

Modernity in Question
Studies in Philosophy and History of Ideas 14

Wojciech Tomasik

Insane Run

Railroad and Dark Modernity



PETER LANG

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This is a book about impending catastrophe. The metaphorical insane “run” ends with the outbreak of the First World War. The book focuses on European culture of the late nineteenth century and the Polish contribution to it. The word “dark” used to describe modernity is understood as a metaphor of gradual and permanent devaluation of the idea of progress, as a fading hope for the future of Europe as bright, predictable, prosperous, and safe. The “darkening” also receives a literal sense. At the end of the nineteenth century, darkness found its way back to the public space – in the theaters, panoramas, dioramas, and “love tunnels”, which awaited the visitors of American and European amusement parks.

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Edited by Małgorzata Kowalska

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Translated by Mikołaj Golubiewski, Jan Burzyński, and Łukasz Dorociński



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Introduction

On an illustrated correspondence card, I saw a witty drawing depicting Jungfrau mountain as a charming virgin, and the neighboring mountain Mönch as a harsh old man, who looks in horror at the locomotive climbing the serpentine tracks and passing the tunnels of the virgin mountain, and then bitterly cries out: Fin de siècle!

– Teofil Gerstmann, “Letters from Switzerland”, *Gazeta Lwowska*, 183/1898.

Even a great disaster brings progress.

– Marion K. Pinsdorf, “Engineering Dreams Into Disaster: History of the Tay Bridge”, *Business and Economic History*, 2/1997.

This is a book about impending catastrophe. The metaphorical “insane run” ends in the outbreak of the First World War, as my narrative stops on June 1914 and crosses this temporal threshold only on several occasions. Moreover, this is a book about smaller-scale catastrophes, which from today’s perspective were harbingers of the greater disaster of war. However, allow me to calm you, dear readers, this book focuses on European culture of the late nineteenth century and the Polish contribution. *Insane Run* describes the period called “fin de siècle,” “la belle époque,” or “modernism.” Thus, the book reflects on a period that, on the one hand, was part of a whole sometimes called by experts “the long nineteenth century” and, on the other hand, it was easily distinguishable from that whole. The double status of this period at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries occasionally leads to terminological misunderstandings. The word “modernism” sometimes labels the whole culture of the nineteenth century, but it may also serve to capture only those elements that enriched the culture at the turn of the nineteenth century. In my book, I will consequently refer to modernism in the first sense as “modernity,” and the period identified as modernity with the term “epoch of modernity.” In this epoch, I will focus on its last decades – which is modernism in the second sense – and justify my argument that the two form a peculiar unity.

The word “dark” in the subtitle expresses this peculiarity, characteristic for the epoch of modernity in two ways. The “darkening” should be understood as a metaphor of gradual and permanent devaluation of the ideal of progress, as a fading of hope that grew on the ground of rationalism, which painted the future

of Europe as bright, predictable, prosperous, and safe; subject to bold and far-sighted projects. These hopes were long ignited by the dynamic development of science and technology. No invention served these hopes better than the steam engine; with no other invention did nineteenth-century people establish a closer and more durable relationship. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, railroad lines became an important part of the cultural landscape of the West. And it is the railroad that most clearly shows the insane run of modernity. In the moving locomotive, the modern world saw a symbol that confirmed the main direction of civilizational changes: the endeavor to subject nature to humans completely, so that it would be fully controlled. To make the most of nature, to tailor it to the human needs, to supplement it, to remake it, and to tune it rational “gardening” plans. The main impulse for these ventures stemmed from a philosophy captured by the popular metaphor of light: the “enlightenment.” The Enlightenment thought supports the birth of modernity, owing its radicalism to the event compared today with the cataclysm of the First World War: the Great Lisbon earthquake of November 1, 1755.

In contemporary research devoted to modern culture, we find an idea that modernity and catastrophes create an interdependent system, that the entire cultural nineteenth century develops as a derivative of conclusions from cataclysms and technological disasters.¹ Those conclusions were often diverse and sometimes ingeniously practical. The rebuilt Lisbon was planned differently, as the city center saw a strict regulation of construction works, available only with a permit. Much more resistant to underground shocks than the ones destroyed, the new buildings emerged from a uniform plan carefully prepared by military engineers. Wide boulevards and vast squares replaced narrow winding streets of the capital city of Portugal. Lisbon became an urban structure that was better adapted to the needs of trade and one could now manage the city easier and more effectively: it was now a modern city. However, the 1755 Lisbon earthquake proved to be productive not only in the sphere of construction and – more broadly – social practice. It also gave a powerful impulse to the formation of opposition against treating cataclysms in religious terms: as a call to repentance and penance for sins. From resistance to passivity, there arose the Enlightenment rebellion against the indifference of God, against the unpredictable nature and

1 H. Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity: Twelve Preludes, September 1959–May 1961*, trans. J. Moore, New York, 1995; K. Rozario, *The Culture of Calamity: Disaster and The Making of Modern America*, Chicago, 2007; M.-H. Huet, *The Culture of Disaster*, Chicago, 2012; J. C. Alexander, *The Dark Side of Modernity*, Cambridge, 2013.

its uncontrollable blind forces. The productivity of disasters is the most visible in case of disasters with the greatest range and the highest number of victims. Therefore, we may compare the Enlightenment shock caused by the 1755 Lisbon earthquake – later strengthened by the events of the French Revolution – to the size of the cultural transformations perpetuated by the First World War. This war affected the entire history of the twentieth century, as the atmosphere of postwar trauma engendered later radical political ideas. Fascism and communism emerged from pacifism and populism. The former stemmed from the moods of maimed young people returning from the front, while the latter from the conviction of elite's betrayal and the conviction that European liberalism was ineffective as it neither managed to resist the war nor mitigate its effects. National Socialism surfaced from the humiliating defeat of the Germans and the conviction that the theory of evolution provides justification for the policy of "social hygiene" and legitimizes racist aspirations.

Henri Lefebvre views the relationship between modernity and catastrophes more radically. He declares that the concept of modernity primarily filled with content the statements and discussions of those who had to face the "darker" parts of the modern world and those who sought to answer why – against loud announcements and widespread expectations – the modern world constantly engendered social crises, contradictions, and confusion. Why did the progress of knowledge and technological development not eliminate but often increased human suffering?² The assumption of such a relationship makes it easier to understand why the last decades of the nineteenth century proved particularly culturally productive. In other words, it helps understand why modernism only fully concentrated and emerged at the end of the century, though its features appear throughout the period? The end of the "long nineteenth century" (1880–1914) bristled with various "darker" elements. They had diverse characters and ranges, but my book focuses exclusively on the case of railroad disasters. I want to show how railroad events influenced European culture, how were they productive, what traces have they left in our symbolic space, and for how long did these traces remain. The expression "dark modernity" becomes clearer when seen from the following standpoint: I am interested in the "shadows" that – as it turns out – form the necessary backdrop of enlightened optimism. For the "darkening" of the epoch of modernity meant that its philosophical backbone was increasingly often and intensely used to defend the dreams of a happy, safe, and fully predictable order. One that can be achieved by the efficient use of knowledge and

2 Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity*, p. 2.

technology. One in which the individual's freedom will not suffer when ensuring the security of whole communities.

Each railroad disaster "darkened" the age of modernity. However, it is hard to resist the impression that the most productive day recorded in the history of the West was December 28, 1879, when a hurricane struck a bridge, which partly collapsed, taking with it the passing train, killing all of its passengers and the entire train crew.³ The Tay Bridge disaster shook Europe so badly that its echoes silenced only after the sinking of the RMS *Titanic*.⁴ This tragic event occurred in a place where modernity first showed its bright colors. The bridge at the mouth of the Tay River, the longest engineering feat of its time, was a work that inspired well-founded pride. Its designer, Thomas Bouch, gained fame and the title of a noble. Shortly after the opening ceremony on June 1878, Bouch traversed the bridge in a train with Queen Victoria as a warranty of its safety. At the end of December 1879, only after fifteen months of exploitation, a hurricane tore off the highest section of the bridge (high girders) along with the passing train. The report after the crash did not leave any doubts: the design of the bridge was poor as it did not account for wind forces, the construction was poor especially due to low-quality iron, and the maintenance was lacking. But if it was not for the conclusions from this tragedy, a second safer bridge that serves travelers to this day would have never been built. Conclusions from the Tay Bridge disaster influenced the structural safeguards applied to an even larger object: the bridge at the mouth of the Forth River. The disaster of December 1879 affected technological progress: more resistant elements made of steel took the place of cast iron constructions.

Almost every major railroad disaster from the end of the nineteenth century energized the cogs of modernization. In this sense, the disasters were culturally productive. After the catastrophe outside of the Irish city of Armagh in June 1889, British railroads introduced legal provisions that oblige carriers to use automatic brakes for the wheels of all coaches of the passenger train, which also stops the coaches at the moment of train formation breakdown. The earlier organization of train operations, based on time intervals, was replaced by blocking, which

3 Here I use J. Thomas, *The Tay Bridge Disaster. New Light on the 1879 Tragedy*, Newton Abbot, 1972; M. K. Pinsdorf, "Engineering Dreams Into Disaster. History of the Tay Bridge," *Business and Economic History* 2/1997.

4 A Polish newspaper recalled the disaster after over half a century, "Straszliwa katastrofa kolejowa, z której nikt nie wyszedł żywy. 250 pasażerów z całą obsługą pociągu zginęło w nurtach rzeki" (A terrible railroad disaster nobody survived. 250 passengers and staff died in the currents of a river), *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* 5/1934.

prevented a situation in which two trains would moving in the same direction would simultaneously appear on the same line. The American catastrophe in the Cascade Range on March 1, 1910, became a powerful catalyst to undertake research into the formation and development of snow avalanches. The beginning of modern psychiatry also coincides with the golden age in the development of railroad communication: the root of this branch of medicine were accidents and disabilities of previously unknown etiology. These are the insomnia that may occur among survivors after an incident, sudden anxiety attacks even among the unharmed by a disaster, or post-accidental “nervous fatigue.” The development of the modern insurance system would not have happened so quickly if it were not for the risks posed by the increase in train speed and the systematically increasing passenger traffic.

