness or pain. Evidently an invalid, for his face was thin and pale, his dark hair cropped short, and the ungloved hand attenuated and delicate as a woman's" (217). The man, they soon find out, is Casimer Teblinski, a Polish "'exile,'" who had "'left the University of Varsovie'" to fight in the January Uprising as a "'volunteer,'" only to become badly wounded (217-8). In telling his story of "'Russian bullets'" and "'Poland in chains,'" Casimer laments that because of his injuries and his decision to "'fly from an enemy,'" he must "'die a long death, instead of a quick, brave one with my comrades'" (220, 219).

When they hear the plight of Casimer and "'poor Pologne,'" the three British travelers at once recall "all the pathetic stories of that unhappy country which [they] . . . had ever heard . . ." (218-9). Moreover, they immediately express pity for him and the Polish cause. Amy cries out, "'we felt much sympathy for you, and longed to have you win'" (219). Helen follows, exclaiming, "'Let us hope that a happier future waits for you both. Poland loves liberty too well, and has suffered too much for it, to be kept long in captivity'" (219-20). Finally, the girls fall silent and listen to Casimer, their uncle, and Karl Hoffman—a German "courier" who the girls find out is Casimer's friend and fought with the Pole in the uprising—speak about the revolution (191). The men talked about "The wrongs and sufferings of Poland . . . so eloquently that both young ladies were moved to declare the most

undying hatred of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, the most intense sympathy for 'poor Pologne'" (222).

Strikingly similar to Thaddeus Kosciuszko, Casimer Teblinski is a wounded, exiled Polish soldier, who fought bravely for the love of his homeland. Giving up health, "fortune, family, and nation" for the cause of Polish independence from despotism, Casimer is, like Kosciuszko, the embodiment of America's beau ideal (Gladsky 26). Moreover, the reaction of Amy, Helen, and their uncle to Casimer's story mirrors the historical reaction of the United States through newspapers, novels, and stories to the partitioning of Poland and the failure of Poland's subsequent revolutions for freedom and independence. The travelers' commiseration with Poland and loathing for its partitioners thus not only betrays Alcott's sympathy for her friend Wisniewski and the Polish cause but evidences her familiarity with the rhetoric of her day about Poland in print culture.

Poland as beau ideal, however, does not pervade the entire text. Just as much as he is a brave and pitiable exile, Casimer is also an Other marked by his strangeness in three distinct ways. Amy's uncle describes Casimer's difference when he explains to Helen and Amy why the Pole is an inappropriate marital choice for Amy. He exclaims, "'Why, Nell, he's an invalid, a Catholic, and a foreigner, any one of which objections are enough to settle the matter'" (236). As if this were a self-evident truth, both Helen and Amy agree with their uncle without hesitation, and Amy later repeats the mantra—"'Sick, Catholic, and a foreigner,—it can never be'"—when she feels herself falling in love with Casimer (253).

The basis of the first marker that Casimer is unacceptable as marriage material—his invalid status—is not in prejudice against the ill or handicapped but in the concern that Amy might prematurely become a widow and suffer grief if she chooses the Pole. When he first

meets the three British travelers, Casimer explains what his doctors have told him about his illness: "'They tell me I can have no other fate; that my malady is fatal . . .'" (218). This, Helen expresses to Amy is her "'great and sad objection'" to the match, the fact that "'He just said he had but a little while to live'" (263). Asking Amy to marry him, Helen insists, would be for Casimer "'to ask such a sacrifice'" (263).

More insidious is the second marker of Casimer's difference, his Catholic faith. Alcott never clearly defines the menacing nature of Casimer's faith. Throughout the story, there is just the repeated categorization of the Pole as Catholic and therefore unacceptable. Griffin explains that just as Catholicism in the nation at large could pollute American principles, values and democracy, the "entry of the foreign [Catholic] subject into the home" is "threatening" (10). It is a "contamination" that "persists as a foreign relative, a husband, a wife, a daughter, a father" (10). The inference is that if Amy were to marry Casimer and bring him into her home, his presence there would threaten to destroy her Protestant faith and values. Her home, she, and any children they would have would be tainted.

The resistance to Casimer as a Catholic is not the only way in which Alcott keys into the gothic tropes of anti-Catholicism. When the girls take a tour of the "Radcliffean" chateau where they are staying in La Tour, Switzerland, they come across a vestige of Catholic horror (240). In the "upper story" of the chateau,

> Hoffman, who acted as guide, led them into a little gloomy room containing a straw pallet, a stone table with a loaf and pitcher on it, and, kneeling before a crucifix, where the light from a single slit on the wall fell on him, was the figure of a monk . . . Amy cried out when she first saw it . . . (243).

Though Amy is soon relieved to find that the monk is merely a "waxen" statue, her terror upon seeing the figure is indicative of the horror that monks like Schedoni in Radcliffe's *The Italian* inspired in gothic fiction as characters that threatened the physical safety, sexual purity, and spiritual morality of women. Though Casimer is not a monk, the text's insistence on his Catholic difference, along with the presence of the disturbing monk, reveal Catholicism as an uncanny force with the ability to contaminate Amy.

If Casimer and Amy enter into an intimate courtship or marriage relationship, the Catholic Pole could contaminate Amy, the statue suggests, most likely through the weakening of her Protestant religious values, as aforementioned. The text exhibits no concern for Amy's physical safety, but it does imply that Casimer's uninhibited friendliness to Amy could endanger her sexual purity. Amy's uncle remarks several times that Casimer and Karl are both "so unreserved and demonstrative" unlike English gentleman (247). Indeed, Casimer takes liberties as he courts Amy, indirectly "confess[ing] the beginning of love" for her even before they are officially courting, calling her "'*Ma drogha*'" ("my dear" in Polish), and often speaking to her "with sudden passion" (245, 251, 253). Casimer never makes a sexual advance toward Amy, but as an intimacy that crosses the boundaries of propriety, his familiarity with her threatens to tarnish her reputation as a woman of spotless reputation.

The final marker of Casimer's difference is his foreignness or Polishness. Helen defines her fear of this aspect of Casimer's Otherness by telling her cousin, "'But a Pole, Amy, so different in tastes, habits, character, and beliefs. It is a great risk to marry a foreigner; races are so unlike'" (263). In Helen's statement, Casimer's difference does not imply his racial inferiority. Helen simply makes the point that it may be difficult for Casimer and Amy to adapt to each other's cultural differences. A few statements that Casimer makes

about his own unfitness for Amy's hand, though indeed indicate a belief, however subtle, about the ethnic inferiority of Poles. When Casimer confesses his feelings for Amy, he says, "'Yes, I love you, and I tell it, vain and dishonorable as it is in one like me'" (258). Casimer does not venture an explanation as to why his admission of love is "dishonorable," but the repeated objections to him as a suitor based on his status as "Sick, Catholic, and a foreigner" suggest that he believes his suit is shameful based on one or all of these descriptors. Further, when Casimer tells Amy that he is not a Pole after all but Sidney Power, a British man who pretended to be a Polish exile to give Amy the romance she was longing for, he remarks, "'Amy, when I was a poor, dying, Catholic foreigner you loved me and would have married me in spite of everything. Now that I'm your well, rich Protestant cousin, who adores you as that Pole never could, you turn cold and cruel'" (286). Sidney's insistence that he as a British Protestant can engage in love in a way that a "dying, Catholic foreigner" "never" can, as well as Amy's failure to object to his words, shores up the subtly and perhaps even unconscious racist underpinnings against Poles in Alcott's work. Poles, Sidney says essentially, are less in their capability to love because of their difference.

Of course, Amy's confession to Helen that she loves Casimer (when she still believes him to be Casimer) "in spite of everything" seems to undercut the argument that "The Baron's Gloves" upholds any ideology about Polish ethnic inferiority. Indeed, Amy's declaration instead appears to function as a statement about the equality of all despite superficial differences in health, religion, or ethnicity. When Helen protests against the choice of Casimer based on "'His religion,'" Amy responds, "'It need not part us; we can believe what we will. He is good; why mind whether he is Catholic or Protestant?'" (263). To Helen's objection about Casimer's ethnicity, Amy says, "'I don't care if he is a Tartar, a

Calmuck, or any of the other wild tribes; I love him, he loves me, and no one need object if I don't'" (263). Finally, in response to an objection based on his illness, Amy exclaims, "'Think of how much he has suffered and done for others; surely I may do something for him. Oh, Nell, can I let him die alone and in exile, when I have both heart and home to give him?'" (263). Gladsky argues that through Amy's responses to Helen's concerns, "Alcott makes it clear that neither American women nor the nation should fear Poles; rather they should be attracted to them" (26). Contending that "She used her stories . . . as a way to present the best face of ethnicity to her readers," Gladsky resists a reading of "The Baron's Gloves" as disparaging to Poles (26).

However, despite Amy's egalitarian exclamations of love, Sidney points out (without objection from Amy) that Amy loved Casimer "in spite of" things that she and others viewed as weaknesses or negative points. Her love certainly has an equalizing effect in the tale, but if love must *make* people equal, it means that they did not have a socially or culturally recognized equal status before the advent of love. Thus, the very presence of Amy's equalizing declarations of love in "The Baron's Gloves" ultimately reinforce my contention that the work has, at its foundation, the belief that Polish ethnicity and the Catholic religion are inferior, that Poles are both familiar beau ideal *and* strange, threatening Other because of their ethnic and religious difference.

Furthermore, the plot twist Alcott throws in at the end of the story undermines a reading in favor of ultimate ethnic equality. When Casimer Teblinski reveals himself as Sidney Power, he also reveals that there never was a Pole in the story, and he conveniently removes all the objections that other characters had and that anyone else might have had to Casimer as a suitor for Amy. In getting rid of the problem of ethnic and religious difference,

Alcott effectively nullifies the significance of Amy's arguments for inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriage. One might argue that because Helen's suitor, Karl Hoffman, turns out to be the German Baron Sigismund Palsdorff in the end that Alcott still makes a statement about inter-ethnic union. The statement, however, is not as revolutionary because the baron is of Germanic and Western European heritage (and is therefore more ethnically similar to the British characters) and because of the absence of religious difference. Regardless of this intercultural match, Alcott still, in the end, leaves Poles—Eastern Europeans—out in the cold.

Alcott also, albeit not purposefully, puts the figure of the historical Polish exile under erasure by relegating him to romance. In the final chapter of the story, when the girls' uncle, Sidney Power, and Sigismund Palsdorff reveal the "bold game" they've been playing on Amy and Helen, Alcott repeatedly alludes to the fact that Sidney and Sigismund have been playing roles. Sigismund, the girls' uncle tells them, "'insisted on playing courier'" because he "'liked the part'" (276). Later that day, Sidney tells Amy that he "'decided to be a Thaddeus'" (284). His mention of "a Thaddeus" is in reference to Jane Porter's novel *Thaddeus of Warsaw,* which he and Amy had read together when he was playing Casimer (252). Moreover, when Sidney recounts his remembrance of meeting Amy and Helen on the train as Casimer, he admits that he based his acting on "'a scene I'd read in a novel'" (285). Although we find out along with Amy and Helen, that Sidney actually did fight in the January Uprising but under his real name, his insistence on playing the part of the Polish exile from his reading reduces the Pole to a role in a play, a scene from a book, a romance for a novel but not for real life (267). Similarly, it reduces Polishness to performance.

Conclusion

With their brave Polish exile characters Alexander Kalouga and Casimer Teblinski, both E. D. E. N. Southworth and Louisa May Alcott embrace the beau ideal in their respective texts, *The Missing Bride* and "The Baron's Gloves." At the same time, the two authors also mark the Polish characters (as well as characters of Polish heritage) as strange Others because of their Polish ethnicity and Catholic faith. While Southworth portrays Alexander Kalouga as greedy and his male descendants as selfish and domineering Catholic despots from a Polish Catholic immigrant line, Alcott portrays Casimer Teblinski as a romantic and exotic lover who is ultimately unacceptable to a British Protestant young woman because of his injuries, Catholic faith, and Polish ethnicity. The presence of these Polish characters that are half familiar beau ideal and half menacing and/or inferior, strange Other betrays mid-nineteenth century American fears of the foreign immigrant Other quickly invading the shores of the United States. Specifically, their presence reveals a growing anxiety about the racial inferiority and potentially subversive threat of the unassimilated Polish Catholic immigrant/exile Other in an era when poorer Polish immigrants were emigrating to the United States for the first time and when the image of Poland as America's beau ideal was beginning to fade.

Chapter 4: Broken and Broke: Financial Loss and Fragmentation in Anthony Walton White Evans's *Memoir of Thaddeus Kosciuszko*

In March 1880, the "Fine Arts" section of *The New York Herald* reported that Jan Matejko was

> engaged on a colossal painting which [would] be exhibited in 1883 at Vienna on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the deliverance of that city from the Turks. It represents an episode in the final struggle—the moment, namely, when the heroic King of Poland, John Sobieski, has succeeded in penetrating to the tent of the Grand Vizier. (8)

Born in Cracow in 1838, Matejko was a renowned Polish artist who dedicated his craft to "strengthening the spirit" of Poland by representing through his "cycle of . . . great paintings" the nation's celebrated "peacetime and wartime feats" of the past ("Jan" 245). "Sobieski at Vienna," completed in 1883 and recognized as one of his greatest paintings, chronicles the role of King John Sobieski and the Polish army in saving Vienna from Turkish takeover in 1683 (246-7). According to his anonymous biographer, Matejko's primary purpose in painting the scene was to "keep the memory of Poland's gallant deed . . . alive in the Vatican and in the conscience of the civilized world" (247).