When the bridge over the Tay River collapsed, the event almost instantly found its reflection in art. In order to present the post-accidental scenery in the press, sketch artists used photographs or visited the site. The visual representation of the crash site was supplemented with numerous meticulous verbal reports. Almost instantly, the echoes of the tragedy emerged in literature. A literary historian can easily name a dozen works – including broadside ballads – usually written by amateur poets and disseminated in regions close to the site.⁵ These usually clumsy literary efforts may serve as the measure for the cultural productivity of a catastrophe. What is important for these anonymous ballads

5 The list, probably incomplete, consists of A. A. C., “The Bridge,” *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 1880 (January 15); D. B., “The Tay Bridge Disaster,” *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 1880 (January 6); “Fall of Tay Bridge” (broadside ballad); G. C. S., “The Signalman’s Dream,” *Dundee, Perth, Forfar, and Fife’s People’s Journal* 1880 (January 10); D. Grant, “The Catastrophe at Tay Bridge December 28, 1879,” *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 1880 (November 18); “In Memory of the Tay Bridge Disaster” (broadside ballad); J. C. S., “The Bridge” (first line: “O, bridge of sights! O, bridge of sights!...”), *Dundee, Perth, Forfar, and Fife’s People’s Journal* 1880 (January 10); J. S. M., “In Memoriam,” *Dundee, Perth, Forfar, and Fife’s People’s Journal* 1880 (January 10); “Lamentable Lines on the Tay Bridge Disaster” (broadside ballad), “Tay Bridge” (broadside ballad; first line: “Christmas Time While Mirth Abounded. . .”), “Tay Bridge; December 28, 1879,” *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 1880 (January 6); “The Tay Bridge Disaster” (broadside ballad). The list becomes more complete with the most famous poem about the tragedy – and most often published – by William McGonagall, “*The Tay Bridge Disaster*,” *The Railroad Bridge of the Silvery Tay and Other Disasters. Selected from the Works of William McGonagall, Poet and Tragedian, Died In Edinburgh September 29, 1902*, London, 1972.

is mostly the very fact that they appeared, that the tragic circumstances forced someone to write, that people could not remain silent.⁶

The “darkening” of modernity was a very productive process for culture. Since the idea of modernity stems from the longing for a safe and predictable reality, it must have sought an ally in the continuously developing technology. However, technological development meant that train speed and precision of operations made railroad network a combination increasingly sensitive to disturbances, thus susceptible to disasters of unpredictable consequences. Therefore, at the turn of the centuries, culture had to solve problems that it partly created. I would like to connect the “darkening” in the previously outlined meaning with the one understood literally. At the end of the nineteenth century, there began a quite unusual process. Darkness found its way back to the public space, which until then had been systematically and effectively enlightened. Since many experts call the nineteenth century as the time of the “colonization of night,” then the end of that period marks the triumphant return of darkness – in the theaters, in the auditorium, in panoramas, dioramas, and “love tunnels” that awaited the visitors of American and European amusement parks.⁷ Therefore, this book is about catastrophes and about the new technologized media. It is about culture, in which a disaster becomes a commodity like everything else, a huge emotional load sold on a massive scale during film screenings and through devices installed in modern amusement parks.

At the end of his monograph, Kevin Rozario analyzes how the premodern understanding of catastrophe as a result of human sins returned in reports on Hurricane Katrina, which ravaged New Orleans. However, in the case of the dramatic events in 2005, people did not write or talk about their sins against God but, instead, underlined the disrespectful way of treating nature and its terrible consequences.⁸ Such perspective on catastrophes was nothing new. In fact, it had sprouted much earlier, in the late years of the nineteenth century, as it intertwined with what we would now call “ecological awareness.” The modernization process

6 The Tay Bridge disaster received a literary commentary a few days after the disaster, on January 10, in *Die Gegenwart* newspaper ballad “Brück’ am Tay. (28. Dezember 1879)” by the prominent German author, Heinrich Theodor Fontane.

7 See also W. Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night. The Industrialization of Light In the Nineteenth Century*, trans. A. Davies, Berkeley, 1995; especially chapter “The Stage. The Darkening of the Auditorium.”

8 See also Rozario, “Epilogue. A Reckoning: Hurricane and the ‘Murder’ of New Orleans,” in: Rozario, *The Culture of Calamity*.

that covered almost all areas of life gained momentum and contributed to the “disenchanted world” and the weakening of religious foundations. In the Middle Ages, before undertaking the construction of a mine, people would pray to tame the earth spirits. Modernization meant that – before boring a tunnel – neither architects nor builders had to tame anyone. It sufficed to learn the laws of nature and thoroughly examine them to gain full control and use them to one’s advantage. Shortly after the Tay Bridge disaster, a poem appeared in a Dundee newspaper, the city most affected by the events. The first verses are:

In shame, O! Science, bow, / Weep for thy fallen crown, / Shed tears of blood / Upon
the flood / That hides thy great renown. // Where is thy triumph now? / And where thy
vaunted skill / To make all things / That Nature brings / Submissive to thy will?⁹

The poem discusses the sin of pride committed by the abstract Science. However, we know that it actually means the people who have laid their trust in the reliability of mathematical calculations, in the talent and knowledge of the architect, in the infallibility of the builders, and in the imperturbability of the timetable. The poems devoted to the Tay River disaster are filled with religious tone, doubt, and the fear of tomorrow, which may mean the lack of a loved one or the lack of certainty as to how things may develop. What may be called an increase in religious sentiments was not the only phenomenon that accompanied the Tay River disaster from December of 1879. It also resulted in a return to a vision of the world in which there is room for miracles, extraordinary events, and unpredictable solutions. More than two months after the disaster, the *Derby Daily Telegraph* reported on the discovery of mysterious objects that floated in the sea upon the shores of Norway. It turned out to be a railroad car. The writing on its side left no doubts. It was part of the train, which collapsed into the water along with the accursed bridge. There were still some clothes inside along with a travel bag with the initials “P.R.”¹⁰

Polish and European nature conservation movement owns a great deal to the modernization process. The idea for a national park in the Polish Tatra Mountains was formulated as a result of heated debate on the construction of a rack railroad that would lead up the Świnica mountain. It was a long and fierce debate. A very good description of it is the title of an article, which I use as the

9 A. A. C., *The Bridge*.

10 “The Tay Bridge Disaster. One of the Railroad Carriages Discovered on the Norwegian Coast,” *Derby Daily Telegraph* 1880 (March 5). The article states that the identification was possible thanks to the name of the transportation company, Edinburgh and Glasgow Railroad. However, the actual train belonged to North British Railroad.

final chapter of this book, “Zamach na Świnicę” (The Assassination of Świnica). To call the plan to make one of Tatra peaks accessible by means of a rack railroad an “assassination” requires one to personify nature, imbue it with features that make it an important living being that deserves and expects respect and tribute. One must first imbue the Earth punctured by railroad tunnels again with life, suffering, and memory. One must “reenchant” the illuminated undergrounds that thousands of travelers comfortably visit every day. The story *The Signalman* by Charles Dickens is one of the first testimonies to document how Mystery – not so long ago exiled by science – returns to the underground.¹¹

This book consists of five chapters, each accompanied by source texts for reference. That is, the readers will find in annexes the works that I deal with in the chapters. I wish to foreground works without reprints, which today are hardly available, sometimes completely forgotten, peacefully resting in the depths of oblivion. Thus, the annexes do not claim to illustrate the way railroad fed into the literature of the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth century in topics, themes, and images. Instead, I focused on but a few features of this literature and limited my selection to what the readers will not find anywhere else. The annexes supplement the five chapters of this book.

In the first chapter, “Gołuchowski Station and Other Attractions,” I concentrate on Bolesław Prus’s experiences from his short trip to Cracow and Wieliczka Salt Mine. I emphasize the underground part of his escapade, in which I recognize a new, “precinematic” type of experience. I investigate the “machine of vision,” which Wieliczka was at the end of the nineteenth century, when it produced spectacles comparable to those that would shortly become available during film screenings. For me, the essential moments of the thrilling experiences in Wieliczka are those, which soon after Prus’s visit appeared in the “cinema of attractions.” Hence, this chapter reflects on mass entertainment, which functionalizes darkness and the relative immobility of audience, not their complete passivity. In my opinion, the climax of underground wanderings was supposed to be the Gołuchowski Station, a structure that imitated the city and embodied the spirit of modernity. To show “where the cinema comes from,” I have selected Prus’s writings, because his works show the footprint of technological development in entertainment. In Prus’s late and little-known short story “Widziadła” he created the atmosphere of early film screenings.

11 I write about it in my book *Pociąg do nowoczesności. Szkice kolejowe* (Inclination for Modernity: Railroad Essays), Warsaw, 2014, in the chapter “Wizja tunelowa” (Tunnel Vision).

In the second chapter, “*A Kiss in the Tunnel*,” I am interested in the links between early cinema and railroads. I present the nineteenth century, which has at least several labels (the age of steam and electricity, the nervous age, the century of the industrial revolution), from the perspective that fascinated its contemporaries. For them, it was the “age of tunnels” and magnificent underground constructions, thought the greatest achievements of engineering. A tunnel stretching across miles such as an underground construction exemplifies a heterotopia, the space which Michel Foucault foregrounds as the one that resembles and contradicts its epoch at the same time. In the nineteenth century, this space is being tamed by means of two other heterotopic spaces: railroad and cinema. At the end of the nineteenth century, there emerges a particular type of joke, summarized by the title of a minute-long film: *A Kiss in a Tunnel*. Film productions strongly supported the process of taming tunnels – particularly the *phantom railroad ride* genre – along with traditional arts like literature, music, painting, and ballet. At the dawn of the twentieth century, amusement parks with their giant wheels, haunted houses, and “tunnels of love” developed the repertoire of tools used to imbue underground constructions more with familiarity.

In the third chapter, I focus on the cultural productivity of the tragic event of March 10, 1886 that happened in the vicinity of Monte Carlo. As my departure point, I select a short fragment of Andrzej Niemojowski’s poem, which appeared in his debut volume of poetry. This chapter considers the strategies of reporting tragedy. I decided to trace its two main types: canonical narratives sanctioned by law and “counternarratives,” which accentuate the fractures in the social reception of a tragedy, which allow us to speculate that tragic events enter the cultural space in various forms, depending on a community’s interests. I called one of the counternarratives the Polonization of catastrophe. A catastrophe divides – by generating narratives and counternarratives – but also connects. The Monte Carlo tragedy was an opportunity to bond around a traumatic experience, to demonstrate that in – a world drowning like a train – one also speaks and thinks in Polish.