In New York, at least, the memory of Poland was alive in the early 1880s. The reference to Matejko and his painting is indicative of the many New York newspaper articles revealing the decade as a time of reminiscence on Polish history. In 1880 and 1881, for example, newspapers ran the death notices of several significant Polish figures that had been loosely or directly connected with Poland's revolutionary movements: Count John Dzjalynzski, Colonel Xavier Zeltner, and Prince Adam Constantin Czartoryski.[47]

Newspapers also reported on festivities in the city that commemorated Polish revolutions. On November 30, 1880, the *New York Tribune*'s article, "A Polish Anniversary," noted that "The Poles of New-York celebrated yesterday the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution of 1830" (2). During the celebration, speakers "paid tributes to their fallen heroes, and referred to the mutual love cementing the whole Polish people in spite of artificial boundaries erected between the three parts of their country. They protested against the nefarious partition of Poland . . . and proclaimed their belief that 'Poland is not dead'" (2). In another celebration in early 1881, "The Polish residents of New York held a mass meeting . . . to commemorate the eighteenth anniversary of the revolution of 1863" ("The Polish," *New York Herald* 9). Though not referenced in New York newspapers of the time, May 1881 also saw an "Address delivered on Decoration day at the Monument of Kosciuszko at West Point by Dr. Henry Kalussowzki a Pole of 80 years" (1).[48]

In this era of nostalgia for and celebration of Polish patriots and Polish military heroism, John Schuyler, "*Chairman of the Committee on Publications of the Society of the Cincinnati*," commissioned society member Anthony Walton White Evans to write "a memoir of [Thaddeus] Kosciuszko for the new book of the Society of the Cincinnati . . ." (Evans, *Memoir* 3). The book, Evans wrote to his friend Bailey Meyer in January 1883, would memorialize the "members of the so[ciety] that belonged to New-York" (1). The choice of Evans to write the biography may seem odd, as he was not a writer by trade but a civil engineer.

In reality, Evans was in a unique position to write a biography on Kosciuszko for the Society of the Cincinnati. Formed in 1783, the Society was a brotherhood of men who had fought in the Revolutionary War; members had a special "medal," they paid into a

"charitable fund" to aid especially needy fellow members, and society membership passed from father to son (Hünemörder 16-7). As a member of the Society by virtue of his grandfather, Colonel Anthony Walton White, who fought in the American Revolutionary War and was "an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati of New Jersey," Evans would have known Kosciuszko to have been one of "the founders of the Society" (Hume 8, 4). Like other members, he would have seen Kosciuszko as a "son of Poland who made the American cause his own and in the darkest days of the struggling new country, crossed the seas to draw his mighty sword in her defense" (Hume 4). However, he also knew Kosciuszko to be "the warm personal friend of my grandfather, through the war of the Revolution, and in after years" (Evans, *Memoir* 3). Colonel White and Kosciuszko had such a regard for one another that they "exchanged Eagles"—medals marking them as original society members—and Kosciuszko stayed at White's home in New Jersey during "the winter of 1797-8" to seek refuge from "the many attentions that one and all wished to show" him when he visited the United States (Hume 8).[49] In his preface to the *Memoir,* Evans writes, "As a boy, I heard his [Kosciuszko's] praises sung and accounts of his deeds in war related by my grandmother, who considered him second only to Washington" (Evans, *Memoir* 3).

Despite his familial connection to and expertise on the Polish hero, Evans had competition for his biography on Kosciuszko. When Evans had finished the first draft of his manuscript, Schuyler informed him, Evans told Meyer in a January 1883 letter, that it was "too long" for the society's book of memoirs (1). Then, Schuyler revealed to Evans that "he had been writing a memoir of Kosciuszko" as well; Schuyler's memoir instead, it seemed, was to go into the book (2). In reading through Schuyler's shorter biography, Evans found various "errors," but refused to edit them, believing that "Schuyler had not treated me right"

(2). At this point, Evans opted "to extend my memoir, make it more complete and publish it . . ." (2). This he did at his own expense, specifying that he wanted "200 copies printed"; the copies, he explained to Meyer, would "not [be] for sale for private distribution" (8).

In the same letter, Evans responded to Meyer's revelation that yet another man was penning a biography of Kosciuszko, Meyer's friend, "Doctor Da-Costa" (5). At this, Evans urged Meyer that Da Costa "had better suspend his Memoir of Kosciuszko until mine is out" (5). For Evans believed that he was ultimately the best man for the job. As he wrote to Meyer, "I have the idea that no one here or in fact anywhere has the facts about Kos[ciuszko] that I have" (8). Best man or not, Evans's biography came out first.

Just before he received his copies of *Memoir of Thaddeus Kosciuszko, Poland's Hero and Patriot, An Officer in the American Army of the Revolution and Member of the Society of the Cincinnati* from the printer, he wrote again to Bailey Meyer on June 21, 1883. He revealed to Meyer his intention that "this Memoir of Kosciuszko be more of a Eulogy than a Memoir" (4). Whereas memoirs were "dry" and "dull reading," Evans felt that eulogies were full of "fine and fancy touches" (4). Thus, Evans's brief memoir of Kosciuszko is biographical in nature, but it is also a prime example of the beau ideal. In ardent language, the memoir romanticizes Kosciuszko, giving an account of his life and accomplishments through both straight historical facts and descriptive anecdotes with "fancy touches." First, Evans details the Pole's youth, his military education in Warsaw and Paris, and his ill-fated love affair with a woman above his socio-economic status. Next, the text focuses on Kosciuszko's military career, describing his service strengthening "'defenses,'" "direct[ing] . . . siege lines," and performing other offices during the American Revolutionary War; his leadership of the 1794 Polish revolution against partitioning powers, his nearly fatal

wounding at the battle of Maciejowice, his capture by "Cossacks," and his time as a prisoner in Russia (11, 12, 18). Finally, Evans focuses on Koscuiszko's later years, detailing his release from prison, his brief visit to the United States followed by his return to Europe, his run-ins with Napoleon, his long stay with friends in Switzerland, and his death.

From beginning to end, Evans idealizes Kosciuszko, presenting him as a valiant war hero who dedicated his life to the freedom of Poland, the United States and all people. In the beginning of his text, Evans asserts, "Among the men of modern times there was, perhaps, in Europe none whose fame was more brilliant, whose patriotism was more pure, and whose character for fierce bravery, gentle acts and virtuous conduct through life, was more unsullied than that of Thaddeus Kosciuszko" (5). He and Washington, Evans moreover opines, "were beacon lights set on high pinnacles, to shed undying lustre on all as they advance in progress, prosperity, purity and patriotism, during ages as they roll on to eternity" (41-2).

However, there are also ruptures in the *Memoir* that reveal the underside of Poland as America's beau ideal. These ruptures are anecdotes about wounds to Kosciuszko's body, about his financial problems, and about attacks on his personal identity through the unauthorized use of his name and image. Taken together, these stories of Kosciuszko's life are a gothic presence in the text that registers late nineteenth-century American male anxieties about monetary loss and the fragmentation of masculine identity that often accompanied it in the financially unstable times of the Gilded Age.

Evans relates that Kosciuszko received serious injuries at three significant times in his life: during his attempted elopement with Louise Sosnowski, during the war for Polish independence in 1794, and after a fall from his horse shortly before his death. Kosciuszko

suffered from the 1794 wounds for years afterward. The result of Evans's emphasis on these wounds is the portrayal of a war hero whose body was broken, or fragmented, for much of his life. Even in death, Kosciuszko's body is not whole. In describing Kosciuszko's deathbed scene, Evans details the hero's body part by part—"His strong hand," his "innocent tongue," his "eagle eye"—rather than focusing on the whole man (38). After he is dead, his mourners break his body into parts and bury them separately.

All of Kosciuszko's wounds correlate closely with various financial problems that affected him. Though from a noble Polish family, Kosciuszko struggled throughout his life with both his lack of money and his lack of complete control over his financial holdings. His elopement ultimately failed because his family was not wealthy enough (6). Although he left a will and multiple other documents describing what was to happen to the wealth he had earned from fighting in the American Revolutionary War, no one ever carried out his wishes (26-7). Finally, near the end of his life, Evans states that Kosciuszko ran entirely out of money due to his habit of giving to the poor (33-4).

These problems differ greatly from those of the Gilded Age man, whose world was one defined by economic chaos and instability. From 1873-1907, five banking panics took place in the United States (Wicker 2). Closest in memory to those reading the *Memoir* in 1883 would have been the Panic of 1873, which began in late September and saw, among other results, the closing of "Jay Cooke and Co[,] . . . one of the most prestigious merchant banking houses in the United States"; the shut down of the stock market for over a week; and various "banks runs, bank closures, and restrictions on cash payment" in different areas of the country (Wicker 20, 21, 22). Though the panic itself only lasted a short time, its effects were long term. Wicker states, "Contemporary accounts describe the post-panic years of

contraction as years of almost unrelieved gloom" (30). During the panic and afterward, many consumers and investors felt both anxiety about loss—loss of money and loss of control—and mistrust in financial institutions including banks and the stock market (Wicker xii).

Banking panics like that of 1873 moreover had a profound effect on male identity—especially for those men who experienced great monetary loss. Focusing on earlier financial panics and the growing reliance on "the ephemeral foundation of credit, speculation, and paper money," David Anthony studies the broken male figure in popular and "pulp" literature of the early and mid-nineteenth century (720, 719). He argues that the "panic-stricken male professional" of this literature "should be understood as signaling a response to the period's perilously unstable economy" (719). The "debtor male" figure of these texts is "fiscally irresponsible, emotionally mercurial, and suffer[s] a crisis of autonomy and self-possession . . ." (720). With the exception of "a rare escape from the snares of debtor dependency," the stories are on the whole "tales of masculine disempowerment" and "humiliation" (725, 724, 731). Most importantly, they are gothic tales that betray anxieties about "a world given over to the radical immateriality of the paper economy" (725).

As the "debtor male" character is a gothic "response" to the financial instability of the pre-Civil War era, so Kosciuszko and his money troubles in Evans's *Memoir* function as a gothic presence revealing anxieties about financial loss and the fragmentation of male identity that results from it, and his wounds function as code for the physical manifestation of this fragmentation. More specifically, Evans's Kosciuszko becomes a symbol of what Scott Sandage terms the "Broken Man" of the Gilded Age (184). Fragmented by financial failure, the "Broken Man" was a prevalent and "familiar cultural figure" in the United States after the Panic of 1873 (Sandage 184). Sandage explains the splintering of male identity in the Gilded

Age, stating that in a "perilous economy that seemed to bestow success and inflict failure almost arbitrarily," those who lost money also faced the loss of their name and reputation, their "manly independence" and their capability of "family breadwinning" (183). They earned "public emasculation marked by economic impotence and dependency" (Sandage 184).

Like the "Broken Man," Kosciuszko also faces wounds to his identity through attacks on his name and image. The wounds take place in two anecdotes Evans highlights in the *Memoir*. Though only loosely connected to his financial state, these two incidents affect Kosciuszko in the same way that financial failure affects the "Broken Man." First, according to Evans and without Kosciuszko's knowledge, Napoleon used the Polish war hero's name on a "proclamation . . . deceiving the Poles most shamefully" (30). Evans presents the theft of Kosciuszko's name as a stain on the Pole's reputation. In the face of this theft, Kosciuszko is helpless to act. In terms of Kosciuszko's image, Evans records an incident in which a sculptor created likenesses of Kosciuszko without his permission. Kosciuszko's violent reaction upon confronting his own face in three sculptures shows his anger at the theft of his image. Both instances reveal an emasculated man who is not able to shape or control what happens to his personal identity, a man from whom circumstance steals his "manly independence" (26).

Thus, Evans's *Memoir of Thaddeus Kosciuszko* presents us with a haunting story that registers late nineteenth-century American fears about economic loss. It is the story of a physically broken man who, in spite of his integrity, fame and wise investment choices, came to the end of his life with little to no money. A man who struggled to control his finances and possessions, his good name and his image. This echoed the terrifying reality of many men in

the Gilded Age—fiscally broke as a result of business deals gone wrong, bank closings or questionable investments, and socially and psychologically broken, or fragmented, as their name, reputation, and ability to provide suffered.

Kosciuszko's Physical and Fiscal Brokenness

Newspapers in Evans's native New York state in the 1870s and 1880s ran multiple articles about male immigrant Poles struggling to adapt and survive in New York City. Though the circumstances these Poles found themselves in differed from those of the "Broken Man" of the Gilded Age, the immigrant Poles' physical brokenness due to loss or lack of money serves as a link between Poland and America, between Kosciuszko and American men who suffered financial ruin. One article, "The Delancey Street Tragedy," in the November 4, 1875 *New York Herald*, tells the story of Davis Jereslov, a man who "came to this country from Warsaw, Poland, about two years ago, with a few hundred dollars, and soon after became acquainted with Joseph Goldman, who had at the that time been in New York for four or five years, and who was a native of a town about four miles from Warsaw" (4). After a short time, the two decided to open a jewelry store together (4). Goldman would "solicit orders and Jereslov [would] do the inside work" (4). Their business quickly became so successful that they had to hire employees to help run it. However, unbeknownst to Jereslov, Goldman was spending "the earnings almost as fast as they were made" (4). When Goldman stole $1,000 from Jochlein, a new business partner, Jereslov became aware of the precarious financial situation of the business and Goldman's part in it. Deciding he could no longer work with Goldman, Jereslov sold "everything he had that he could spare, and by hard work, managed to scrape together enough to pay back . . . the $1,000 . . ." (4). A few months after the dissolution of the business, Goldman approached Jereslov and challenged him to a

duel. Both died in the fight; "Goldman was shot twice, and was killed on the spot, while Jereslov received one bullet over the right temple, and died shortly after his arrival at the Bellevue Hospital" (4). Before the duel, Jereslov learned that "his wife and three children, for whom he had written to come to this country," had left Poland (4).

One of the "City News Items" in the January 3, 1880 edition of the *New York Herald* reads, "Frank Ksyzsko, a native of Poland, who has resided at No. 3 Carlisle street, is lying in a helpless condition in the Chambers Street Hospital, suffering from lead poisoning, a disease he contracted in a lead factory where he had been working" (8). A few months later, the *New York Tribune* published an article entitled "A Tailor Tired of Life." The piece chronicled the suicide of another "native of Poland" (2). On June 14, Maurice Moses Himmelfarth "shot himself twice in the head, and died before his family could get into the room" (2). A "manufacturing tailor," Himmelfarth's suicide had been prompted when "An order which he had filled for Seligman & May was returned yesterday with a complaint that the goods had not been made properly, and he was unable to pay his workmen their weekly wages" (2).

In July 1882, the *New York Herald* published yet another immigrant story, this one with quite a different ending. This article starts with a family about to be reunited. At the behest of her husband, Joseph Marcowitz, who had been in the United States for a year, Mrs. Marcowitz sold all of her belongings in Russian Poland and left for the United States with "her five children" ("Speculation" 9). She arrived at Castle Garden, New York in mid-1882 and immediately went to her husband's home, only to find that he had left "two days before, accompanied by a woman, the keeper of a news stand near Forsyth and Canal streets, the mother of two children" and "the possessor of $200" ("Speculation" 9).[50] An investigation found that Mr. Marcowitz had been involved in "several elopements" during his marriage

(9). In each case, he had convinced the woman in question to give him her money—a few hundred dollars in cash—so he could prepare for their life together. The elopements usually ended with Mr. Marcowitz back with his wife and the other woman losing her money. Another article on the scandal further alleges that Mrs. Marcowitz had been involved in the elopements that happened in Poland, "the agreement being for her to appear upon the scene after the money had been secured" ("Gotham Gossip" 9). This elopement, however, ended with Mr. Marcowitz's whereabouts unknown and Mrs. Marcowitz and her children "sent . . . to Ward's Island," an island the New York City authorities reserved as a "dumping grounds for social outcasts" ("Speculation" 9; Miller and Seitz 181).

All of these stories, from that of Davis Jereslov to that of Joseph Marcowitz, represent the struggles of immigrant Poles in the 1870s and early 1880s. Over 150,000 Poles immigrated to the United States during this time, most from Prussian Poland. Most, moreover, were poor and came to America with the aim to work long enough to earn the money to return to Poland and improve their family situations (Pula, *Polish Americans,* 15-8). They toiled as "unskilled laborers . . . .in both small and large mills, mines, and factories" (Falkowski 39). Despite the plans of many to go back to Poland eventually, the majority of immigrants stayed in the United States after they settled in to their new lives (Pula, *Polish Americans,* 18). For those who immigrated to America and planned to stay, it was often the case that entire families could not travel together. Thus, one or two members of the family would emigrate, work and send for the others when they were financially able (24).

Although it would be a mistake to view all Polish immigrants to America in the 1870s and 1880s as "inchoate and undifferentiated peasant newcomers [and] . . . passive victims of American capitalism . . . ," there were those—like Frank Ksyzsko and Maurice Moses

Himmelfarth—who experienced physical and/or emotional brokenness as they attempted to adapt to and survive in the United States (Falkowski 40). Notwithstanding their different personal circumstances and the grief they had to bear, each immigrant was literally broken by his financial situation. Ksyzsko would not have contracted lead poisoning if he'd been financially stable enough to survive without having to work at a lead factory. And if Himmelfarth's business had not been faltering financially, he most likely would have been able to pay his workers even if a customer refused to compensate him for work, and thus he probably would not have killed himself. But neither of these men had either economic stability or hope. And their stories were the ones American readers digested about immigrant Poles in the New York newspapers of the 1870s and 80s, stories of tragedy and suffering, stories of people fragmented by financial circumstances.

There is no evidence that any of the immigrants' financial circumstances had anything to do with the Panic of 1873 or its economic aftermath. Nevertheless, "The Delancey Street Tragedy" and the story of Joseph Marcowitz, published under the headline "Speculation in Elopements," both speak to the spirit of the times. In the 1860s and 70s, men all over the United States sought to be involved, like Marcowitz, in speculation. While they didn't speculate in elopements, many looked to invest as little money as possible in different business ventures—especially railroads—in order to gain a much bigger return (White 26). In fact, as "The railroad network expanded rapidly following the [Civil War], more than doubling in the United States, from 35,085 miles in 1865 to 70,784, with peak building between 1870 and 1872," more and more investors bought into transcontinental railroads (White 50, 56).

But when the Panic of 1873 took place, fear immobilized the market. It became abundantly clear that investments and business ventures, through no fault of the investor, could end in financial and personal tragedy and brokenness, as Jereslov's investment in his jewelry store had. In the fall of 1873, investors watched as "Sinners and righteous… tumbled down into this particular economic hell together . . ." (White 85). And hell it was. The Panic of 1873

> led to the depression that paralyzed the economy. Credit tightened, and prices fell. The coal and iron industries suffered along with the railroads; half the American iron foundries had closed by the end of 1874. Bankruptcies doubled, from 5,183 in 1873 to 10,478 in 1878. Above all, it was a railroad depression. In 1874 new railroad constructions in the United States fell to 1,911 miles, and both passengers and freight revenue began to decline. . . . Railroad stock prices fell by 60 percent between 1873 and 1878. The [unfinished] fledgling transcontinentals halted where they were, usually in the middle of nowhere. (White 83-4)

For railroad investors, builders, and promoters, the years after the Panic were bleak. All around them were men broken by financial loss, as Ksyzsko and Himmelfarth's lives and bodies were broken by their lack of money and hope (Sandage 182). Despite the haunting possibility of further economic ruin and subsequent brokenness in the unstable times following the Panic, men with financial interest in railroads had the task of again inspiring consumers with confidence in transcontinentals (White 65). Eventually, they did. The railroad boom lasted until the early twentieth century, and by 1896 a web of new railroads had forever changed the western United States (455).

Watching all of this unfold was Evans, a man who had built his career around railroads. After finishing his education at the "Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy," New York, and spending a few years working on the "Erie canal enlargement," Evans worked on railroads in New York, Chile, and Peru (*The National* 84).[51] When the Civil War ended, he worked as a consultant to "establish standards for the railroads to the Pacific coast," as a "purchasing agent for railway supplies for a large number of South American governments," and as a "consulting engineer" for railroad projects in South America and the South Pacific (84-5). Besides writing the *Memoir of Thaddeus Kosciuszko,* Evans was also the author of *American V. English Locomotives: Correspondence, Criticism, and Commentary Respecting Their Relative Merits,* a book published in 1880.

When the Panic of 1873 occurred, Evans lived in New Rochelle, New York and had an office in New York City, which he frequented a few days out of the week (Nason 214). According to his journal entry of September 18, 1873, all seemed normal to Evans "in town" on the day the Panic officially began, but the next day was different. Evans wrote, "Went to town. A fierce panic broke out among the Brokers. Stocks fell rapidly. Bought 100 shares Western Union Telegraph & 100 shares Panama Ry [railway]. Fine day. Came home." A few days later, on September 22, 1873, Evans notes, "The Panic in financial affairs still existing." Finally, on September 24, he writes, "The Panic still existing. Some important houses failed."[52] These three entries are the extent of Evans's existing writing on the Panic. While scant, they reveal that Evans was certainly aware of the panic and, as his journal suggests, was following its developments in September 1873.

There is no direct evidence that Evans was personally affected by the panic, although his income books show a sharp decrease in annual income from 1874 to 1877. Most likely,

the decrease was due to economic instability in South America rather than in the United States. At the time, Evans made most of his money by "supplying, designing, and sending out a great quantity of railway plant including many iron bridges, to railways in Peru . . ." and by acting as a "purchasing agent for railway supplies for a large number of South America governments and corporations and for the government of New Zealand" (Nason 213; *The National* 85). During the 1870s, Peru "witnessed the collapse of the financial structure, the failure of most of the country's banks, the resort to paper money and inflationary finance for the government sector . . ." (Bertram and Thorp 23). Chile, another country with which Evans had business ties, also experienced a depression in the 1870s (Farcau 27). Whether Evans's faltering income was the result of one of these depressions or a combination of all of them, his account books show loss. His case was not one of financial ruin, but surely, he was aware that many others had been financially broken and that the panic had hit the railroad industry—his industry—especially hard.

As a reader in New York among thousands of other readers who were familiar with the historical reality that Poland was a fragmented, or partitioned, nation, Evans most likely read about broken Poles like Jereslov, Ksyzsko, and Himmelfarth as well. In the atmosphere of the 1870s and 80s United States, defined as it was by banking panics, economic depression, financial ruin, and mistrust of the market, the tragic histories of the fiscally broken Poles represent the financial sufferings of the American public at large, and the fragmented Polish bodies represent the fragmentation of masculine American identity as a result of financial instability. In Evans's *Memoir,* all of these elements come together in the person of the most famous Pole in American history to constitute a gothic presence. Thaddeus Kosciuszko's wounds and their connection with money register late nineteenth-

century American fears of financial loss or lack of economic control and the fragmentation of identity that so often came with it in the United States after the Panic of 1873.

In the opening of Evans' *Memoir* is the story of his "elopement" with Louise Sosnowski during the same year that the Americans declared independence from Britain (6). Louise was the daughter of a wealthy nobleman who was also an important figure in Polish government (6). The two lovers tried to run away and marry in secret, Evans explains, because Louise's "haughty parents rejected with scorn the poor young nobleman . . ." (6). Overtaking the pair, Sosnowski and his men confronted Kosciuszko. In the fight that followed, "Kosciuszko defended himself and his lady love with lion-hearted courage, but one against many could not prevail; he sank wounded to the ground and was left for dead by the imperious father, who carried off in triumph his daughter to his stronghold" (7). When he came to, "all that [Kosciuszko] found of his beloved was a handkerchief stained with his blood" (7).

There is some question as to the historical accuracy of the version of Kosciuszko's elopement in Evans's *Memoir*. One of Kosciuszko's biographers, Alex Storozynski, calls the story of Louise and Thaddeus a "legend" because "historians question the circumstances of just how far the escape plan actually went . . ." (2). What historians tend to agree on is that Kosciuszko was an "unwanted suitor" and that Sosnowski's men "attacked" and "wounded" him (Pula, *Thaddeus Kosciuszko* 31). Whatever the case, Evans's account of the incident reveals much to us about American perceptions of Kosciuszko. First, it reveals the paradoxical nature of Kosciuszko's socio-economic status. He was, as Evans states, a "poor . . . nobleman," or as Storozynski puts it in the title of his biography of Kosciuszko, a *Peasant Prince* (6). Kosciuszko and his family were members of the nobility, "part of the landed

gentry" (Storozynski 1). However, their "family estate was small and struggling, in part because the Kosciuszkos were much easier on the serfs who farmed their land" than other noble families were (Storozynski 1). Besides this, Pula asserts that at the time Kosciuszko's "personal finances [were] greatly distressed" (*Thaddeus* 31). Sosnowski preferred a much more socially and financially advantageous match for his daughter, and in time, he realized his desires for her (Pula, *Thaddeus* 31). About Kosciuszko's appeal to marry Louise, Sosnowski said, "'Pigeons are not meant for sparrows and the daughters of magnates are not meant for the sons of common gentry'" (qtd. in Storozynski 1).

Evans's account of the nobleman's elopement also shows us the first scene of the wounded Polish peasant prince, an image that was to follow him for the rest of his life. Though the extent of these first wounds is unclear, they are serious enough to render him unconscious and cover his handkerchief "with his blood" (7). Evans describes Kosciuszko's later injuries with more specificity, but these primary wounds have two significant correlations with the circumstances of his later wounds. First, the injuries happen at a critical moment in his life and mark a masculine failure. Kosciuszko receives these first injuries just as he is about to get married, and because of them, he fails to deliver on his promise to his fiancé; he is not able to protect or provide for her. All of Kosciuszko's wounds also correlate in some way with his money problems. In this case, Sosnowski literally wounds Kosciuszko because of his unacceptable socio-economic status, his lack of money, and lack of reputation in his homeland. Consisting of brokenness, economic trouble/lack, and masculine failing, Kosciuszko's experience is hauntingly similar to that of the Broken Man post-Panic of 1873. Thus, the anecdote registers Gilded Age fears of male fragmentation due to monetary loss in the unstable U.S. economy.

The next set of wounds Kosciuszko received happened during Poland's war for independence against Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1794. Evans reports that Kosciuszko received the injuries at the battle of Maciejowice, where the Polish army fought a "superior force of the Russians and Prussians . . . against overwhelming odds" (17).[53] Despite the danger, Kosciuszko "placed himself at the head of the Polish army" (17). Marked by determination and bravery, Evans's account of Kosciuszko in battle is impressive:

> In the hottest part of the engagement Kosciuszko had three horses killed under him. Mounting again, and at the head of his principal officers, he made a grand charge into the midst of the enemy. Again his horse was killed, as were most of his officers, others were taken prisoners. . . . At last exhausted and bleeding, he fell by the lance of a Cossack, and a sabre cut across his forehead. (18)[54]

After Russia and Prussia had won the battle, soldiers identified Kosciuszko among the wounded. Still alive, he became a prisoner of war in Russia under the reign of Catherine the Great (19). He remained there until Catherine died and her son, Paul, came to power. Having long admired Kosciuszko, Czar Paul "gave him his liberty unconditional and loaded him with gifts of lands, serfs, money and honors (he afterwards placed a large sum to his credit, in the Banking-house of Thompson, Bonard & Co,. of London, which remained there until it had doubled) . . ." (19-20). Once Kosciuszko was free, the Czar proposed that Kosciuszko become an officer in the Russian army, but "the noble soul of Washington's friend very modestly and courteously refused the glittering offers, saying: 'I have never fought except in the cause of human freedom, in America and Poland, and I can never serve in any other cause'" (20).