The eponymous fourth chapter is a study of form, which researchers derive from the experiences of the French Revolution. In the subtitle, I call melodrama the railroad genre in order to demonstrate this “railroad” character in three examples. One of them can hardly be described as forgotten. It is Gustaw Daniłowski’s short story “Pociąg” (The Train), which owes its name mainly to the debate on its originality. In the analysis of the story, I try to show the transformation process of a melodramatic project – which I recognize in its first edition – changed with time, how the attractive structure of tested devices is used to enhance a propagandist message. Still a melodrama, “Pociąg” becomes a

work about a new political power and its institutional representation: the Polish Socialist Party. My deconstruction of the story creates an opportunity to comment on its originality. I defend Daniłowski by pointing to the melodramatic poetics of borrowings and repetitions.

The fifth chapter, “*The Assassination of Świnica*,” is an elaborate study of a discussion provoked by the project to construct a rack railroad from Zakopane to one of the Tatra peaks. Here, I foreground the culture that hegemonizes the visible. Nevertheless, I begin by analyzing the popularity of planners. At the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, planners proposed bold projects of railroad connections, some of them unimplemented to this day. Trains were supposed to become not only vehicle for comfortable intercontinental journeys that would leave ships far behind – as planes were not yet considered a competition – but also take Europeans to remote attractive places, which previously seemed out of reach.¹² The Świnica project would never appear, if it was not for the development of tourism at the end of the nineteenth century and if this development was not accompanied by what George Simmel called “the wholesale opening-up and enjoyment of nature.” Świnica was supposed to become the Polish Rigi mountain, which was easily accessible by a rack railroad since 1871. When Poles discussed the investment, the Swiss had already undertaken the construction process of the rack railroad onto Jungfrau mountain and they were working on an even more ambitious project: a railroad to the peak of Matterhorn. The Jungfrau line never reached the summit and stopped at the Jungfrauoch Pass, while the construction of the Matterhorn line never began. We may treat these two events as a particular type of catastrophe: one that only harm the projects of railroads and not the already functioning lines. From the resistance against “puncturing” the Alps emerged the modern nature conservation movement, while from the resistance against constructing the rack railroad to Świnica peak emerged the idea to make Tatra Mountains a national park.

In almost every chapter, I allow myself comments that exceed the time framework of the studied events. Therefore, in the first chapter, I mention the tragic results of joining fire and darkness. For instance, I reflect on the fire at a charity event in Paris and a fire in the French underground. The second chapter on the history of taming the tunnels ends with a description of a tragedy that happened on December 12, 1917, in the vicinity of the Mont Cenis Tunnel in the Alps. In the conclusion of the third chapter, I remind that the Chernobyl disaster aligned in time with the publication of Ulrich Beck’s *Risk Society*, which foregrounds

12 See also “Parą do bieguną północnego,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 143/1892.

risk as the constitutive feature of contemporary culture. In the fourth chapter, I present the recent disaster of a German airbus (March 24, 2015) as having the potential for a future melodrama. In the ending to the chapter on Świnica, I write that the planned “assassination” partially succeeded, as masses of tourists may reach today another peak, Kasprowy Wierch, by means of a cable car. All these comments point to my conclusion that the contemporary world is still filled with “shadows.”

Chapter One The Gołuchowski Station and Other Attractions; and, On the Origins of Cinematography

Light ought to be in the shadow.

– Ignacy Krasicki, “Fajerwerk”, in: *Dziela Krasickiego. Dziesięć tomów w jednym*, Paris, 1830.

In fact the cinema of attraction[s] does not disappear with the dominance of narrative, but rather goes underground.

– Tom Gunning, “The Cinema of Attraction. Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde”, *Wide Angle*, 3-4/1896.

The short story “Widziadła” by Bolesław Prus could end in the following manner: “The painting has disappeared, and the salesman entered the room. We looked at our watches – it’s late! . . . I paid the bill. It was rather small for such delicacies. . . / *Today, when I remind myself all those things, I think that for three hours I had a strange dream made of matters unknown and unexpected.*”

As we know, the original ending is different. “Widziadła” tell a story of a Lithuanian nobleman who visits Warsaw and focuses on the impressions of a film screening. The impressions are a part of the provincial protagonist’s experiences. However, there is no doubt that these experiences originated in Bolesław Prus’s real experiences of his first encounters with cinematography. Prus himself experienced what I expressed above in the sentence written in italics. This narrative has no imaginary intermediary because it is the ending of his series *Kartki z podróży* (Travel Notes), which is a reportage from Prus’s visit to the Wieliczka Salt Mine. Both fragments may set the framework for Prus’s literary biography: the first fragment is from 1911 while the second from the journal *Kurier Warszawski* in 1878.¹³ The name of the author of the first fragment

13 See B. Prus, “Widziadła,” in: Prus, *Pisma wybrane*, Vol. 2: “Nowele,” Warsaw, 1990, p. 552; Prus, “Kartki z podróży [Wieliczka],” in: Prus, *Dziela*, ed. Z. Szweykowski, Vol. 27, Warsaw, 1950, p. 235. Later, I use “W” to mark quotes from this book. Quotes from “Kartki z podróży [Kraków]” come from the same book and are preceded by “K.” The story “Widziadła” appeared only after Prus’s death. He submitted it to *Stara Warszawa* quarterly, but without result. It was only in 1936 that Zygmunt Szweykowski published the piece. In her monograph about early cinema, *Śladami tamtych cieni. Film*

was renowned while the second did not yet ring a bell. Cinematography debuted in the middle of the period set by these two dates and, a few years later, theaters enriched the space of cities. Therefore, we may view Prus's biography as one in which "Widziadła" document and witness a significant cultural transformation, which *Kartki z podróży* foresee. The first work preserves the experience of the first film screenings, while the second work describes precinematic experiences, which later filled the screening rooms. What I have in mind here is the idea embraced nearly unanimously by contemporary film experts. Film and cinematography were not one-time inventions but rather a culmination of many past processes, which rapidly accelerated in the nineteenth century, manifested in various "machines of vision:" passages, exhibition halls, panoramas, dioramas, or magic lanterns.¹⁴ On the list of institutions that materialized the nineteenth-century "mechanization of vision" an important place belongs to the railroad journey.¹⁵ Mirror, stained glass, and archaic techniques of shadow theater complete the list of mechanization platforms. The earliest expression of cinematic desire is recognized in Plato's metaphor of the cave: a picture projected on the walls is observed by chained immobile people.¹⁶ The experiences of those incarcerated by Plato strongly resemble the peculiar nineteenth-century experience, which has not yet been discussed in the genesis of cinema. What I mean are tourist visits to the Wieliczka Salt Mine.

This is a humble Polish contribution to the formation of the future cinematic experience. In the nineteenth century, mines were not rare in Europe; in fact, quite on the contrary. It was the time of a rapid development of mining. In some regions, like in Upper Silesia, the mines were a permanent fixture of the landscape. It was a dynamic century also in the sense of the vertical expansion of

w kulturze polskiej przełomu stuleci 1895–1914, Poznań, 1993, pp. 236–238, Małgorzata Hendrykowska analyzes "Widziadła." I shall later return to her analysis and idea of Prus's image of "educational tendency."

- 14 See A. Gwóźdź, "Skąd się (nie) wzięło kino, czyli parahistorie obrazu w ruchu," in: *Historia kina*, Vol. 1: *Kino nieme*, eds. T. Lubelski, I. Sowińska, R. Syska, Cracow, 2014.
- 15 See I. Christie, *The Last Machine. Early Cinema and the Birth of the Modern World*, foreword T. Gilliam, London, 1994, pp. 17–21; L. Kirby, *Parallel Tracks. The Railroad and Silent Cinema*, Durham, 1997, pp. 19–73; G. Smith, *Dickens and the Dream of Cinema*, Manchester, 2003, pp. 90–100.
- 16 See Gwóźdź, "Skąd się (nie) wzięło kino," pp. 26–28. Susan Sontag links Plato's cave with the essence of photography: "Movies and television programs light up walls, flicker, and go out; but with still photographs the image is also an object, lightweight, cheap to produce, easy to carry about, accumulate, store. "In Plato's Cave," in: *On Photography*, New York, 2008, p. 3.

skyrocketing metropolises and their development of railroad, sewerage, and waterpipe roots into complex underground networks equal to the ones on the surface. The mine is an archetype of numerous artificial underground structures located under cities. Moreover, it timidly announces the so-called modern world and its characteristic aggression of civilization on nature.¹⁷ In September of 1877, when Bolesław Prus visited Cracow, the city of London already had a network of underground railroad, while Warsaw that Prus left for only a moment devised a bold plan of building the sewerage system on the left bank of the Vistula river.¹⁸ Meanwhile, the underground infrastructure of Cracow was rather modest: mostly private cellars and the royal tombs at the Wawel Castle. But just fifteen kilometers away was the Wieliczka Salt Mine, which could offer a tourist attraction that was unique even on the scale of the continent: a salt mine that one could visit and explore in the company of a guide. Visits to various mines are an important part of romantic peregrination settings. However, what made Wieliczka extraordinary among other attractions of the nineteenth century was the fact that it directed its offer at the mass tourist, at anyone who could crave seeing “things unknown and unexpected.” Prus took part in a group tour in the Wieliczka Salt Mine. That is why all he remembered and described in *Kartki z podróży* may be associated with the “social machine,” in which visual experiences – just as in the later cinema – were produced for the sake of mass instant consumption. Wieliczka was a “machine,” which mostly served Poles. This is what I mean when I argue that the Polish pre-cinematic experiences were born in a slightly different conditions than in other parts of Europe.

“Widziadła” from 1911 and the 1878 Wieliczka part of *Kartki z podróży*, which describes a trip from September 1877, are similar not only due to the type of experiences they represent. Their composition is also akin. Its basis is the hero’s journey whose realistic dimension is supplemented by a virtual part, supported by his physical movement on the vertical axis. Wzdychajło [Sigher] from “Widziadła” is a Lithuanian nobleman who visits Warsaw, probably by train. Once in the city, Wzdychajło enters “a shop” with a few random acquaintances where – in a “small dark room” – he witnesses bewildering scenes that fill a “bright disc”¹⁹ on a wall. In *Kartki z Podróży*, Prus takes a train to Wieliczka,

17 See B. Bobrick, *Labirynty of Iron. A History of the World's Subways*, New York, 1982, pp. 75–86; R. Williams, *Notes on the Underground. An Essay on Technology, Society, and the Imagination*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1992, pp. 51–81.

18 See W. K. Pessel, *Antropologia nieczystości. Studia z kultury sanitarnej Warszawy*, Warsaw, 2010, pp. 85–91.

19 Prus, “Widziadła,” pp. 547–549.

where he arrives at “a wooden building that resembles in shape a second-rate railway station on the Vistula road.” (W 227–228). Then, Prus begins to descend along “a well with stairs twisting like a tire-bouchon.” (W 228), which takes him into the depths of the Earth. The association with a corkscrew is crucial. The nearing spectacle actually begins with Prus’s visit to a diner and a vertigo. His organism assumes a state, which Wzdychańo and his two companions achieve by consuming a few bottles of strong wine. Let us notice the combination of a physical journey – Wzdychańo’s to Warsaw and Prus’s to Wieliczka – with the virtual one: imagined and simulated. The link between both journeys is the state of disorientation in time and space, easy to achieve in a diner “after a shot of vodka” (W 222) or in a dark room of a Warsaw wine bar. Let us leave darkness for later to follow other factors, which could be responsible for the disorientation that Prus experienced once entering the Wieliczka Salt Mine. The first and very important clue is immediately visible in Cracow, at the very beginning of the reportage:

So we set off to Wieliczka. The day is cloudy, the earth is sprinkled with showers and the station railway with farewells. My clock shows different time than the one on St. Mary’s Basilica, and the church one shows a different time than the railway clock, so I came to early and am enjoying myself like a deaf on a concert (W 219).

It is not hard to recreate Prus’s journey from Cracow to Wieliczka even in terms of his exact time of arrival at the station. It is also fairly easy to determine where do the time differences come from, which already at the beginning of Prus’s journey made him fall into irritating temporal chaos. Prus’s watch and the clocks show different times not because they are falsely set but due to the modern discipline enforced on the world by the railroad. Therefore, the clash of different ways of measuring time could have the most annoying effects for those traveling on nineteenth-century trains.

In Cracow, Prus encountered three different times and he probably brought two of his own from Warsaw, both divergent from the ones in Cracow. He already arrived at the Warsaw Railroad Station with two times, which we know from his scrupulous report of the beginning of his journey: “On September 1 [1877], at 10 pm, I arrived at the railroad station of the Warsaw-Vienna line where, to my surprise, I met a few of my dear friends, which warmed my heart” (K 140). The timetable published in *Kurier Warszawski* informs that Prus’s train was “a passenger train, with first-, second-, and third-class compartments, from Warsaw to Granica and Sosnowice, departing at 10 pm, arriving in Granica at

6.25 am, in Sosnowiec at 6.35 am.”²⁰ According to travel regulations, “anyone who has not purchased a ticket ten minutes in advance cannot demand that it is sold to them.”²¹ When did the writer arrive at the station and when did he meet his friends? There must have been some time left until 10 pm, because the pre-journey hustle takes a while and its description ends with a sentence of relief: “we finally heard the bell announcing the departure” (K 140). In Prus’s times, Warsaw was a torn city, officially bilingual, and with two different times. The Warsaw Time regulated the daily rhythm of the city and set the timetables of trains of the Warsaw-Vienna railroad. However, trains that departed from the stations on the right side of the Vistula river ran according to the Petersburg Time, which preceded the Warsaw time by thirty-seven minutes. Public timetables usually followed the Warsaw Time. For instance, on the first day of Prus’s journey, a courier train to Terespol departed at 5:05 pm (4:28 Warsaw Time), and a passenger-cargo train at 01:20 pm (12:43 Warsaw Time).²² There was no consistency in that respect. Some timetables used Warsaw Time only for departures from the Warsaw station, while for other stations the Petersburg Time only. The clocks on stations in Petersburg, Terespol and stations on both Vistula River Railroad Stations showed the Petersburg Time. A clock set to the Petersburg Time showed 10 pm when the Warsaw Time was more than half an hour behind. Maybe that was the way Prus set his chronometer? Maybe he preferred the Petersburg Time, so that he was sure to be on time for the train to Granica? Noteworthy, when Prus describes the entry building to the Wieliczka Salt Mine, he refers to the newly opened station from the Vistula-River Railroad,²³ which ran on the right side of the Vistula and followed the Petersburg Time. Moreover, when characterizing the slow and steady journey from Cracow to Wieliczka – “We set off in a Terespol manner” (W 220) – Prus pointed to the railroad time dictated by Petersburg.

Cracow welcomed the newcomer from Congress Poland with three times. The first was the city time, which Prus refers to as “the time on St. Mary’s Basilica.” After the arrival, Prus stayed at the Dresden Hotel in the Main Square. It was also the place, where his trip to Wieliczka started. Saint Mary’s Basilica does

20 *Kurier Warszawski* 100/1877. See also *Gazeta Warszawska* 136/1877. Today, the station Granica is called Sosnowiec Maczki, while Sosnowice is Sosnowiec Główny.

21 “Główniejsze przepisy dotyczące przewozu osób na drogach żelaznych,” in: *Józefa Ungra Kalendarz Ilustrowany na rok 1877*, p. 53.

22 See *Kurier Warszawski*, 104/1877.

23 See also Prus, “*Kartki z podróży*” [Płock], in: *Pisma*, Vol. 27, ed. Z. Szwejkowski, Warsaw, 1950.

not and did not have a clock, only a “compass” on its southern side; however, it played a crucial role for time coordination in the city. Guidebooks from Prus’s times agree that “all year long, a watchman announces time” from the Basilica’s tower.²⁴ Therefore, Prus could hear the time of Saint Mary’s Basilica in the sound of church bells and the watchmen’s trumpet signal.²⁵ The synchronization of the time of Saint Mary’s Basilica probably still relied on a very primitive system. Prus mentions it when describing the things he did not manage to see in Cracow: “I have not seen the observatory but, as far as I know, the only reason for its fame today is that the administrators announce real noon to the citizens each day with a flag signal” (K 167–168).²⁶

And what was the alternative for those who could not hear the Basilica’s bells or the trumpet call? Nineteenth-century calendars and popular science publications provided complicated descriptions of how to construct a sundial and convert real noon – if known – into the value assumed for the local meridian (the so-called mean time).²⁷

In 1877, apart from its own city time, Cracow used two other times on its railroad stations. Prus ironically writes that, “The clocks of the station do show the time, yet they follow the meridians of Budapest and Prague. Probably because

24 W. Łuszczkiewicz, *Ilustrowany przewodnik po Krakowie i jego okolicach z dodaniem wszelkich wiadomości potrzebnych dla podróżnych*, Cracow, 1875, p. 12. See also a remark on the “clock’s watchman” in A. Napierkowski, *Najnowszy ilustrowany przewodnik po Krakowie i okolicach*, Cracow, 1883, p. 20.

25 Prus reached Cracow at 9:44 a.m. (9:56 a.m.) with the Vienna-bound train, to which he changed in Trzebinia, (earlier, he changed trains in Granica and Szczakowa). See “Rozkład jazdy Wył[ącznie] Uprz[ywilejowanej] Kolei Półn[ocnej] Cesarza Ferdynanda i Morawsko-Śląskiej,” *Czas* 113/1877; “Pociągi na kolejach żelaznych,” *Czas* 200/1877. In his hotel, Prus hears the bell ringing: “My pondering is stopped by the tower bell announcing eleven o’clock in the morning. Then the second bell rings, the third, and the fourth. The following momentary silence is interrupted by a trumpet call” (K 151). Describing the St. Mary’s Church, Prus locates its clock with the following words: “This [higher, western] tower holds a clock that tolls regularly only because of a fire watchman, who wakes it with the hits of his hammer” (K 164).

26 A historian from the observatory in Cracow, F. Karliński, *Rys dziejów Obserwatorium Astronomicznego Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego*, Cracow, 1864, p. 52, fn. 1, writes in the nineteenth century that, “Since February 19, 1838, the city clocks have been regulated by the watchman on the tower of the St. Mary’s Church according to the flag waved at noon at the gallery of the observatory.”

27 See “Tablica do regulowania zegarów w roku 1877,” *Poznański Kalendarz na rok zwyczajny 1877*; Dr. W. [Daniel Wierzbiński], “O zegarach słonecznych i sposobach ich urządzenia,” in: *Józefa Czecha Kalendarz Krakowski na rok 1886*.

the local council begrudged Cracow the funds to buy a local meridian from [the capital in] Vienna” (K 150).

The trains heading west (Emperor Ferdinand Northern Railroad) followed the Prague time – twelve minutes behind the Cracow Time – while the trains heading East (Galician Railroad of Archduke Charles Louis) followed the Budapest time, which was four minutes behind the Cracow Time. Prus’s irritation with the different time announcements may have resulted from the fact that the station clock’s “western” time lagged four minutes behind the time of “Saint Mary’s Basilica,” while his own chronometer was still set according to Petersburg Time. Had it been set to Warsaw Time, it would have been four minutes ahead of the time of “Saint Mary’s Basilica,” and eight minutes ahead of the “western” time of the Cracow railroad station. Therefore, with a watch set to Petersburg time, Prus had forty-five minutes of extra waiting ahead of him. Hence, before the train’s departure, he could have felt “like a deaf at a concert.” Prus’s journey to Wieliczka occurred at the threshold of modernity in Poland. Precise time measurement and the replacement of local time with the global one will soon mark the victory of modernity. Cracow still used three times, but the situation was about to change. The idea “to uniform the hours”²⁸ was steadily gaining recognition and would partially materialize on October 1, 1891. From that day, all the stations of the Austrian railroad were to follow the Central European Time, synchronized with the indications of watches from the 15th meridian east.²⁹ If Prus visited Cracow after the reform, he would have experienced only two different times. Prus started his journey to Wieliczka at 12:08 pm. The Cracow Time was already 12:12 pm, the “western” station’s and the Vienna Time was 12:00 pm, while the Warsaw Time was 12:16 pm and Petersburg Time – 12:53 pm. Railroad was an important institution for the nineteenth century, especially for distant provinces, because it enabled the time synchronization. Wherever a train travelled, one could safely assume that its daily regularity was the result of a fixed timetable. Knowing the timetable, one could set their local chronometer according to the passing train. Where there was no radio or telephone – still absent in many places – a regularly passing train was the simplest tool for setting time, although not entirely reliable.

28 See T. R., “O ujednostajnieniu godzin dla kolei żelaznych i dla potrzeb życia zwyczajnego,” *Wszechświat* 42/1888.

29 “Czas kolejowy środkowo-europejski,” *Kurier Lwowski* 273/1891. Warsaw continued using its old local time, twenty-four minutes ahead of the Central European Time. Warsaw applied the system of time zones only during the First World War.