Kosciuszko suffered from the wounds he received in 1794 at Maciejowice for years afterward. At the point of his release from prison in 1797, his "wounds were still open and unhealed" (20). In this condition, he traveled to London, where "The *Gentleman's Magazine*" published the following about his condition:

> 'He is incurably wounded in the head, has three bayonet wounds in the back, and a part of his thigh carried away by a cannon shot; his wounds are such that he cannot move himself without excruciating torture . . . (qtd. in Evans 20)

Late that year, Kosciuszko left England for the United States, where he "visited Washington in Philadelphia, and was received with a warrior's honors by his old chief" (23). The "many attentions," however, wore on him, "as he was still a sufferer from his wounds" (23). This is the point at which he retired to spend the winter months resting at "the house of his old comrade-in-arms, General Anthony Walton White . . ." (23).

Still at White's home in early 1798, Kosciuszko decided it was time to return to Europe (25-6). Before he left, he

> made a will bequeathing the money and lands given to him by the United States Government, to be used in the emancipation and education of the negroes in Virginia. This will was left with Jefferson. On the death of Kosciuszko, Jefferson had it proved and recorded. Jefferson being old, refused to act as executor . . ." (26).

Neither Jefferson nor anyone else ever carried out Kosciuszko's wishes even though, shortly before his death, the Pole communicated to Jefferson that his original wishes for the gifts given him by the U.S. had not changed (Storozynski 277). In fact, despite having little money on which to survive in Switzerland, "Kosciuszko refused to touch the principal endowment he had left to free slaves," and he was "confident that Jefferson would carry out his wish"

(Storozynski 272; 275). Jefferson, however, was "uncomfortable" with Kosciuszko's request and the funds lay dormant for years (Storozynski 277). Eventually, Evans writes, when relatives of Kosciuszko sued the U.S. government for their ancestor's property in the 1820s, the "Supreme Court decided that this will was null and void, another will having been made in 1816" (26). The case dragged on for years, but the Court finally settled with the family for just over $34,000 (26).[55]

Like the wounds he received while trying to elope, the injuries Kosciuszko got at Maciejowice happened at a life-changing moment and indicate a masculine failure. Before the battle, Kosciuszko felt the extreme urgency of "attack[ing] the Russians before they could reach the capital" and amass a bigger army (Storozynski 205). It was quite literally a life or death situation for Warsaw and perhaps for Poland's independence. When he realized the odds at Maciejowice, and when a fellow officer encouraged him to withdraw, Kosciuszko said, "'There is no room to retreat, this is the place to be buried, or be victorious'" (207). His words were almost prophetic; incurring serious wounds as the Poles lost the battle, he came incredibly close to being buried. The severity and lasting nature of his wounds reflects what was soon to become a reality for Poland itself: partition, the open wounds of a nation cut apart (the third and final partition of Poland took place after Kosciuszko's revolution failed). The injuries further stand as a marker of Kosciuszko's inability to protect his country from dismemberment or to control the situation in any manner.

Alongside Kosciuszko's wounds, Evans again discusses money. This time, the wounds have nothing to do with his lack of money. Rather, after he receives his injuries and a prison sentence, Czar Paul offers him riches and freedom. Evans's *Memoir* suggests that Kosciuszko willingly accepted the gifts, but in actuality, he turned down the money and

property from Czar Paul more than once because they came with strings attached (Pula, *Thaddeus* 237; Storozynski 215). As Storozynski explains, the gifts were bribes; Kosciuszko had to "swear an oath of allegiance to the czar of Russia and promise not to organize any more rebellions" (215, 214). Kosciuszko did not swear the oath until "Paul agreed to set free over 12,000 other Poles held in Russian captivity" including his dear friend Count Niemcewicz (Pula, *Thaddeus* 237; Storozynski 215). Even after this point, Kosciuszko never used any of the money (Storozynski 272). The lack of context Evans provides about the gifts makes them seem to be, instead of bribes, reparations for the years Kosciuszko spent in prison or rewards for his bravery and patriotism. It is also important to note that Evans praises Kosciuszko for investing the wealth he received from Czar Paul. The details Evans includes about the investment—the bank where Kosciuszko kept his money, the fact that it doubled with time, and his own commendation of the soldier for his financial savvy—seem ancillary to Kosciuszko's biographical narrative. But for Evans's Gilded Age readers, the details may have offered reassurance that investors could—like Kosciuszko did—profit from fiscal responsibility and safe investment.

Yet, the persistence of Kosciuszko's suffering from his injuries and his inability to control what happens to the money and lands he received from the United States government destabilize the image of a responsible investor in control of his money. Evans juxtaposes Kosciuszko's newfound riches in both Russia and America with the Pole's injuries. When Kosciuszko receives money from Czar Paul and when he writes his will leaving Jefferson in charge, his wounds are always in the background. These wounds, "still open and unhealed," are a gothic presence indicating his physical brokenness and symbolizing his economic impotence (20). In the end, though Kosciuszko was actually wealthy, none of the wishes he

had with regard to his money mattered. Jefferson failed to act on his word. Nash and Hodges mark this as Jefferson's failure, his betrayal of Kosciuszko (2). But Evans's *Memoir* also shows Kosciuszko as unable to control his American wealth. He ultimately has no power over what happens to it, so that his wounds, again, come to represent fragmentation of identity in part due to loss of control over his money and property. This lack of control registers Gilded Age fears of losing control of one's money in a time of financial instability and risky speculation. Fiscally responsible or not, devastating loss happened. And this reality was haunting.

Kosciuszko received his final wound, according to Evans, during a ride on "horseback" near "Vevay, on the Lake of Geneva" (37). The accident happened when "the horse stumbled and bruised his rider" (37). Shortly after this incident, "On the 1st of October, he was attacked with a serious nervous fever . . ." (37). Two weeks later, he died (37). In the Pole's deathbed scene, Evans describes Kosciuszko by body part. He writes,

> His righteous soul, as if voluntarily retiring to rest, weary of life's toils and cares, now plumed itself for Heaven as the cold and stern hand of death gradually sundered the mortal ties which bound it to earth. His strong hand, which had never drawn a sword but in the cause of human freedom, had never dealth a blow except at the hearts of tyrants, gave now its last affectionate grasp to surrounding friends. That eloquent innocent tongue, which had never been heard except in the cause of humanity, which had roared at the head of armies like thunder on the distant hills, which had frequently been heard in the silent watches of the night to breathe devotions of the pious heart which gave it utterance, now, like love's soft whisper, sighed its last farewell on earth. That eagle eye, which had formerly thrown its

> piercing glance over the ranks of advancing hosts with a far-seeing vision, which could accurately scan the forces arrayed against him, now gave is last look on friends and all earthly things . . . (37-8)

Poetic though this eulogy is, it represents Kosciuszko as a fragmented, rather than a whole, man. This image of brokenness persists as the narrative continues and Evans describes that Kosciuszko's body is broken in death; "His heart is buried under a monument at Zuchwil, in Soleure; his body was embalmed and placed in the vaults of the Jesuit Church" (39-40).

Leading up to the description of Kosciuszko's bruised and broken body, Evans gives an account of the man's finances in his final days. At the end of his life, Kosciuszko lived in Soleure, Switzerland "with his friends the Zeltners," of whom Evans records Kosciuszko as saying, "'They received me as a poor exile, rendered relief to my broken constitution, have taken care of me with devotion and friendship, and have made me happy by the kindness they have shown me" (31). Before his accident, Kosciuszko spent much of his time with the Zeltners and their children (Storozynski 270-1). However, he also "spent his time and his entire income in charity. Every day he rode long distances into the Jura mountains, to hunt up cases among the poor peasantry, always carrying a couple of bottles of generous old wine for the sick. He never passed a poor man without stopping to give him a few batzen (cents), the lowest he ever gave—he generally gave one or two dollars" (Evans, *Memoir* 33). Eventually, the Zeltners noticed that Kosciuszko "became melancholy, returning from his trips into the mountains sorry and downhearted" (34). In talking to him about his change in mood, the Zeltners discovered that he had given "away all his money, and of there being still many suffering for want of bread and common necessaries . . ." (34). To solve the problem, the Zeltners gave Kosciuszko some money (34). Evans ends this anecdote by relating that

Kosciuszko, "with his pockets once more filled with money, and his heart made happy . . . again started for the mountains to dispense his charity, and make others happy" (34).[56]

Rather than happening at a critical moment in Kosciuszko's life, this final injury brings on, according to Evans, the Pole's death. The bruise he receives, which should be taken to suggest internal injuries resulting from the fall, functions as a symbol of both the "broken constitution" that Kosciuszko mentions and his status as a "poor exile," a man severed from his country. Evans's deathbed description of Kosciuszko by body part and the breaking apart of Kosciuszko's body after his death furthermore signal the brokenness of the man and his country. That Kosciuszko comes to the end of his life financially broke according to the *Memoir* is also significant. In actuality, he was broke partly by choice and partly because of his compassion for the poor. Kosciuszko could have had access to a great deal of money in his final years, enough to render him wealthy, but he "refused to touch the czar's money" or the money he had set aside for the abolition of American slaves (Storozynski 272). The facts about his choice to leave the majority of his money untouched are not present in Evans's biography, though. Rather, Evans states that the money Kosciuszko gave in charity was the revenue he had received from the czar. This, along with Evans's portrayal of the "'grand old man'" as "melancholy" and helpless without the Zeltners' aid, leaves readers with the impression that Kosciuszko allowed a large sum of money to bleed through his hands almost to the point of childlike and uncomprehending irresponsibility that one might expect to come with old age (34). While this is an innocent failing, if it can be called a failing at all, it still shows a man not quite in control of his finances.

As biographical facts, none of Kosciuszko's money troubles, whether at the beginning or end of his life, are particularly gothic in nature. However, the combination of Kosciuszko's lack of control over capital, his masculine failings, and his injuries constitute a gothic presence for Gilded Age readers haunted by the reality of living in unstable economic times. Put another way, Kosciuszko's physical brokenness and fiscal broke-ness register late nineteenth century American fears about the fragmentation of male identity that often accompanied economic loss.

Kosciuszko's Injured Name and Reputation

There was another Poland in the news in the 1870s. Under the headline, "The Poland Report," an article in the February 19, 1873 *Evening Post* reads, "Our readers were put in possession of the substance of Chairman Poland's report on the Credit Mobilier corruption yesterday afternoon, and have doubtless by this time made up their minds as to its merits" (2). This statement is from one of scores of articles in New York newspapers in 1873 that refers to "The Poland Committee," a House of Representatives committee headed by Vermont Congressman Luke P. Poland and formed, as the title of their report reads, "*to Investigate the Alleged Credit Mobilier Bribery"* (L. Poland). The report made to the House of Representatives in early 1873 about the Crédit Mobilier scandal alleged that "members of . . . [Congress] were bribed by Oakes Ames to perform certain legislative acts for the benefit of the Union Pacific Railroad Company, by presents of stock in the Credit Mobilier of America, or by presents of a valuable character derived therefrom . . ." (L. Poland I). Implicated in this scandal were some high-ranking U.S. politicians and public figures, such as Henry Dawes and James A. Garfield (L. Poland V, VII).

The Crédit Mobilier was an extremely public scandal. Newspapers ran with the details and decried the results of the investigation. One article accused the committee of "whitewash[ing]" and "suppress[ing] . . . evidence" against certain members of the House of Representatives ("The Credit Mobilier Infamy" 6). Another article called the report "an outrage upon common sense," and those who wrote it, "desperate politicians and gamblers" ("An Outrage" 2). In the minds of many, the main problem with the report was that it only implicated two men: Oakes "Ames, a Republican, and James Brookes, the Democratic floor leader" (White 65). Both were ousted, but beyond this, "no one was punished and no money was recovered" (65). Though the investigators "allowed most of those implicated to go scot-free," the publicity of the scandal meant that the names and reputations of all involved suffered (64). Henry Dawes, for example, was unable to make a career move into the Senate because of the scandal (63).

Luke Poland's investigation of the Crédit Mobilier scandal may seem entirely unrelated to the partitioned European nation of the same name, but Gilded Age readers would have connected one Poland to the other because newspapers did exactly that. In 1874, according to a *Morning Telegraph* article entitled, "Poland's Fate," Poland lost his seat in the House of Representatives because he "obtained the passage of a bill under false pretenses—of a measure aiming a death-blow at freedom of the press—a law now infamous to all posterity under the name of the Poland gag-law" (4). The law was so unpopular that many articles celebrated Poland's defeat. The *Evening Post* of September 5, 1874 quotes from the New Haven *Register* about Poland's loss: "'Alas, for poor Poland! Again dismembered!'" ("Political" 2). Playing on the ex-congressman's last name, this article uses the rhetoric of Poland's partition to mock the politician's decisive defeat. Poland didn't merely lose the

election; voters, the quote suggests, partitioned the politician, and the results were painful. As the "Poland's Fate" author writes, "Poland [found] himself laid out flat on his back" (7).