The train to Wieliczka had three classes while, in the Salt Mine Prus had to choose between four lighting classes. They differed in price as they entailed a transaction that defined the quality of experiences underground. The transaction mostly concerned the visual part of experience but not only, because visitors who purchased the first or second class would also enjoy the company of a miners' band.³⁰ The size of the group and the financial contribution directly transferred onto what one heard and saw in the underground "theater of lights." At the time of Prus's visit to the Wieliczka Salt Mine, the expression "theater of lights" ("electric theater") was not yet present in Polish. It entered the language much later and was used for cinemas, especially the elegant ones. Perhaps that was the name Prus remembered when – at the end of his life – he decided to submit "Widziadła." One could say that the name "theater of lights" manifested the growing artistic aspirations of cinematography at the dawn of the twentieth century. Moreover, it clearly indicated its search for social and cultural legitimization which, for a long time, only evoked associations with poor taste. Particularly the earlier forms of cinematography employed "theatricality" to satisfy its ennobling longings and ambitions, less to connect with the structure of theatrical performance. We should even risk a bolder claim that cinematography emerged and evolved as a practice, which stems from a negation of theater solutions. Early cinematographic spectacles were far from what one could see and experience in theatrical plays. Instead, films resembled to a much greater extent the exhilarating mass-produced visual experiences like the illuminated Wieliczka Salt Mine. To be sure, one only experienced the illumination in Wieliczka after paying for the right entry ticket.

The differentiation of the Wieliczka Salt Mine spectacle into (at least) four various classes appeared probably soon before Prus's arrival to Wieliczka,³¹ which was proof for the late nineteenth-century evolution of mines into increasingly efficient and sophisticated "machines of vision." The differences in lighting initially had a different character and mostly highlighted the visitors' social status. Hence, there had been a lighting standard for everyone and a rich version for the most honorable visitors. The author of the first monograph on the Wieliczka Salt Mine mentions the matter when admiring a great salt spider (chandelier) that

30 See "Kopalnie soli w Wieliczce," *Józefa Czecha Kalendarz Krakowski na rok 1877*, p. 90. Prus recalls another source of knowledge on Cracow and the mine, a guide by Ambroży Grabowski *Kraków i jego okolice*, "with 57 woodcuts, a picture and plan of the city" (K 157).

31 See Łuszczkiewicz, *Ilustrowany przewodnik po Krakowie i jego okolicach z dodaniem wszelkich wiadomości potrzebnych dla podróżnych*, p. 140.

“lit the mine during visits of larger groups.”³² Subsequent guide authors often wrote about glistening lighting and admired it openly:

Though it already increases the beauty and splendor of the long corridors and the great caverns of the Wieliczka Salt Mine, the illumination brings such a great charm to this largest chamber, carved in the richest layers of salt, that one could not imagine something more beautiful. And when you hear the music flowing from the gallery, built for that very purpose, and the roar of shots echoes like thunder, then the whole of your being will be overcome by a charm of admiration, gloom, and fear, which no pen could describe. One must but become an eyewitness to these wonders in order to penetrate their vastness and reflect upon them in the depths of surprised spirit.³³

It sometimes happens that ruling personages visit these places, which seem otherworldly: galleries, halls, huge vaults, and above all the abyss (chamber) called Kloski, which is forty-two feet high and brilliantly enlightened. Fireworks burn, divine sounds of music flow in the chambers' air, and the viewer, submerged in an endless admiration, finally begins to doubt whether he is still in this world.³⁴

Initially, pompous illumination of the underground accompanied only the visits of few people: “a monarch, a prince, or another high-profile person.”³⁵ *Ilustrowany przewodnik po Krakowie i okolicy* (The Illustrated Guide to Cracow and the Neighbourhood) from 1875 informs about a new situation, which is the one Prus faced upon his arrival to Wieliczka. The type of lighting still depended on the guest's status; however, the mine supplemented this distinction by a division into classes, which corresponded to the amount and type of energy source. The lighting class and group size determined the entrance fee. The extensive price list included “elite class,” which guaranteed the visitors all the attractions that previously only kings and nobles admired. Prus visited the site in a moderately wealthy group, which found it sufficient to experience the “theater of lights” on a first-class tour. The spectacle offered many attractions, especially visual,

32 F. Boczkowski, *O Wieliczce pod względem historii naturalnej, dziejów i kąpieli*, Bochnia, 1843, p. 8. The chandelier hung in the Łętów Chamber, which emerged from the joining of two smaller chambers in 1750. The chandelier was a reminder of the visit of Russian dignitaries. “In 1809, according to the wish of Russian general Suvorov, the chamber became a dance hall. In 1814, a portal and six spiders made of salt enriched the hall for the arrival of tsar Alexander I and Archduke Joseph, the Palatine of Hungary.” Z. Kamiński, *Przewodnik dla zwiedzających kopalnię wielicką. Szkic opisowy z rycinami w tekście*, Cracow, 1919, p. 12.

33 J. Mączyński, *Pamiętka z Krakowa. Opis tego miasta i jego okolic*, Cracow, 1843, p. 300.

34 A. Grabowski, *Kraków i jego okolice*, Cracow, 1866, p. 316.

35 S. O. [Stanisław Okraszewski], “Szkice podróznego w przelocie przez Europę w roku 1842. (Część druga),” *Biblioteka Warszawska*, Vol. 3, 1842, p. 47.

introduced by illuminations that combined a dazzling light play with the peculiar perspective forced upon the visitors by the Mine's infrastructure. It resulted in various optical effects such as limiting the field of view to the size of a small spot located in the distance: "We rush again. The short corridor goes slightly down. At its end, we see a huge chamber illuminated with chandeliers made of salt as pure as glass" (W 230). The chandeliers with thousands of burning candles was a clear sign, that Prus visited Wieliczka, when it no longer perpetuated the inequality of social status and transformed into a festivity that subordinated to far more modern criteria: the wealth of the visitors. The elite class fee guaranteed the visitors the company of an orchestra that would welcome them at the railroad station in Wieliczka, follow them into the Salt Mine, and bid them farewell upon departure. Moreover, to make the way to the mining shaft even more splendid, mortars would fire at the elite visitors' arrival and, below in the great chambers, there would be music and colorful illuminations.³⁶ Therefore, Prus's experience of the Wieliczka Salt Mine already was a modern "machine" to produce and sell visual attractions to anyone interested. A few years earlier, the site was only an institution that perpetuated and sanctioned social inequality.

Wolfgang Schivelbusch ends his book on "the industrialization of light" with remarks about cinematography as he describes its unique configuration emerging from three intertwining elements: darkness, spectators, and shining image in front of the viewer:

The spectator in the dark is alone with himself and the illuminated image, because social connections cease to exist in the dark. Darkness heightens individual perceptions, magnifying them many times. The darkened auditorium gives the illuminated image an intensity that it would not otherwise possess. Every lighted image is experienced as the light at the end of the tunnel – the visual tunnel, in this case – and as a liberation from the dark.³⁷

The darkness in the above quote may seem overwhelming, but it is not unjustified. There is definitely a lot of darkness in the cinema. In the early cinema, darkness cannot even fit into the small screening rooms and flows out, drowning the previously highly lit public spaces. The theater followed cinematography and turned off auditorium lights.³⁸ However, this is not the only factor that

36 See Łuszczkiewicz, *Ilustrowany przewodnik po Krakowie i jego okolicach z dodaniem wszelkich wiadomości potrzebnych dla podróżnych*, pp. 140–141.

37 Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night*, p. 221.

38 Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night*, p. 212.

transformed theatrical interior at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. There were at least three other factors that contributed to the change. The first one relates to the innovations of theater reformers, most importantly Richard Wagner's practice and concept of spectacle, which aimed to be an aesthetic and religious experience. Just like the dim light inside of a temple inspires contemplative spirit, so were dimmed lights in Bayreuth theater supposed to turn spectacles into a mystic experience. Prus's arrival in Wieliczka occurred almost at the same time as the inauguration of the new building for Wagner's spectacles. It was designed in such a way that the seats' arrangement concentrated all the eyes on the stage, so there was no place for boxes, which traditionally surrounded the ground floor seats like a horseshoe.

The second factor was of a different character, which refers to theater's search for such forms that would make the audience feel as if on stage in front of them appeared real people in a real room, which just happens not to have one wall. Theater strove to be a faithful copy of real life. Various means helped in this pursuit of realism in the late nineteenth century. One of them were decorations. However, more drastic changes happened on stage where actors changed their technique and completely abolished any communication between them and the audience. Moreover, the disappearance of stairs that led to the stage in the eighteenth century created an invisible border that now separated the audience from the actors, who stopped performing for the spectators but, instead, fully immersed into the relations with each other. The nineteenth-century theater created a certain inequality between spectators and characters: actors behaved as if someone peeped at them through a keyhole. Spectators could not expect to receive even a quick glance from an actor. The border between the stage – with illusory decorations – and the auditorium, between the fictional and the real world grew on the foundation of light.

The third and final factor that helped dim the auditorium was of technological nature. In the middle of the nineteenth century, theater welcomed gas into its premises and – a bit later – electricity, which enabled easier and more effective control over the intensity of lighting. The above factors acted with various intensity. Let us remember that – to a great extent – the effectiveness of these factors derived from audience's attitude and familiarity with them. Wolfgang Schivelbusch characterizes the situation at the end of the nineteenth century in such words: "The social desire to see and be seen has survived in the theatre, despite illusionism, realism and naturalism. Even when gas and electric

light brought a total blackout within easy reach, European auditoriums were not plunged into darkness, but only into a dusky light.”³⁹

In September 1877, theater was still an institution that served to perpetuate and impregnate social inequalities. In this sense, it resembles the mine in Wieliczka from the time before Prus’s visit, when lighting classes depended on the status of the visitor. Two literary descriptions of plays from the period show that they aimed to let the auditorium watch each other and reproduce what happened in the auditorium. Therefore, to blur the border between passive and active participants of the spectacle. In *Lalka*, the reader watches the spectacle with the great Rossi from behind Ignacy Rzecki’s back, who visited the play at Wokulski’s request to present a gift to the artist. For a humble salesman, it was a really embarrassing moment. Rzecki, a man used to watch from the gallery, had to sit in the first row where all the eyes could observe him. Fortunately, Rzecki noticed pie-maker Pifke, whom he asked to fulfil Wokulski’s request. Let us indicate that Rzecki’s experience begins long before the curtain rises:

Meanwhile, the auditorium was filing, and the sight of pretty women taking their places in the boxes completely emboldened Ignacy. The old clerk even brought out a small pair of opera-glasses and began gazing at their countenances: whereupon he made the sad discovery that he too was being looked at from the amphitheater, from the stalls behind and even from the boxes. . . .⁴⁰

The beginning of the performance did not change anything. For Rzecki, the most important was what happened in the auditorium:

The acting at first did not interest him, so he looked around the auditorium and caught sight of Wokulski. He was in the fourth row and was not gazing at Rossi at all, but at a box occupied by Izabela, Tomasz and the Countess. Rzecki had seen hypnotized people a few times in his life and he thought that Wokulski looked like a man hypnotized by that box. He was sitting there motionless, like a man asleep with his eyes wide open.⁴¹

Another detail remembered by Rzecki was that, after the third act, pie-maker Pifke handed the gift to Rossi, while “[t]he celebrated actor did not even nod to Pifke, but he made a very deep bow in the direction of the box in which Miss Izabela was sitting and perhaps – in that direction alone.”⁴²

Rzecki’s impression of the play is a chaotic mixture of events that occurred on stage and in the auditorium. The latter clearly prevailed over the first. As we

39 Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night*, p. 209.

40 Prus, *The Doll*, trans. D. Welsh, New York, 1972, p. 255.

41 Prus, *The Doll*, p. 256.

42 Prus, *The Doll*, p. 257.

read, Rzecki “had also been quite delighted by the way Macbeth fought with his sword,”⁴³ but in the description from the perspective of the old salesman, we do not even learn the title of the play. After Rzecki left the theater, he did think briefly about the stage: “That fellow acts wonderfully well, I must see him again. . . .”⁴⁴ Yet, his thoughts quickly gave way to a memory of the events in the auditorium: “Why had Staś [Wokulski] stared so oddly at the box in which the Countess, Mr. Łęcki and Miss Łęcka were sitting?”⁴⁵ There is no doubt that there was light in the auditorium during the play, and everyone had a very wide perspective at their disposal, particularly the spectators in the boxes. Later moved to the fourth row, Rzecki could actually cast his looks in all possible directions. However, he himself was also an easy prey for critical looks and unfavorable comments. Nineteenth-century theater was still an institution, which offered experiences not solely from stage events. A historian of scenography writes on the hierarchy of experiences, which may seem very odd today but was true for the at the time:

The auditorium has the form of a semicircle or a horseshoe, which allows viewers to observe each other, especially since lighting was kept during the performance. This auditorium is divided into ground floor, boxes, and balconies; each social class has its place. One comes to the theater like to a restaurant, rather to talk, meet someone, show oneself in a fashionable garment than to enjoy the performance.⁴⁶

Rzecki was used to sitting in the gallery. Wokulski’s request moved him to a place where he must have been uncomfortable and where he had to appear for others as a ridiculous intruder. The encounter of pie-maker Pifke allowed Rzecki to partly move away from the center of attention, where everyone directed their eyes during the performance.

Prus’s *Lalka* (The Doll) locates the show at a time when the writer ventured inside the Wieliczka Mine, almost exactly when the report from his underground journey reached the readers of *Kurier Warszawski*. However, the theatrical conventions from the analyzed episode were strong enough to survive in an unchanged form at least until the end of the century, and probably even longer in the provinces. The theater in Łódź, portrayed by Reymont in *Ziemia Obiecana* (The Promised Land), is still like theaters characterized above. The performance begins long before the curtain goes up. We watch the play through the eyes of

43 Prus, *The Doll*, p. 257.

44 Prus, *The Doll*, p. 256.

45 Prus, *The Doll*, p. 257.

46 Z. Strzelecki, *Kierunki scenografii współczesnej*, Warsaw, 1970, p. 20.

three protagonists. This technique of exchanging viewpoints perfectly reflects the multitude of glances that fill the space of the auditorium. The way to the auditorium leads through a buffet, where Reymont's Borowiecki "returned [to drink vodka]."⁴⁷ From there, the protagonist heads to the first row: "Charles went there, to find himself in the first row of orchestra, seated between Moritz and Leo. The latter was assiduously bowing to a certain fair-haired damsel on the first floor, and staring at her through an opera-glass."⁴⁸ Borowiecki wanted to see those gathering in the auditorium and to be seen, so he stood up: "Very tranquilly, too, did he stand the fire of binocles and opera-glasses directed on him from every part of the theatre, which hummed like a beehive filled with a fresh swarm. . . . Somewhat haughtily he let his eyes wander over the brilliantly illuminated theatre, and he gaily attired public that thronged it, sparkling with jewels and diamonds."⁴⁹ Good lighting enabled Borowiecki to carefully examine the details of women's attire and – while studying the physiognomy – estimate the price of their accoutrements: "The boxes looked like balconies covered with cherry-coloured velvet, from which (so many flowers, as it were) there looked out ladies splendidly attired and blazing with precious gems."⁵⁰

In the audience "there is an aroma of millions"⁵¹ but the rich accoutrements and exquisite attire of the gathered was present there mostly to be watched and admired, to dazzle men and compete with other women. The splendor and ostentatious behavior in the auditorium proved that – at the end of the nineteenth century – Łódź was a deep province on the theatrical map of Europe: nobody probably heard about theater reformers there, and nobody knew about the Bayreuth revolution yet. The city valued money. One of the reasons to acquire them was to show off in the theater, provoke jealousy, and awake lust. We do not even learn from Reymont what plays were staged in Łódź theater.⁵² The personalized narrative consequently follows the three men who live in Łódź and does not really care for what is going on the stage, because the most interesting things for them occurred in the auditorium. Reymont describes two performances that

47 L. Reymont, *The Promised Land*, trans. from the Polish by M.H. Dziewicki, vol. 1, New York, 1927, p. 36; the phrase "to drink vodka" was omitted in the translation.

48 Reymont, *The Promised Land*, p. 36-37.

49 Reymont, *The Promised Land*, p. 37.

50 Reymont, *The Promised Land*, p. 37-38.

51 Reymont, *The Promised Land*, p. 38.

52 Reymont, *The Promised Land*, p. 39: "It was indeed nothing but a mere charity performance, consisting of the efforts of two comic actresses, one solo singer, a piano-player, and a violinist, and some *tableaux vivants* to wind up with."

compete with each other: one on stage, the other in the auditorium. The stakes in this game is social standing, which should not leave any doubt whatsoever and manifest itself in the position of the seat and the worth of women's jewelry. The beginning of the spectacle was not clearly marked as the bright light in the auditorium was kept, and only the conversations in the auditorium got quieter. The performance from *Ziemia obiecana* reached its climax not on the stage but in the auditorium. At one point, a hectic movement began, entrepreneurs from Łódź rose up one after another and – disappeared. The cause of the anxiety was quickly recognized. Through the audience circulated a mysterious message, containing some electrifying information: “These whispered details passed quic as lighting from mouth to mouth, filling the directors of many a firm with a [dim] feeling of vague unaccountable disquietude.”⁵³

Two places are particularly important in the quoted sentence. First of all, the way of identifying those who are worried: they are not spectators of the performance but “the directors of many a firm.” Secondly, the anxiety caused by the contents of the message is “dim,” because only then could it be visible in the auditorium bathing in the light. Frantic behavior among the rich contrasts with the joy of the commoners. Those who occupy the “upper tiers” kept watching the “performance.” Their laughter falls on the “upon those man-millions who lolled there, stretched out on velvet, bedecked with diamonds, puffed up with grandeur and with power.”⁵⁴ I point out the stylistic device with which Reymont performs a kind of gender unification of those from the most affluent. There is no traditional distinction between men and women, because the millionaires are probably men, but diamonds adorn the bodies of their companions: wives, lovers, and daughters. On the other hand, theater space exacerbates gender differences. The division between women and men was visible both in outfit and behavior.

A theater historian notes that the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theaters often used light in the auditorium to emphasize the importance of the play.⁵⁵ This additional illumination was a lure used during performances organized to celebrate national holidays, birthdays (name days) of rulers, and beginning or opening of an artistic season. Differentiation of light intensity dependent on the rank of the show persisted in theaters for a long time: even after the introduction

53 Reymont, *The Promised Land*, p. 45; the adjective “dim” was lost in Dziewicki's translation.

54 Reymont, *The Promised Land*, p. 46.

55 See P. Mitzner, *Teatr światła i cienia. Oświetlenie teatrów warszawskich na tle historii oświetlenia od średniowiecza do czasów najnowszych*, Warsaw, 1987, pp. 56–59.

of electricity. Even then, chandeliers with hundreds of candles on the ceiling illuminated the spectacle's finale. The differentiating function of lighting could serve more than just an emphasis to the festive character of the spectacle. Some "owners" of boxes requested that additional lights be installed next to their seats. An inalienable part of performances were "illuminators" who refilled oil lamps at the lower and upper ramp, if necessary. A similar ritual could apply to the chandelier above the auditorium.⁵⁶ Counteracting light losses during the performance is another proof that the theater did not separate the stage from the auditorium for a long time. The "illuminators" were part of the technical team, their appearance revealed the "lining" of the performance, reminding the viewers that what they watch is a performance. Gas and electric light, which are easy to control, allowed to change this formula and helped in the pursuit of theater, in which spectators could fully immerse in the illusion and – ideally – forget that they actually are in a theater.

Visiting the Wieliczka Mine began with rituals, which blurred gender and masculinized visitors. In the building above the shaft, everyone received protective clothing – the same capes and caps – and put them on before going down to the Mine. Aleksander Kisielewski describes it: "With racing heart, I approached the hole through which we were supposed to descend. We were dressed in white ankle-length capes and green mining caps, in order to protect our dresses from the salt dripping from the ceilings and running down the walls. Below, everything was made of salt, even the air."⁵⁷

The safety capes were obligatory for both men and women. Before Prus's visit, an alternative to the stairs leading down the mine was a primitive lift or, rather, a thick rope: "At its end were two small seats taken by boys with cressets; next to them were six other seats, which were barely a thick linen band folded in two, in which one has to slip while holding to side ropes attached to the main one."⁵⁸

The descent was also the beginning of the spectacle with light in the main role. Below, eyes could only see pitch darkness and, when looking up, visitors experienced an effect similar to the one described in the last sentence of a book by Wolfgang Schivelbusch: "I looked up, and the light of opening doors was to me like a tiny star in the sky."⁵⁹ However, real attractions awaited at the bottom

56 Mitzner, *Teatr światła i cienia*, p. 114; Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night*, p. 204.

57 A. Kisielewski, *Z Krakowa do Gdańska Wisłą. Wspomnienia z podróży*, Lviv, 1869, pp. 71–72.

58 J. S., "Wieliczka," in: *Józefa Czecha Kalendarz Krakowski na rok 1866*, p. 21.

59 Kisielewski, *Z Krakowa do Gdańska Wisłą. Wspomnienia z podróży*, p. 72.

of the Mine, where the darkness was complete and a religious mood filled the souls of visitors:

when one enters the mine for the first time, it happens in deep silence and with a religious reverence, when the guides, apt in light effects, ignite Bengal fireworks at several opposite points, and when their pink and blue flames begin their magnificent run under the sky-high vaults, they become temples made by giants, and the eye gets lost in the charm of their dreamy reflections.⁶⁰

Young boys with cressets escorted the visitors, and the “guides” were in front of them, to organize colorful illumination spectacles with Bengali fireworks. Prus reached the first seam using the stairs, twisted – as we already know – “like a tire-bouchon.” There were complaints among those going down that the road to the underworld “can make you dizzy” (W 229). And it did indeed. “Tire-bouchon,” darkness, and uniform costumes blurred the earth’s differences, gender differentiation vanished, “in the shy light of the candle, I see that my neighbor in a mortal cape and a mining cap, up there represented the fair sex” (W 229). The sense of orientation and time disappeared, and they could only be reclaimed on the surface. The underground journey was physical, on the one hand, and imaginary, on the other. Visitors experienced fantasies in this hallucinatory, dreamy world.