A few month's later, Poland's name comes up again in relation to the partitioned nation. Under the title "Washington Gossip" in *The Daily Graphic* of January 21, 1875, a brief note reads, "Mr. Phillips, of Kansas, made a motion today before House Judiciary Committee to repeal the law known throughout the globe as the Press Gag law, a law which died of old age when freedom shrieked and Poland fell" (3). Again, in order to mock the congressman, this article alludes to the famous final line of a popular poem by Thomas Campbell that Evans quotes in *The Memoir*: "And freedom shrieked—as Kosciuszko fell!" (14). In contrast to the image of freedom screaming in grief when Kosciuszko becomes wounded in the Polish revolution, in *The Daily Graphic* note, freedom screams in anger at Congressman Poland who tries to oppress liberty with the gag law.

The history of the Crédit Mobilier scandal and the comments comparing the Vermont politician to the partitioned nation juxtapose issues of control and wounds to the identity. Unwise financial decisions, whether corrupt or not, could easily spin out of control and end up wounding male identity. As is clear in the case of Dawes, and many others, some of whom were innocent of political corruption, a financial scandal could easily mean the loss of name and reputation in the Gilded Age. Of course, what damaged Luke Poland's reputation was his passage of an incredibly unpopular law that voters felt would do away with the freedom of the press. Like Ames and Brookes, who lost their reputations and seats in Congress because of the Poland report, Poland himself lost his seat and reputation due to a bad policy. Connected with the Crédit Mobilier scandal through his writing of the Poland report and his heading of the Poland Committee, Poland's last name also coincidentally

connects him to the nation of Poland and idea of wounds or violent partition. Thus, in addition to masculine fragmentation resulting from financial loss, Poland also signaled to American Gilded Age readers issues involving financial and political scandal, and the fragmentation of masculine identity due to loss of ability to control perceptions of one's name and image.

While Evans's surviving letters and journal from 1873 show that he did not write about the Crédit Mobilier scandal specifically, as a man intimately involved and interested in the railroad industry and as a man who invested in the stock market, he certainly would have known about it if he paid any attention to New York newspapers in the beginning of the year. Regardless of his knowledge or opinion of the scandal, in the *Memoir* Evans discusses two further wounds to Kosciuszko's masculine identity that are uncannily similar to wounds that Broken Men of the Gilded Age received after financial ruin—injuries to name and image. These wounds to Kosciuszko's identity render him helpless in a similar way as his physical injuries do in other parts of the text, but they are not the result of personal economic ruin or lack. Rather, they are cases of others' appropriation of Kosciuszko's name or image for either political or economic gain. Read as part of a narrative that foregrounds Kosciuszko's physical wounds and financial troubles, these wounds to the Pole's identity constitute a gothic presence registering, yet again, nineteenth-century American anxieties about fragmentation of male identity resulting from financial loss.

Not all references to Kosciuszko's name in the *Memoir* are a gothic presence. As Kosciuszko's renown spread, his name grew in its power to command deference and respect. The involvement of Kosciuszko in the American Revolutionary War made him famous in the United States. Nash and Hodges point out that Americans celebrated his actions for the

country's independence by putting his name on everything from towns to streets to monuments (8). Later, as he fought for his own country's independence, he likewise became famous throughout Europe. Certainly, Poland's enemies knew Kosciuszko's name, and many of them even admired the war hero. After his injury at Maciejowice, when soldiers finally found him "lay[ing] senseless among the dead," Evans remarks, "His name even now commanded respect. The Cossacks made a litter of their lances and carried him to the General, who ordered his wounds to be cared for, and that he should be treated with the respect his distinguished position merited" (18-9). Storozynski adds that the Russian soldiers in fact respected Kosciuszko's name so much that they would not allow for him to be taken away by "oxcart" because they "thought the beasts were undignified" (208).

By the time Kosciuszko made it back to the United States and stayed with General White, he had gained even more popularity. In New Jersey, "Many of his old comrades-in-arms during the Revolutionary struggle came from distant parts to see the hero of Poland, the man who had made his name and fame resound throughout every civilized land in the world . . ." (24). While Kosciuszko did not seek fame (in fact, he hid from it while in the United States), the leading role he took in two revolutions for independence ensured that he became a celebrity in his lifetime. In both the United States and abroad, newspaper authors, painters, poets and writers of history immortalized Kosciuszko's name. Especially with Poles and Americans, his name carried authority. Unfortunately, there were those who took advantage of its power.

According to Evans, Napoleon was one of them. He, too, admired Kosciuszko and recognized the power of the Pole's name. Just before he began to march against Russia, Napoleon sent a message to Kosciuszko through one of his subordinates (28). The man told

Kosciuszko that Napoleon "was convinced that the Polish Nation could be of the greatest service to him, and as Kosciuszko was first in the eyes and hearts of his countrymen, he wished him to accompany him on the expedition" (28). Kosciuszko refused, feeling sure that "the Emperor was ready to receive the services and the best blood of Poland, and enslave them afterwards" (29). Instead of allowing Kosciuszko's refusal to deter his plans, Evans explains, Napoleon took measures to procure safe passage through the partitioned nation; he "forged the name of Kosciuszko to a proclamation, and published it, deceiving the Poles most shamefully, and for years prevented Kosciuszko from denying it" (30).

In actuality, as Storozynski clarifies, Napoleon was not responsible for the forgery. The guilty party was Joseph Fouché, Napoleon's "chief spy" (247). When Kosciuszko refused to be a part of Napoleon's plans to march through Poland, Fouché "forged a letter in [Kosciuszko's] name that was sent to newspapers telling editors that the famous Pole supported Napoleon's cause" (260). Regardless of its true author, the letter served its purpose; despite Kosciuszko's warnings to the contrary, the majority of Poles saw "France as an ally that could help liberate them" and Napoleon "as their savior" (260, 261). Though Napoleon himself did not commandeer Kosciuszko's name, the damage to the Pole was the same. With the forgery, Fouché delivered a blow to Kosciuszko's identity and suppressed the Pole's voice. Kosciuszko was unable to control the use of his name or speak in his own defense, according to Evans.

Ultimately, despite the forgery, Kosciuszko's good name and reputation survived intact. Evans records an anecdote of Kosciuszko seeing Polish soldiers in the Russian army "committing excesses of the most cruel nature, and burning the houses of the poor peasantry"

near Paris in 1814 (32). He immediately rebuked their actions. When they scoffed at him, thinking him to be elderly and confused, he silenced them (32).

> 'I am Kosciuszko,' was the quick reply. If the lightnings of Heaven had descended on their heads, and fixed each man to the spot he stood upon, they could not have been more paralyzed; there stood before them with flashing eyes, the hero of their mother's nursery tales, the god of their dreams as boys, the incarnate spirit of the idol of Poland. They threw down their arms, them threw themselves on the ground and put dust on their heads, according to a Samartian custom. They crept to him and hugged his knees, begging to be forgiven and pardoned. It must have been an affecting scene. It showed that his name still retained its ancient power over Polish hearts, a power never used but for some good and generous end. (32-3)

After his death in 1817, his renown only grew. Evans writes, "His whole character has passed into history, poetry and song . . ." (39). Immortalized in American literature and cultural memory, Kosciuszko's name was famous in the nineteenth century, and he became the embodiment of America's beau ideal (Gladsky 11-3). In the end of *The Memoir,* there is no hint of a gothic presence or anxiety or guilt; Kosciuszko is all beau ideal. He is a "bright beacon," a symbol of "human progress, as connected with Liberty"; his name is synonymous with "purity and patriotism"; and, as a "soul-stirring inscription" in Poland memorializes him, he is "Kosciuszko the Friend of Washington" (39, 42, 41).

Yet, the forgery of Kosciuszko's name remains a gothic rupture in the text, a haunting example of fragmentation of identity. When the newspapers printed stories of Kosciuszko's support of Napoleon, the Pole was no longer in control of his public persona. In using Kosciuszko's name, Fouché rewrote the war hero's identity and changed perception of him in

a way that Kosciuszko could not control. It injured, or fragmented, the name and identity that Kosciuszko had built over years. The theft of his name and the silencing of his voice left him powerless, impotent, just as his earlier injuries did. Kosciuszko's inability to defend his name against the charge is moreover similar to the impotence Gilded Age American men faced after financial ruin. Unable to restore their names and reputations after fiscal loss, many of them remained broken, fragmented men. Sandwiched between two stories of Kosciuszko's money troubles (the story of Jefferson's refusal to act as executor of Kosciuszko's will and of Kosciuszko going broke because of his charitable habits), Fouché's forgery and the damage it does to Kosciuszko's name registers late nineteenth-century American fears of fragmentation of identity due to financial loss.

A final gothic rupture in the text is the fact that Kosciuszko was not able to control his representation in art while he was alive. Evans relates that Kosciuszko liked to paint and draw, and he enjoyed art (23, 35). However, he "refused to allow any one to paint him, or chisel him out of marble . . ." (35). Near the end of his life when he lived with the Zeltners in Switzerland, Kosciuszko visited a sculptor by the name of Eggenschwiler (35). In the studio, "Kosciuszko at once detected the likeness to himself. . . ." in several busts (35). According to Evans, "in his anger that such a thing should be done, [Kosciuszko] shattered two of [the busts] with his cane; the artist protected the third with his person, and explained that he had only executed the order of Zeltner, and begged him to spare the bust. . . . ," which he did (35). He later learned that Zeltner had commissioned Eggenschwiler "to study [Kosciuszko's] face and head at the Opera in Paris . . ." (35).

The Eggenschwiler incident is an example of something that happened to Kosciuszko repeatedly. Storozynski notes that after Czar Paul set the Pole free, Kosciuszko "turned down

invitations to have his portrait painted" because of his injuries (217). In London, he also "refused requests to sit for paintings" (219). This did not stop artists from re-creating his image, however; "…one of England's most talented artists, Richard Cosway . . . secretly sketched [Kosciuszko's] features for a portrait that was completed later. Another painter, American-born Benjamin West, also called on Kosciuszko and later produced a portrait of him from memory" (219-20). Storozynski implies that Kosciuszko's refusal to sit for paintings was because he still suffered from certain injuries, while Evans suggests that Kosciuszko never allowed people to represent him artistically—even after he was totally healed (Storozynski 217-9; Evans, *Memoir* 26). Neither biographer gives any other reason for Kosciuszko's refusal.

The reason for his denials, however, are not as important as Kosciuszko's helplessness to curb efforts to portray his image through art. Again, Kosciuszko's voice went unheard. His refusals did not matter to his dear friends, the Zeltners. Nor did they matter to Eggenschwiler or other artists who represented him without his permission. It is only in Eggenschwiler's studio that Kosciuszko could reclaim agency. In a haunting moment, the Pole confronts his own image three times over, and he reacts by violently shattering his doppelganger. He demands respect for his voice and his wishes. The ferocity of his reaction betrays both his discomfort with seeing his representation in art and his anger at his friend's betrayal and his own incapability to control his image. The scene, which comes in *The Memoir* immediately after Evans's relation that Kosciuszko is in financial straits because of his propensity to give to others, furthermore betrays American anxieties about fragmentation of male identity due to financial loss in panics like the one in 1873. Specifically, the

Eggenschwiler incident speaks to the masculine fear of the loss of one's good name and reputation that so often accompanied financial ruin in the volatile Gilded Age.

Conclusion

Thaddeus Kosciuszko was not the equivalent of a Gilded Age American man. He was a Polish nobleman, an icon of two cultures, a war hero, and a man who received gifts of wealth from two nations. He had no concerns about railroads, financial panics or bank runs. Despite all of this, Evans's *Memoir of Thaddeus Kosciuszko,* while it certainly offered late nineteenth-century American readers a sentimental portrait of the man who epitomized Poland as America's beau ideal, also offered readers a hauntingly familiar story—a story about physical brokenness and fiscal loss, fragmented reputation and damaged name and image; a story that mirrors the experience of the Broken Man of the Gilded Age, financially ruined by the pitfalls of an unstable economy and emotionally fragmented because of the tarnishing his good name suffered. Though on the whole the *Memoir* is a prime example of a text that showcases Poland as America's beau ideal, the gothic ruptures also reveal the dark underside of that ideal. The details of Kosciuszko's wounds, his lifelong troubles with money, and his loss of control of the use of his name and image register late nineteenth century American fears about financial ruin and male fragmentation in the volatile Gilded Age.

Conclusion

Buried on page 8 of the January 2, 1892 issue of *The Rockford Daily Register-Gazette* is a brief article entitled, "A Nation in Mourning." It reads, "This year throughout Poland is to be regarded as a year of the deepest mourning. The women of Poland from the highest to the lowest, from the princess to the peasant woman, will wear nothing but black . . . Thus will the Poles commemorate the year of 1792, when they lost their independence" (8). One hundred years prior to the printing of this article, the Russian army had crossed into Poland to "overthrow the Polish [government] . . . and the Polish Constitution" (Davies, vol. 1, 535). This action led to the "Russo-Polish War of 1792-3," in which Poland suffered a defeat that precipitated the second partition of the nation in 1793 (535). On the heels of that partition came Kosciuszko's 1794-5 failed revolution and the final partition of Poland. Following the partitions and the Polish aid in the Revolutionary War, America had for more than one hundred years, "viewed Poland as a martyr among nations, a European counterpart of America's democratic instincts, and a home of the European beau ideal" (Gladsky 33).

In 1892, however, the United States did not mourn along with Poland the centennial of its loss of freedom and sovereignty. Rather, most articles mentioning Poland focused on the deluge of lower class Polish immigrants entering the U.S. An article in the *Grand Forks Daily Herald* subtitled "Seeds of Typhus Fever Planted by Russian and Polish Jews" is one example of many articles about the diseases immigrants brought with them to the United States. It reports on "65 cases" of the fever found among immigrants living in "tenement houses" in New York City ("Crowded" 2). After authorities identified the "victims," they removed the immigrants to a hospital and "carefully fumigated and quarantined" the tenements (2). "They Must Wash," an article in the September 26, 1892 issue of *The Boston*

Herald, pokes fun at the Russian and Polish immigrants who resisted taking a bath before they were allowed to come into the country (3). The writer notes that immigrants "must not only have the insects and germs killed out of their clothes . . . but they must wash themselves . . ." (3). He goes on, joking, "The Czar . . . in all his tyrannies has never tried to wash them. Perhaps the tremendousness of the task appalled him, and perhaps the national treasury does not contain enough for soap" (3).

The representation of the Pole and of Poland as the United State's beau ideal in American literature was almost entirely gone in the last two decades of the 1800s. Gone with it was the dark underside of that beau ideal in the form of Poland as a haunting gothic presence registering nineteenth-century American anxieties. Instead of being brave, noble, "compassionate, patriotic, self-sacrificing, educated, cultured, adventurous, [and] high-minded"—and instead of being ghosts with warning messages or being vaguely threatening Catholic foreign Others—Polish immigrants of the late nineteenth century were, according to American writers, "a deviation from the sociopolitical norm" (35). They were dirty; they carried disease; and they "lack[ed] . . . individuality of mind, citizenly motives, and socioeconomic aspirations" (36). Now Poland, through the surge of "hundreds of thousands" of poor Polish immigrants, was an overt threat to the U.S. in print culture and in actuality (Gladsky 34). This shift in attitude toward Poles, which has unfortunately continued through the twentieth and into the twenty-first century in the form of negative ethnic stereotypes, shows the earlier nineteenth century to be a distinct time in American literary history when Poland was both familiar, admirable, sympathetic beau ideal *and* strange, ghostly, terrifying presence.

I have sought to uncover the latter, the dark underside of that beau ideal. My project has looked to various texts—short stories, novels, biographies, poems, and newspapers and periodical articles and features—from the early 1800s to the early 1880s that mention Poland, focus on Poland, or include Polish characters. Considering gothic elements in each text and then contextualizing through Polish and American history, I have argued that Poland is an uncanny presence revealing nineteenth-century American fears and guilt about national security, imperialism, slavery, the Other, economic instability, and identity. The anxiety each text betrays is specific to the concerns of certain eras in American history.

In 1805, when the United States was still forming and therefore quite vulnerable to attacks, Brown's reference to Silesia and allusion to Poland in "Somnambulism: A Fragment" registers fears of outside threats to the America's sovereignty as a nation. Later, in the 1840s, when the United States was on the verge of entering into a war with Mexico for territorial expansion, the Polish character in Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" indicates American anxieties about the nation turning into an imperialistic aggressor similar to the three powers that the United States criticized for partitioning Poland in the 1700s. For a nation struggling with its part in the Mexican American War and increasingly quarreling over the realities of U.S. slavery, references to Poland in Melville's 1851 *Moby-Dick* reveal further concerns over American imperialism and over an economy built on the commodification of slaves' bodies for profit. In the mid-1850s and 1860s, when the U.S. struggled with nativist attitudes toward Catholics and ever-increasing waves of immigrants, Polish characters in Southworth's *The Missing Bride* and Alcott's "The Baron's Gloves" betray American anxieties about the threat and/or taint of the Polish Catholic immigrant Other. Finally, the financially broke and physically broken Thaddeus Kosciuszko in Evans's

brief 1883 biography registers concerns about economic ruin and the social and psychological fragmentation that resulted from it following crashes like that of the Panic of 1873.

Moreover, behind each of these references to Poland and Polish characters in works I have explored is the history of a failed Polish revolution. U.S. newspapers heavily reported on all of these revolutions. Thus, the American reading public would have been very familiar with them and would have connected references to Poland in the works explored with the insurrection that happened closest in time before the text's publication date; Polish revolutions took place in 1794-5, 1830-31, 1846, 1848, and 1863. These revolutions also naturally turned American minds to their nation's Revolutionary War. Firmly cementing this connection was the historical fact of and admiration for the two Polish revolutionaries who had fought for America in that war. The Polish rebellions behind the references to Poland, though, are not merely a marker of nostalgia for America's war of independence or sympathy for the beau ideal. They are a gothic figuration haunting nineteenth-century American literature. Each of them offered a coded warning to the United States that correlated with the anxieties I have pointed out above. They furthermore shore up Benjamin Reiss's claim that, "Founded by violence but appealing to reason, a postrevolutionary society . . . can never achieve stability" (146). Even one hundred years after the Revolutionary War, as my project highlights, the U.S. did not achieve true stability, but struggled throughout the nineteenth century with instabilities involving culture, expansionism, human servitude, immigration, identity, and finance.

While from the early nineteenth century to the early 1880s references to Poland in American literature served as a gothic presence registering these instabilities, the last two

decades of the nineteenth century mark the historical moment when Poles and Poland became what the U.S. imaginary had always feared: gothics. From the veiled dark underside of the beau ideal betraying American anxieties, Poles and Poland became a direct and visible threat to the United States' economy, sense of national identity, and narrative of egalitarianism. Along with this threat came the aforementioned sharp shift in attitude toward Poles, which most scholars agree began in 1880 with the period of mass immigration that lasted until 1920. During this time, tens of millions of Europeans migrated to the United States. Poles made up over one million of them (Gladsky 34). This number was a drastic increase from Polish immigration in the whole of the nineteenth century prior to 1880. Following the European revolution of 1830-1 up through 1860, approximately 1,300 Poles immigrated (Pula, *Polish* 2). During the next two decades, scholars believe that thousands more Poles came to the United States, making the total number of Poles to migrate to America in the nineteenth century pre-1880s somewhere in the tens of thousands (Pula, *Polish* 9). In comparison, the millions that came during the following period of mass immigration inundated the nation and ultimately sparked the view that Poles were "a deviation from the sociopolitical norm."

The ethnic rejection was not due to numbers alone, but also to economic status. Most Poles who emigrated in the first half of the century bore a likeness to America's conception of the beau ideal and even the "peasant prince" himself, Thaddeus Kosciuszko. They were members of the upper class, and some were even nobility, though not all had the money to accompany the title. Political exiles, they came to the United States not to work but because they had been ousted from their homeland after fighting in one of Poland's revolutions for independence (Pula, *Polish* 4). In the United States by necessity rather than choice, they

"remained committed to Polish independence" and worked for that aim in their new home (8). Most were highly educated and, once they spoke English fluently, easily found work as teachers, businessmen, "surveyors, cartographers, engineers, and musicians" (6). As I have shown through newspaper articles, these immigrants contributed to American intellectualism in their day. Henry Kalussowski, for example, offered lectures on Polish history, and Count Holinski gave a speech at an abolitionist gathering, adding a unique perspective to the debate on slavery ("Mr. Kalussowski" 1; "Fourteenth" 6). Similar as they were to the beau ideal, and thus offering Americans an image of what they desired to be, such immigrants were a welcome and acceptable addition to the United States. Americans, in fact, felt such admiration and sympathy for these immigrants that some formed committees to aid the Poles with their transition to the United States and "Congress took the unprecedented step of authorizing" them a land grant (Pula, *Polish* 5).

Mid-century Polish immigrants were of a different type. Unlike their predecessors, most did not belong to the upper echelons of society. The majority of these immigrants, who came to the United States from the 1850s through the 1870s, became landowners and small farmers, and they located in "recognizably 'Polish' settlements [such as those] . . . in Texas, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and New York" (Pula, *Polish* 9). The story of one of these communities, Panna Maria, Texas, reveals the nature of the large number of mid-nineteenth-century Polish immigrants. Enlisted by Polish priest Leopold Moczygęba to settle in southeastern Texas, more than 700 Poles started an isolated, financially independent, and culturally close-knit farming community in Panna Maria (8-9). Their town was "the first truly permanent Polish settlement in America, complete with family and religious life, ethnic organizations, and permanent elements of Polish culture" (9). While in reality—with the

exception of their culturally Polish ties—immigrants like those in Panna Maria were similar to most rural Americans, because they were neither highly born nor highly educated, they did not quite match America's image of the beau ideal. Their foreign presence in the United States, along with the familiar presence of exiled Polish immigrants of higher social status who had come before them, constituted the gothic presence of Poles in the works of Alcott and Southworth that were both beau ideal and strange Other. Likewise, this period of Polish immigration provided a middle ground between America's view of the Pole as beau ideal and the Pole as deviants.

In the late nineteenth century, the majority of the millions of Polish immigrants to the United States were "landless, poor, unskilled, ignorant tillers of the soil—peasants who belonged as much to the Middle Ages as to the nineteenth century" (Gladsky 34). They came to the United States seeking to improve their economic situations and most lived in crowded tenements in American cities, where they worked in factories doing physically intensive labor (Pula, *Polish* 18). The sheer numbers and "'strangeness'" of these immigrants "frightened and confused many native-born Americans," who began to see the Pole as "an animal, violent, drunken, a nationalist and breeding machine whose fecundity was a threat" (Gladsky 34; Goska 105). Many United States citizens saw Poles as stealing American jobs, over-running American cities, and bringing disease to American shores. Instead of the beau ideal, Americans felt, these Polish immigrants were dirty, poverty-stricken foreigners who did not make a valuable contribution to United States society.[57]

The Polish, of course, were not the only ethnic immigrant group to experience such rejection. Irish and Italian immigrants shared a similar story. During the mid-nineteenth century, over 1 million people immigrated to America from Ireland (Bankston and Hidalgo

397). Forced to leave their homeland due to lack of "food and shelter" as a result of the Potato Famine, these immigrants came to the United States out of necessity; they needed to find a way to feed their families (397). The majority of them were "uneducated," "unskilled," "poor and Catholic," and they "represented the first large wave of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants in the history of the nation" (398, 397). Like the Poles who came later in the century, they settled largely in urban centers and most worked doing hard labor (398). Also similar to Poles who immigrated from 1880-1920, the Irish faced prejudice on the grounds of ethnic and religious difference (403). Bankston and Hidalgo state, in fact, "Among the millions of western Europeans who have immigrated to the United States, the Irish have been subjected to an exceptional amount of negative stereotyping and discrimination" (403).

The majority of Italian immigrants in the nineteenth century came in the same wave that brought millions of Poles and other non-Western European migrants. During the closing decades of the 1800s and opening decades of the 1900s, "more than four million Italians entered the United States" (Bankston and Hidalgo 410). Facing political and economic hardship in Italy, most came with the purpose of bettering their financial situation. Like the Irish and the Poles, they settled in cities, did manual labor, and brought their Catholic faith with them (410-2). They, too, encountered discrimination, and more than the other groups, they faced extraordinary amount of pressure to "abandon their native culture or to face social ostracization and the loss of economic opportunity" (412).

As was true for the Poles, the immense numbers of these immigrant groups and their low economic status was part of the reason they were the victims of stereotyping and discrimination. Their ethnic, religious, and sometimes political "strangeness" was furthermore part of the reason. Before the massive wave of immigration that began in 1880,

the majority of Americans were "white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant" (Kraut 151). They believed that the pillars of their nation were "Anglo-Saxon tradition embodied in the Magna Carta, that primal expression of political democracy, and the Protestant Reformation, the spiritual rebellion against an oppressive Roman Catholic Church" (151). The xenophobic reaction of many U.S. citizens toward the influx of Irish, Italians, and Poles had its root in fears that the foreignness, Catholic religion and extreme political ideas of the immigrants would profoundly change their nation (150-1). Along with the increased "job competition," urban "congestion," and the language barriers and cultural misunderstandings that were the result of the upsurge in immigration, these fears pressed many U.S. citizens to lash out with "three strains of anti-immigrant venom: racial nativism, anti-Catholicism, and antiradical nativism" (150, 151).

The rise of xenophobia in America that found expression in discrimination against the Irish, Italians, Poles, and other non-Western European immigrant groups during the nineteenth century was an extension of the ideological shift from romantic ideals to realist and naturalist thinking that happened after the Civil War. Emphasis on sentimentality and the exotic had made the romantic period the perfect time for the notion of beau ideal to thrive (Lehan xii). Americans, after all, based their sympathy and admiration for Poland in feelings of nostalgia for Poland's part in the Revolutionary War and their romantic views of Polish nobility (Gladsky 11, 21-2). With the focus on the nation's "grotesque" new realities—including the "great urban slums" and the poor immigrants and other ethnic minorities in them—during the beginning of the realist and naturalist period came ideological views like social Darwinism and various theories of racial hierarchy which helped to facilitate prejudice and justify unsympathetic views of immigrant communities (Lehan 22, 8, 10). From a social

Darwinist perspective, the struggles of foreigners like Poles to survive in the United States merely meant that they were unfit. "Nature" would weed them out eventually. This view canceled out any need for compassion or fair treatment. Racial theories that were supported by "Darwin's theory of evolution" meant that those of "superior" races, like the "'Anglo-Saxon race,'" could use members of "inferior" races—such as Poles—for "cheap industrial and agrarian labor" or could express negative views of them without guilt because they were simply following the order of things (Lehan 10-1). Influenced by these and similar ideas, as well as by fears of the large numbers of poor, Polish immigrants pouring into the United States and the economic changes they would bring, Americans began to see Poles no longer as a familiar beau ideal but rather as an inferior ethnic Other, crammed into dirty, disease-ridden tenements in cities teeming with all kinds of strange immigrants. In this era, the Pole became "Bieganski," or the "brute" Polack (Goska 15, 16).