The colonization of the night began in European culture in the seventeenth century in two ways. Wolfgang Schivelbusch speaks of the “lighting of order” and the “lighting of festivity.”⁶¹ Far-reaching uniformity – in the shape of lanterns and the intensity of light they produced – marked the first type, while the second type assumed maximum diversity, freedom, and unpredictability. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Cracow already had gas lanterns in its central parts, which produced the same effect every night: “The evening has come and gas lanterns, so dark and rare as ours, were lit” (K 162). From time to time, the city conducted celebrations with illuminations and fireworks. From among the light shows that Cracow’s urban space held at the end of nineteenth century, the most memorable for the citizens must have been two particular spectacles, both on the occasion of visits from Vienna. In 1880, the city hosted Emperor Franz Joseph I. In city chronicles, this event was saved as an extraordinary spectacle arranged in the Main Square:

Although it was impossible to illuminate the tower of St. Mary’s Basilica, the view of the Market Square was truly magical. Especially, when the Cracow Cloth Hall and some houses lit with a wide palette of colors of Bengal fireworks. The Cloth Hall

60 J. S., “Wieliczka,” p. 22.

61 See Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night*, pp. 137–140.

illuminated with attention to the architectural lines looked beautiful. Calm colorless light underlined the building's magnificence. The marble walls looked splendid and warm as never before, and it seemed that one was somewhere in Italy, in front of one of those glamorous palaces which proudly stand all around that classical country. The building, solemn and original even after the renovation, turned out completely magical when colorful lights flew around it and brought it to life with violet, purple, emerald glow and all the colors one could imagine. There were days when the Main Square in Cracow drowned in thousands of colors and was a pure festival of colors. The Galician Bank and the Mutual Insurance Organization appeared in the gas flames along with the Emperor's initials.⁶²

The plan of the emperor's visit to Cracow included a trip to Wieliczka and a descent underground. On this occasion, the mining authorities ordered special carriages for transporting dignitaries in the undergrounds. The visit to Wieliczka eventually did not happen and the carriages had to wait for distinguished guests for seven years, until the arrival of Archduke Rudolf and his wife Stéphanie. The program of their stay was very intensive. They came in June 1887, so most of the ceremony could take part outdoors with the cheering of crowds. At that time, Cracow already had a gas installation, proved during the Emperor's visit. It served mostly to raise the spirits and enchant the gathered crowd. *Czas* published a detailed report on the evening spectacle of June 28:

When in front of the massive audience that eagerly waited for the illumination of the Cloth Hall (which splendor was deduced from trial attempts) flames were lit, juvenile citizens welcomed the glow with an exclamation. Invisible at night, gas pipes threw out thousands of flames, highlighting eighteen arches on each side of the Cloth Hall, the central gates, and the balustrades. Rosettes leaped over the railing over each arch. From the side of Szewska street, there glowed the monogram of the Archduke couple, surrounded by a flaming wreath with a crown at the top. On the side of the St. Mary's Basilica hanged the imperial initials. Over each pillar shined colored tulips lit with gas. Lamps with intensely red glass threw light in the depths beneath the arcades and at the entrances. They cast a dim magical light. Looking from afar, one saw a fiery building with red glazing windows. Next to it shone the Galician Bank. The entire balustrade was surrounded by flames with gas rosettes; windows of the first floor, where a social club used to be, were surrounded by burning frames, which highlighted the lines of the window with the upper cornice. The flames in lanterns along the main highway surrounding the Market Square were replaced with gas wreaths and rosettes in which shone the imperial initials of the crown prince and his wife. The houses around the

62 "Cesarz Franciszek Józef I w Krakowie," in: *Józefa Czecha Kalendarz Krakowski na rok 1886*, p. 27.

way glittered, and many were decorated with gas rosettes, coats of arms, and emperor's initials. Gas flames created the impression of shimmering jewels in the wind.⁶³

Cracow repeated this wonderful (and expensive) spectacle the following evening, on Wednesday, June 29. An important part of both light shows was time: the middle of the week. We know that performances lasted until 11 pm and that it was only after this hour that "the crowd thinned out." The visit of the archduke and his wife was an extraordinary occasion, which made people of every state equal. The daily rhythm resembled the place on the social ladder as it corresponded to the time at which one began and ended their activity. The same factor that shifted the seventeenth-century balls until after dusk was still present in the nineteenth century. Only the wellborn ate late breakfast and a supper at night. The visit of Archduke temporarily suspended those rules. Night was available to everyone; the evening spectacle was the time of carnival during which the hierarchy and subordination vanished in the darkness.

From the very beginning, a visit to the Wieliczka Mine was associated with two different types of lighting, which can be considered equivalents of the "regular" and "festive" lighting developed and improved in the nineteenth century. From the moment of descent, the "candlemen" accompanied the guests, they usually were young boys in preparation for the mining profession. Light was here a symbol of uniformity and economy, which is confirmed in records from various visits that happened before 1914.⁶⁴ Primitive lamps, swinging to the rhythm of the footsteps and dimming under a stronger puff of air, made the visitors stroll the underground in almost complete darkness. The diversity and richness of light concerned only the spectacles in the chambers. Of course, the underground spectacles were not as pompous as those that welcomed the Emperor of Rudolf and Princess Stéphanie. The technical possibilities in the Mine would not allow for such celebration. However, with sufficient funds, one could feel like the Archduke – as we learn from an old brochure – because the Mine could guarantee the same attractions to anyone.

63 "Iluminacja," *Czas* 147/1887.

64 The installation of electric lights in the underground tourist route began in 1914; see "Kopalnie wielickie," *Turysta Polski* 1/1914, p. 30 (supplement to *Świat*). Mieczysław Orłowicz, *Ilustrowany przewodnik po Galicji, Bukowinie, Spiszu, Orawie i Śląsku Cieszyńskim*, Lviv, 1919, p. 324 (preface dated "Lviv, July 1914"), also complains about "the primitive way of illuminating the mine with oil lamps and chambers with blue light hinders their beauty, while much smaller mines, like the one in Ronaszek near Marmaroschsiget, are illuminated by Hungarians with electricity, which only emphasizes the belittling of Wieliczka."

Should anyone wish to witness by themselves or in a group a *more exquisite lighting* than first-class, they demand an even more sumptuous welcome with the luminous illumination of arches, pyramids, the bridge of Emperor Franz Joseph I, Archduke Friedrich chamber, Gofuchowski railroad station, Piaskowa Skała chamber, and so on, to enjoy the railroad ride, various fireworks, and the so-called “hell ride” in Steinhauser shaft, one must order the so-called “announced guest tour” at least 48 hours in advance at the Management Board of the Mine. In order to do so, one must also deposit 100 zlotys and discuss further costs with the Management Board.⁶⁵

The above means that the only limitations to the “announced guest tour” could be of technical nature. In other words, the illumination differences – known and respected by overground Cracow – were abolished in underground Wieliczka. The form of the spectacle correlated with the price and, obviously, with the capacity of the underground “machine of vision” to offer in closed chambers a show born first in open space.⁶⁶ The “machine” of Wieliczka was capable of producing various effect. Now, let us focus on the one which – as I believe – was very close to the early cinematic experience.

The time of rapid tourism development in Wieliczka, was also an important time for the prehistory of cinema. The 1855 London-published *The Art of Transparent Painting on Glass for Magic Lantern*⁶⁷ proved the popularity of spectacles that used the “magic lantern.” This was not the only publication of such type, though Edward Groom’s work smoothly connected theoretical elaborations with the form of a manual explaining how to prepare projections that stand a chance of attracting audience. Author’s belief and starting point was that projections with the use of “magic lantern” should popularize knowledge above all else, and only then serve as entertainment. Groom’s slides sought to teach, help understand the intricacies of nature, only then amuse and bewilder the audience, for instance, by showing people or animals in motion. Groom’s manual is worth mentioning for one more reason. Although the title might not suggest it, the manual opens to modern techniques of image recording. Apart from slides produced by painting techniques, Groom also describes such made on glass by the application of positive photographic records.⁶⁸ A similar manual

65 “Kopalnie soli w Wieliczce,” in: *Józefa Czecha Kalendarz Krakowski na rok 1895*.

66 In the second half of the nineteenth century, there occurred another interesting phenomenon bringing fireworks and sparklers from squares and city parks into salons. Therefore, Wieliczka spectacles were a cultural practice related to lighting “fireworks” on Christmas trees. See Mitzner, *Teatr światła i cienia*, pp. 71–72.