And brute Polack the Pole has remained in wide U.S. culture, print culture, and media representation throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries (Goska 15-104). Despite almost a century of American admiration for Poles and the myriad of objects and places memorializing revolutionary Poles in America—such as the town of Kosciusko, Georgia, General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way in Los Angeles, and Pulaski highways and roads from north to south—after 1880, the United States never again readily recognized Poland as the nation's beau ideal. With the disappearance of the beau ideal also came the evaporation of Poland and its history as a gothic presence registering American anxieties such as the threat of foreign invasion, the possibility of America becoming an imperialistic despot, or the perils of economic instability. Instead, the ghost of Poland crossed the

threshold into reality, and, for many Americans, Poland became an actual gothic, a tangible threat to democratic ideals, Protestant faith, and economic opportunity.

Notes

[1] I borrow the phrase "dark underside" from several scholars. John Serio mentions "the dark underside of life," referring to "the terror of human guilt" (92). Kathy MacDermott explores the "dark underside of wish fulfillment" in her analysis of light and "black humor" in anti-realist texts (52). Finally, Savoy states that, "the Gothic embodies . . . and gives voice to the dark nightmare that is the underside of 'the American dream,'" referring to America's negative realities, those that obscure the dream (167). When I mention the dark underside of Poland as America's beau ideal, I am referring to the moral darkness of the realities of conquest and slavery, anxieties that the bright picture of the ideal tries to cover up (as well as the darkness caused by other fears that the ideal tries to ignore—i.e. possible loss of freedom and anxieties about the Other and subjecthood).

[2] Strauch argues, "The Ode was written in 1846 in immediate response to Channing's abolitionist position against Union. . . ." (4). David Robinson contends that the ode is Emerson's statement of admiration for Channing as the Transcendentalists' "political conscience," as well as Emerson's defense against Channing's claim of Emerson's "excessive individualism" (165, 173). Bromwich posits that the poem is a dialogue between Channing and Emerson, with Channing accusing Emerson of not taking a public stand against slavery and the United States' treatment of Mexico, and Emerson responding that he must stay true to his Muse (Bromwich 216, 213-4, 220-1). I follow Strauch and Gougeon in claiming that Emerson's central argument is against the dissolution of the United States (Strauch 4, Gougeon 71-2).

[3] The note for this letter explains that Emerson is referring to "The unsigned article in *The Edinburgh Review,* for Nov., 1822, on books about the partitions of Poland" ("To John" 134).

[4] Emerson knew of the Polish poet from Margaret Fuller, who befriended Mickiewicz in Europe and claimed that he was responsible for making Emerson's writing available to French readers. On March 15, 1847, Fuller wrote to Emerson, "Mickiewicz, the Polish Poet, first introduced the Essays to acquaintances in Paris. I did not meet him anywhere, and, as I heard a great deal of him which charmed me, I sent him your poems, and asked him to come and see me" ("To Ralph" 261-2).

[5] Other references to Poland in Emerson's journal include: "Partitions" on January 10, 1824 ("Wide World 12" 212), "Locke & Poland" on November 30, 1830 ("Blotting Book PSI" 212-3), "an appeal for the Poles" on November 25, 1837 ("Journal C" 440), and "the annals of Poland" in July 1842 ("Journal G" 28).

[6] Sigmund Freud's theory of projection is the structuring methodology of my study. According to Freud, "In paranoia, the self-reproach is repressed. . . . In this way, the subject withdraws his knowledge of the self-reproach," and the repressed guilt is "projected into the external world" ("Further Remarks" 184; "Letter" 112). In another instance, he rephrases this slightly, noting that what is "abolished internally returns from without" ("Notes" 71). Freud furthermore explains that projection works in a similar way with fears. A person projects an internal anxiety that returns as an "external danger" (Freud, "The Unconscious" 184). I argue that nineteenth-century U.S. writers project peculiarly American guilt and fear onto Poland that "return" in certain texts. My use of the uncanny in relation to the United States and

Poland is akin to Jesse Alemán's use of it for the United States in Mexico in his article, "The Other Country: Mexico, the United States, and the Gothic History of Conquest."

[7] For Poles, the primary site of revolution seems to have been a shared struggle against an oppressive power. Many Poles who went to Haiti in the early nineteenth century to fight for the French against the Haitians "so admired the their enemy" in the struggle for "fundamental freedoms" that they "eventually sided with the revolutionaries" (Abbott 155; Dapía 5).

[8] Elizabeth Fries Lummis Ellet, a writer for popular periodicals, was "the first American historian of women" as well as a translator of "European legends and fairytales" (Diamant, "Introduction," 1; "The Author" 9).

[9] Living the majority of his life west of the Mississippi River, J. Ross Browne was known for chronicling life and his adventures in the American West (Wild 9). During the early years of the Civil War, Browne lived in and journeyed through Europe (Wild 39). From his experiences, Browne wrote two travel narratives (39). *The Land of Thor* chronicles his "walking tour through parts of Russia, the Baltic countries, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. . . ." (40). Austrian Poland, though not specifically mentioned by Wild, is one of the countries Browne visited and wrote about during this time.

[10] Ellis Gray was a frequent contributor of children's stories to *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1877, she published *Long Ago,* a "juvenile book" of interrelated tales ("Editor's Literary" 471).

[11] "From Washington" in an 1865 issue of *The New York Tribune* notes that any Poles who emigrated to the United States after the 1863 revolution could "be assured of the most

ardent sympathies of this nation for their unhappy condition, and its admiration of the bravery of their struggles, and in all those civilities that may be properly tendered, this country will emulate the noble example of her sister republic" (5). A June 1865 issue of *The Freedom Centinel* reports about the need for a colony in the United States for "the Polish exiles" of the revolution, "who would doubtless be a valuable acquisition to our industrial population" ("Immigrants from" 2). A brief note in an 1867 issue of the *Commercial Advertiser* informs readers of "one hundred [Polish] immigrants" to Texas, who are "happy, contented and giving complete satisfaction" ("Southern Items" 4).

[12] The original source is in German: Weber, Alfred. "Eine neu entdeckte Kurzgeschichte C. B. Brown." *Jahrbuch fur Amerikastudien* 8.1 (1963): 280-281.

[13] America's attempt to continue trading with the French while England and France were at war angered Britain and almost caused the U.S. a war (Wood 239-40, 275). When the U.S. finally made peace with England, France grew angry with America over trade agreements, and a war loomed on that horizon (Estes 15-31).

[14] Just one year after the second partition, the celebrated Thaddeus Koscuiszko led a revolution in Poland. The fighting began in March and continued for the better part of the year. From the beginning, Russian troops outnumbered the Poles, and the revolution was put down on November 4, 1794. Inevitably, the third partition of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria followed. With this final blow, the country no longer existed on the European map. Now, Poland was wholly under the control of Russia, Prussia and Austria (Davies, vol. 1, 511-541).

[15] Published in 1805, "Somnambulism" is a forerunner to Irving's *The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon*, which was published in 1819 and "is still considered the starting point of the American short story" (Scheiding and Siedl 67). However, Brown terms his tale a "fragment" instead of a narrative (5). Cody argues that with the newspaper "extract" at the beginning and the "elliptical dashes" that start and end the tale "Brown indicates that more of the story exists beyond the confines of the printed text of the fragment" (42). The form of the tale thus suggests two things: there are facts of the story that readers cannot know because they fall outside of the dashes, and there are things locked in Althorpe's subconscious that he cannot know because they fall outside the bounds of his wakeful state.

[16] While he would not have had the psychological knowledge or vocabulary to explain it in this way (he was about one hundred years too early), Darwin is skirting the edges of Freudian thought by hinting at the difference between the conscious and the unconscious mind.

[17] This enthusiastic support continued even after the Polish were defeated. As soon as the uprising was over, the United States government extended a hand to the Poles, inviting refugees of the revolution to come to America for asylum (Gladsky 13-14). Writers also joined in; many penned poetry, stories and plays "inspired by the events of 1830-31," and in these pieces of literature, "without exception, Poles are presented in positive, almost glowing terms" (Gladsky 16).

[18] For more information on Poe's political leanings, see David A. Long article. Although Poe "despised" politics in general, Long explains that he "was a conservative who honored both literary and political conventions in the breach, and who thereby conceived his

own radical status quo. Obsessed with personal control, contemptuous of majority opinion, appalled by unregulated social change, he at once personified the mainstream conservative viewpoint of the 1840s and exposed its inherent liabilities. Though estranged from the American political system and mortally offended by its cultural consequences, Poe labored within and against the system" (D. Long 6, 2).

[19] Though Poe's interest in fighting in Poland was obviously influenced by the concurrent sympathy that almost all of America felt toward the uprising, Hutchisson also points out that Poe may have also been moved by Lafayette's sympathy toward the rebellion. As Hutchisson relates, Poe's grandfather "had fought in the Revolutionary War and… was revered as a great patriot… After his death, Lafayette visited the elder Poe's grave and was reputed to have called him 'un coeur noble'—a noble heart." (5). Further, his sympathy for Poland may have arisen from the fact that Poe saw himself as a "disinherited aristocrat" (D. Long 3). Since the Poles themselves could at this time be described as 'disinherited' or dispossessed aristocrats, Poe may have felt an affinity for their plight on that level as well.

[20] For a psychoanalytic reading, see Brewster 120-137. For a comparison of mesmerism in the story to the telegraph, see Frank 635-662. For a comparison of Poe's mesmerism to Edison's phonograph, see Enns 61-82.

[21] Jędrzejko notes that after the conference "The two first Polish-language scholarly books on Melville [came] out," that "Melville . . . books are bought and read", and that "Melville . . . MA dissertations are being written in Poland" (79).

[22] Thomas McLean also points out that the novel was among Melville's books (72). The copy of Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in Melville's library is inscribed with the name "'Augusta Melville,'" Herman Melville's sister (Sealts 86).

[23] The war referenced in the beginning of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is "The Russo-Polish War of 1792-3, or the War of the Second Partition as it was later called . . ." (Davies, vol. 1, 535).

[24] Most Northern Democrats during this time supported the antislavery cause and so firmly opposed "slavery extension" into territories gained in the Mexican American War (Schlesinger 524). At the same time, most supported the war itself (Schlesinger 521-3).

[25] In focusing on and historicizing a small detail, Antonio Barrenechea takes up the issue of imperialism in the novel in a way that is similar to my own project. Reading Melville's "The Doubloon" chapter alongside historical documents of colonial South America, Barrenechea focuses on Captain Ahab's doubloon, positing that the coin links the novel and the United States to colonies in South and Central America (19). Because of this link, he argues, Melville is "a New World author who extends . . . the colonial legacy of the Americas," even as he critiques the imperialistic tendencies and actions of his country (20, 29).

[26] Melville uses a similar phrase to refer to Austria, Prussia and Russia in his 1856 short story "I and My Chimney." The tale is about a man who loves the oddly shaped chimney in the middle of his house and who refuses, even at his wife and daughters' insistence, to tear it down, build a better chimney and make improvements to his house. Near the end of the tale, the man states, "Not more ruthlessly did the Three Powers partition away

poor Poland, than my wife and daughters would fain partition away my chimney" (375). Various scholars have read "I and My Chimney" as Melville's commentary on the historical realities of the nineteenth century. Emery reads the narrator's defense of his chimney as Melville's ironic and "colorful portrait of the American political system, centered around a federal Union" (218). Melville uses the chimney to evaluate this system, positing that while it had served America well after the Revolutionary War, in the 1850s it is "unresponsive to . . . local needs and concerns," "complicated," and immoral (218-9). Also, doing historical readings of the story, Sowder argues that "I and My Chimney" is Melville's commentary on "slavery," while Stein contends it is Melville's commentary on "the character of religious faith in his times" (Sowder 129; Stein 63).

[27] There is some scholarship that specifically takes up the phrase "loose-fish" in *Moby-Dick.* In an analysis of the novel's history which focuses on *Moby-Dick's* "various manifestations in manuscript, print, and other cultural artifacts," Bryant argues that the text itself "is what Ishmael might call a 'loose-fish'" (37). Specifically the words and meaning of the novel are "the loose-fish," what we as readers must hunt for and catch (55). Rodden uses Ishmael's phrase to characterize the culture of literary scholars in the modern era and earlier. These "antediluvian" intellectuals of the past are, he states, "'loose-fish'" who "thrived near-exclusively on a diet of print culture, thereby dwelling in an entirely different cultural climate from their postmodern successors" (177). Finally, in explaining his pedagogical approach to Melville's great novel, Lamb compares university students who "fall . . . in love" with *Moby-Dick* to "fast-fish for life" who then become "loose-fish," carrying their love of the novel into the wider world (44).

[28] Wai-chee Dimock also sees a profound connection between imperialism and slavery in *Moby-Dick.* For Dimock, freedom is comparable to ambergris and the doubloon in Melville's novel. The two objects stand out as "untouchable and immaculate" because they are both "accompanied by something distinctly unmarvelous"—a dead whale and an aging ship (185). Similarly, freedom is only "marvelous" when it is in the presence of its opposite (185). In other words, "the inviolate needs a corrupt world to prove its inviolability" (185). Like the doubloon and ambergris, freedom in the "American Empire" of "'liberty,'" Dimock argues, "is haunted always by its obverse" (196, 208). That obverse is "Indian Removal," slavery, and the cultural fear of "vengeance" in return for both (196, 199, 198).

[29] It may be that Melville, who lived in Troy when the above article ran in New York City's *Evening Post,* never read Montalembert's account of the massacre. However, he had ample opportunity to read newspaper articles about the relationship between serfdom, the Cracow Uprising and the liberty of Poland as a nation.

[30] At the end of his report about Nat Turner's rebellion, Higginson makes a connection to the 1830-31 revolution in Poland. He writes, "While these things were going on, the enthusiasm for the Polish Revolution was rising to its height. The nation was ringing with a peal of joy, on hearing that at Frankfort the Poles had killed fourteen thousand Russians. The *Southern Religious Telegraph* was publishing an impassioned address to Kosciuszko; standards were being consecrated for Poland in the larger cities; heroes like Skrzynecki, Czartoryski, Rozyski, Raminski, where choking the trump of Fame with their complicated patronymics. These are all forgotten now; and this poor negro, who did not even

possess a name, beyond one abrupt monosyllable,—for even the name of Turner was the master's property,—still lives, a memory of terror, and a symbol of wild retribution" (212).

[31] The slave insurrection in Haiti began at St. Domingue in the end of 1791 (Heinl and Heinl 52). The insurrection was incredibly violent. In St. Domingue, "the mob pillaged, plundered, burned, and killed" (52). Heinl and Heinl continue, "Everywhere, enraged *homes de couleur* turned on former white allies . . ." (52). The violence sparked into a war that finally ended in 1804 (123).

[32] There are significant passages about amber in "the *Natural History* of Gaius Plinius Secundus—Pliny the Elder—and the *Germania* of Cornelius Tacitus" (Ley 5-6). After this, the history of the amber trade is sketchy until the mid-thirteenth century. Records show that the "Order of the Teutonic Knights" controlled the trade from this time until the mid-fifteenth century (13). In 1480, merchants and artisans in Gdánsk (Danzig) gained rights to make amber goods. This spurred a competition for control of the market between the Order and the city (14). In the early 1500s, "Paul Koehn von Jaski, head a wealthy family of merchants in Danzig, signed an agreement which simply transferred the amber monopoly to his house" (16). A little over a hundred years later, Frederick William of Prussia, bought Koehn von Jaski out, and amber remained "State Property" until the early 1800s (16). For a short period "from 1811 to 1836," the monopoly fell under private ownership again (26).

[33] Fuller's letter is dated March 29, 1848. During this time, Italy "was divided into independent states. Apart from the minuscule principalities of San Marino and Monaco, there were three kingdoms, three sovereign duchies, and the extensive temporal possessions of the papacy" (D. Smith 55). "Revolutionary" movements and/or conflicts happened in all these

sections of Italy during the year Fuller wrote her letter (D. Smith 55). Though Rome itself did not experience a full-on conflict as Venice and Milan did in March 1848, there were demonstrations and considerable support for ongoing revolutionary movements elsewhere (D. Smith 64-5).

[34] Rebecca Spring, "a Quaker philanthropist and supporter of William Channing's New York Prison Association," was a woman Fuller became friends with some time before she left for Europe (Marshall 244).

[35] In areas of Poland in 1848, there was support for revolutionary movements and "the ideal of the brotherhood of nations" spurred by revolutions in other countries, but they came to nothing in the end (Lukowski and Zawadzki 170). Prussia and Austria quickly extinguished dissidence in their sections of Poland, while nothing happened in Russian Poland (169-70).

[36] Revolution was "in the air" in Europe on 1848. Rapport puts it this way: "In 1848, a violent storm of revolutions tore through Europe" (ix). A revolutionary conflict in Paris was the main catalyst; from there "it swept eastwards through Germany and the Habsburg monarchy within a very short space of time only to be stopped at the western boundaries of tsarist Russia. It also reinvigorated the revolutionary movement in Italy, which had started a few weeks earlier . . ." (Pogge Von Strandmann, "1848-1849" 1).

[37] Gladsky writes that Susan Morgan takes up the issue of Polish Catholicism in *The Swiss Heiress* (21). He explains, "For Susan Morgan, Catholicism is perhaps the one national characteristic that tarnishes Poland. *Swiss Heiress* deals in part with Protestant-Catholic

animosity, as Morgan's heroine resists the courtship of a Polish count precisely because he is Catholic" (21).

[38] The text associates other traits with Polishness—idleness and immorality, for instance—but the two I have mentioned are the traits that male characters utilize when they seek to oppress other characters.

[39] Kosciuszko was originally from "the Brest region of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth" (Storozynski 3). For his schooling in Paris, he "enrolled at the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture," secretly "attend[ed] the École Militaire or the military engineering academy . . ." (12). After this, he fought in the American Revolutionary War. For his part in the war, the American government granted him both land and money, which he wanted to use "for the manumission and education of African slaves" (235).

[40] Kosciuszko famously had a deep scar on his forehead (Storozynski 219). Besides Alexander Kalouga and Nickolas Waugh, there are two other representations of the beau ideal in the novel. Both are women: Marie Zelenski and Edith Waugh. Referred to as the "heroic" wife of Alexander Kalouga, Marie is the Polish matriarch of the Kalouga line (24). Though she takes up even less narrative space than her husband, she, like him, imbues her descendants with the traits of the beau ideal. Southworth gives no specific details about Marie's heroism, but readers can surmise about her character by looking to Nickolas Waugh's niece, Edith, of whom Nickolas says, "A true descendent of Marie Zelenski, is she!" (83). He gives the exclamation after he finds out that Edith has saved Luckenough by standing up to the British soldiers who threatened to plunder and pillage the manor during the War of 1812. As women of Polish heritage—one ostensibly taking after the other in deeds of

heroism—who stand up courageously to forces of oppression, Marie and Edith offer readers a rare glimpse of the female version of the idealized Pole in American literature.

[41] Southworth's reference to Alexander Kalouga as a "buccaneer" would seem to suggest that he was one of the "late seventeenth-century buccaneers" (Lane 96). During the late 1600s, "individuals of many nationalities could come together freely in loose bands, embark from a variety of Caribbean bases, and make a living, virtually unhindered, by pillage" (96). These pirates were violent and menacing, and many specifically targeted Spanish-held territories (97). Because Alexander left England in 1605 after the Gunpowder Plot, however, and arrived in the New World in 1634, his buccaneer life was too early for him to have been one of these buccaneers. The dates of Alexander's life events make it much more likely for him to have joined a "Dutch sea-rover" (Lane 63). Lane notes that "After the turn of the seventeenth century, Dutch privateering, or piracy, was a business. . . ." that flourished due to the "generalized state of war and rebellion" between Spain and the Netherlands (63, 62). Sea-rovers were especially interested in targeting Spanish territories in South and Central America and the Caribbean (63, 73).

[42] "Montgomery" is a name of Scottish origin.

[43] During the Civil War, the Northern states were "desperately seeking a European ally to offset the political threat from England and France . . ." (Pula, *Polish* 11). Also needing an ally and afraid that "England and France would intervene on the side of the Polish insurgents in 1863," the "czar sent his fleets on extended visits to New York and San Francisco . . ." (Pula, *Polish* 11). This new alliance meant "that Northerners were no longer willing to give their unqualified moral and financial support to Poland" (Pula, *Polish* 11).

[44] "Laddie" and "my boy" both refer to Ladislas.

[45] To her friend Alfred Whitman, she writes, "'Laurie' is you & my Polish boy 'jintly.' You are the sober half & my Ladislas (whom I met abroad) is the gay whirligig half, he was a perfect dear" ("To Alfred" 120).

[46] Established by John O'Mahony "in 1858," the Fenian Brotherhood was a group of Irish "republican radicals [in the United States] who called for Irish independence from British imperialism . . ." (McGovern and Steward xii). The "most inscrutable secret societ[y]" the "committee of the brotherhood" refers to in the interview was a branch of the Reds' "'Provisional National Government'" (Lukowski and Zawadzki 178). Specifically, the branch was "a security corps of so-called 'stiletto-men'" who committed acts of "terror . . . against Russian officials and their Polish collaborators" in 1863 and 1864 (Lukowski and Zawadzki 179).

[47] The notice for "Count John Dzjalynzski, Polish Patriot" ran in the April 20, 1880 *New York Herald* (6). The obituary memorialized him as part of "an ancient and opulent family," "a profound scholar," and "one of the organizers of the Polish insurrection of 1863, for which he made considerable sacrifices, and in which he took an active part" (6). Another notice entitled "Funeral of a Polish Patriot" memorialized "Colonel Xavier Zeltner, the friend of General Kosciuszko" (3). Finally, on January 10, 1881, the *New York Herald* printed the obituary of "Prince Adam Constantin Czartoryski, Polish Statesman" (10). Czartoryski, the notice explains, "was a nephew of the celebrated 'Constitutional King of Poland, Prince Adam George Czartoryski (1770-1861), who was the leader of he Polish insurrection of 1830 . . ." (10).

[48] According to the "Poles in America Foundation" website, Kalussowski was a "Linguist, politician and historian" who "Came to the U.S. in 1842 as a political refugee" ("Kalussowski" par. 1). Of some repute in the United States, Kalussowski's name appears in a number of American newspapers from the mid to late nineteenth century. In one example, the New York *Spectator* of February 13, 1840 includes a note entitled, "Mr. Kalussowski's Lectures." The beginning of the note reads, "It was announced . . . a few days ago, that Colonel Kalussowski, a Polish officer, was contemplating the delivery of a course of lectures on the history, language and literature of Poland" (1). A copy of Kalussowski's address at West Point, which covers the life of Kosciuszko, is in Evans's research notes for the Kosciuszko memoir. Certainly, it was one of his sources for the text.

[49] The Eagle of the Society of the Cincinnati was so important to Kosciuszko that Evans asserts, "he wore [it] on his breast . . . in the bloodiest battles he fought for his own country" (3). Hume furthermore writes, "Kosciuszko wore the Eagle of the Cincinnati in America and in Poland, and ever felt that it typified that freedom and independence which he sought to achieve for his native land, just as he had aided America to attain them" (4).

[50] Castle Garden was the "immigration station" in New York "from 1860 until Ellis Island opened in 1892" (Seitz and Miller 182)

[51] According to *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography,* "From 1845 until 1850 he was engaged as resident engineer on the construction of the Harlem railroad. . . . In 1850 he went to Chili to construct the Copiapo railroad . . ." (84). After that, he went to Peru, where he was "chief engineer of the Arica and Tacua railroad" (84). From 1856-59, he was "chief engineer of [Chile's] southern railway" (84).

[52] In Evans's journal entries, there is little to no punctuation. In each instance that I have quoted from his journals, I have added periods for clarity.

[53] Under the leadership of General Ivan Fersen, Russia attacked Warsaw in the fall of 1794 (Storozynski 197). After their failure to take the city, Catherine the Great enlisted General Suvorov, "her most talented commander" to join Fersen "to form one massive army" (Storozynski 204-5). Aware of this news, Kosciuszko "decided that he had no choice but to strike at Fersen before he could combine his troops with Suvorov's to form one massive army" (205). Kosciuszko left Warsaw, gathered as many troops as he could from the surrounding areas, and met up with Fersen's army at Maciejowice, where the Poles were severely outnumbered (205-6). The battle took place on October 10; the Poles lost (208).

[54] Evans's account of Kosciuszko's injuries is for the most part accurate. After being flung from his fourth horse, "A Cossack caught Kosciuszko from behind and stabbed him in the back with a long pike. Another Cossack trotted up and rammed a second pike through his left hip, puncturing his sciatic nerve" (Storozynski 208). Still conscious after this, Kosciuszko attempted to shoot himself, but his gun had no bullets left. At that point, he lost consciousness (Storozynski 208).

[55] The final story of what became of Kosciuszko's American money is more complicated than Evans suggests. Storozynski writes that Kosciuszko "had written four separate wills, each referring to a different pool of money that was destined for specific beneficiaries" (279). This became problematic. After Kosciuszko's death, various people tried to obtain the money given to him by the United States; "the Zeltners, Kosciuszko Armstrong, Kosciuszko's heirs in Poland, and even several imposters sued to get the funds,

and the legal entanglements dragged on for years" (282). There is evidence that while the legal battles were going on, the last executor of Kosciuszko's American will, Colonel George Bomford, spent all but "$5,680" of the money given by the United States (282). Storozynski notes that "At that point, Kosciuszko's estate was worth $43,504" (282). Eventually, "The various lawsuits concerning Kosciuszko's wills wound their way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in 1852 that the four wills were invalid . . ." (282).

[56] Storozynski confirms that Kosciuszko was devoted to charity during his later years and that he "gave away" the majority of his funds to the poor in and around Soleure (272). The biographer does not confirm Evans's anecdote about the Zeltners giving Kosciuszko a loan. This does not mean the story isn't factual. However, it is worth noting that Kosciuszko at one point loaned money to a member of the Zeltner family who "never repaid the loans" (275). This kind of situation seems to have happened to Kosciuszko more than once, as Storozynski comments, "he was willing to share everything he had, causing some people to take advantage of him" (274-5).

[57] In reality, these immigrants made up vibrant and multifaceted Polish communities in the United States (Pula, *Polish* 20). They developed Polish Catholic churches, schools, and "religious societies" (21). Moreover, they "were producers and consumers of the written word" (Majewski 15). Majewski writes that they produced not only a "great number of Polish-language newspapers," but also "religious tracts, installment fiction, poetry, [and] dramas" (1). Partly because of the language barrier and partly because of ignorance and fear, Americans looking at Polish communities from the outside in "did not fully understand either the complexity of immigrant society or the degree to which its values and organization

represented an ordered adaptation of Polish rural culture to the demands of an urban industrial society" (Pula, *Polish* 20).

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