67 See E. Groom, *The Art of Transparent Painting on Glass for Magic Lantern*, London, 1855.

68 Groom, *The Art of Transparent Painting*, p. 11.

by Stanisław Szalay, owner of a “photographic storehouse,” appeared in Poland. “Magic lantern” – despite its name – is characterized in the book as a tool for fostering knowledge. A big part of the book is made of remarks on how to use the magic lantern to prepare an interesting lecture. At the beginning of the twentieth century, slides for presentations were easily available. There was no need to paint or prepare them on your own. A great variety of them was also available in Stanisław Szalay’s storehouse.⁶⁹ Neither did one have to prepare the content of a lecture or presentation. In a brochure, there were advertisements of slides that were available at the “Polish Bookshop.” Among the offered titles there were two lectures entitled *Talks About the Inside of the Earth*.⁷⁰ Szalay advises that, “These presentations need to be like a play in a theater: well directed and prepared.”⁷¹

An interesting thread in his small book on how to prepare a lecture is the part in which he discusses the necessary preparations of the room for the lecture. It is important to provide darkness, which is a prerequisite for the operation of the magic lantern. Szalay writes that, “Any other light source should be avoided. Hence, if there must be light in the room (the police may require this), it ought to be placed in such a way that it does not throw any light on the screen.”⁷²

This above fragment indicates a matter that may be named the conflict between the “regular” and “festive” lighting. Such a conflict did not arise in the nineteenth century. It is an inalienable part of cultural practices based on the use of light in public space. The lighting of Paris funded by Louis XIV intended to serve the authorities and facilitate control over the city, whose citizens always found a way to be insubordinate. The natural darkness might have magnified the social lack of transparency. Narrow winding streets made it impossible to identify a person or pacify hostile mob, so they became extremely dangerous after sunset. Initially, city lights were part of a continuously developed and improved apparatus of repression. Szalay mentions that police regulations ban complete darkness in the auditorium. In the early twentieth century, these regulations grew in importance with the spread of new cultural practice: cinema. In the legal provisions that defining the conditions of cinematographic performances, there were parameters regarding what, when, and to what extent may be darkened. One of such regulations read, “When there is any audience in the waiting rooms,

69 See S. Szalay, *Latarnia czarnoksiężska i jej zastosowanie w szkole i przy odczytach*, Warsaw, 1907.

70 Szalay, *Latarnia czarnoksiężska*, p. 3.

71 Szalay, *Latarnia czarnoksiężska*, p. 27.

72 Szalay, *Latarnia czarnoksiężska*, p. 25.

vestibules, and halls outside of the auditorium, light must not be dimmed; the auditorium can only be dimmed to such an extent that the images require. After each performance, all the restrooms ought to be lit with full light.⁷³

Wieliczka Mine visit plan had to meet police regulations for lighting. Therefore, authorities imposed appropriate regulations on the visitors by forcing on them a discipline similar to that of nineteenth-century schools and factories. The educational character of a visit to the Mine is obvious in Prus's description. It also impacts the description itself, which at one point becomes a lecture on geology for beginners; just like the lectures in *Talks About the Inside of the Earth*. The underground journey explained what kitchen salt is, how it is made and extracted, but it also outlined the relations of power in the world above by informing who capitalizes on the production of salt. Apart from the valuable educational component of the nineteenth-century trip through the Wieliczka Mine, there was also a political component. Among other places, it manifested itself in names. When Prus descended, the shaft he used commemorated the Polish nobleman Daniłowicz and when Archduke Rudolf visited Wieliczka, the shaft was already renamed after him, the Crown Prince of Austria. The underground chambers had various names and the most splendid of them were a tribute to the rulers of the terrestrial world. Politics was also present in the light performances in Wieliczka, including banners. Because every underground is a threat to the rulers. It had to be clear who is the master of the mine. However, in the undergrounds, both rulers and knowledge lost to entertainment.

Almost all who reported on the Wieliczka Mine mention the banners hanging in the chambers. Undoubtedly, they were messages that appeared no sooner than the pavements and chambers opened for spectators in search of new experiences. Banners were no mere underground exposition; on the contrary, their role and use were established long before the nineteenth century. They were a festive decoration used in open and closed spaces; that is, in streets, on squares, or in gardens and, respectively, in theaters and temples. Today, we know how they were made and illuminated. A contemporary theater historian describes them in a way that draws a parallel between the banners and slides, but also the primitive magic lantern:

Tulle, canvas, or greased paper served as materials for banners, painted using both opaque and transparent paint for different parts of the composition, so as to later decide through where the light should go. Some banners had dark silhouettes, other – bright, depending on what was painted.⁷⁴

73 “W sprawie kinematografów,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 226/1912.

74 Mitzner, *Teatr światła i cienia*, p. 59.

The vast majority of authors include banners in their reports. Because banners are mobile, and it is easy to make and install them, they could have been changed for every visit to match its character. The Archduke Rudolf and Princess Stéphanie came to Wieliczka with the “royal train.” From there, they went to the mine under “the arch with an inscription “God bless you” on one side and “May God be with you!” on the other.”⁷⁵ When the couple descended, the Mine was “lit with a thousand lights.”⁷⁶ From the Łętów ballroom, accompanied by music, the distinguished guests went to Michałowice chamber, “magnificently illuminated with a red Bengal fire.”⁷⁷ In that very place also hang a dazzling banner made for this occasion, which depicted “a miner welcoming the guests” with an inscription “God bless you!” The further part of the underground journey was a chain of attractions arranged with the use of light, music, and people. From the bridge in the chamber of Franz Joseph I, the Archduke and the Princess had “an amazing view of the ten-meters-high pyramid with inscriptions, built in their honor.” In the same chamber, they could admire the first tableau vivant on their way which “presented a group of miners at work.” Next, the guests went along the Lichtenfels corridor, where – as the press correspondents reported – “they saw mining works.” The most splendid composition was in the chamber of Archduke Friedrich. “There, a stunning tableau vivant of miners appeared. The composition was arranged by Mr. Juliusz Kossak.” The further visit abounded in entertainments:

From the chamber of Archduke Friedrich, the royal couple took a little horsecar trip. The decorations of cars for the Archduke couple were splendid. The horsecar stopped at the Gołuchowski station, where the military band of the 13th regiment accompanied the royal Couple during breakfast. After breakfast, they went to see the lake. Then, they visited the Steinhauser shaft. Here, they took the so-called “hell ride.” The miners lifted on ropes singing the oldest Polish religious song *Bogurodzica* [Mother of God]. In that very shaft they also saw a marvelous firework spectacle to which a music society from Cracow added even more splendor. The lighting of all shafts, chambers, and grottos was astounding.⁷⁸

75 “Wycieczka do Wieliczki,” *Czas* 147/1887.

76 *Gazeta Lwowska* 1887 (July 1).

77 “Arcyksięstwo Rudolfowie w Galicji,” *Kurier Lwowski* 180/1887. See “Pobyty arcyksięcia Rudolfa z małżonką arcyksiężną Stefanią w Krakowie,” *Nowa Reforma* 148/1887; “Wycieczka do Wieliczki,” *Czas* 147/1887; “Wieliczka,” *Dziennik Polski* 180/1887.

78 “Arcyksięstwo Rudolfowie w Galicji,” *Kurier Lwowski* 80/1887.

Prus's journey through the Wieliczka Mine was not that lavish, for the writer wanted to be careful with his expenses in the mine. Yet, the type of visit Prus selected also offered dazzling and breathtaking experiences. In the ballroom hung an enormous chandelier "made of salt as pure as glass" and "shined a banner." What did Prus see on the banner? We will never find out, because the hurry ("We rush once more") interrupted slow contemplation. Other reports include similar descriptions of "slides" in Wieliczka. Authors write about light effects and visual experiences, while reducing the significance of signs in the compositions. Perceiving banners in that way approximates them to other forms of lighting of the undergrounds: to cascades of fireworks and the "hell ride." Something similar happened on the surface, when the Main Square in Cracow welcomed the Emperor and the Archduke with marvelous illuminations. Many elements of the carefully planned light decorations simultaneously formed monograms and coats of arms. However, it was the attractiveness, not the legibility of images, that was at stake in the illumination game. Images were to draw people's attention and make all the eyes look in one direction; after all, the participants were mostly uneducated, also illiterate people. The principle of attractiveness governed the composition of the underground spectacle. The same principle was supposed to lure the participants of nineteenth-century fairs to performances showcasing dexterity, magic tricks, fire eating, wild animals, and attractions like the funhouse, the mirror maze, the Ferris wheel, and other cleverly devised machines. At the end of the nineteenth century, popular culture overtook this form of spectacle by developing the *variété*, a spectacle full of unpredictable, surprising, bloodcurdling tricks that could end in unpredictable ways and form all possible configurations. At the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, film screenings joined this extensive list of spectacles based on the principle of attractiveness.

"Cinema of attractions" is a term from film studies, describing practices common in the early days of cinematographic camera.⁷⁹ The first public projections of "living photographs" were all of the *variété* type. Therefore, they did not stand on their own but supported other performances to jointly entertain the audience.⁸⁰ The attraction rested not so much in the events onscreen as the

79 A term proposed by Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions. Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," *Wide Angle* 3–4/1986, which reoriented the research on the early years of cinema. The book *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. W. Strauven, Amsterdam, 2006 brings a proof of the popularity and canonization of this term.

80 A good example may be spectacles of the continental Éden-Théâtre, which visited Lviv in July and August 1897. Apart from the "gallery of gigantic tableaux vivants," the

process of transferring the moving images of people to the screen; the magical device of reanimating that, which – once registered – ought to belong to the past, change, or cease to exist. The unconvincing plot, if any, was not the source of amazement for the audience, but it was a gesture of resurrecting what was gone. It was the possibility to recognize on the screen something that was somewhere outside of the screening room, that no longer existed, but was doubled as if by some magical spells so that it was here and there at the same time.⁸¹ The astonishment and surprise were to be first evoked by the mysterious rattling apparatus. Therefore, the management of the municipal theater in Cracow invited people for a “demonstration” of the camera and warned that – contrary to popular belief – “it is not a toy but a tool for researchers, particularly physiologists.”⁸² The demonstration of the modern machine’s possibilities was a type of a popular spectacle in the late nineteenth century. At the time of first cinematographic spectacles, the citizens of European metropolises could admire other exciting inventions like the phonograph or the machine that emits X-ray which could pass through skin.⁸³ The word “miracle” filled advertisements and descriptions

programme of this “largest and most fantastic enterprise in the world” also offered “fantastic pantomime with phenomena” (“A wild night”), “a panopticon of famous figures” (performed by “a man with hundred heads”), “a delightful fire-visionary flying dancer,” “a performance by director Schenk,” “the presentation of an incomparable giant thaumatograph;” see *Gazeta Narodowa* 197, 202, 217, 220, 221, 237/1897. In the early twentieth century, cinematographs were still included in “folk plays,” advertised for instance as „[p]ublic fun for young and old. Among others, the merry-go-round, a panorama, Kasperl’s [puppet] theater and monkey theater, stands of happiness of all sorts. Lottery. Cinematograph, wrestling contest, African theater, numerous swings, etc. etc.” *Gazeta Codzienna (Gazeta Toruńska)* 121/1903.

- 81 According to Nicholas Daly, “Boerograph,” in: Daly, *Literature, Technology and Modernity, 1860–2000*, Cambridge, 2004, the recognition of scenes from life in images and among film characters – people known from elsewhere – was the basis of the earliest cinematographic experiences. A Cracow daily informed from Vienna about the unfortunate consequences of such a recognition: “Studencka miłość w życiu i kinematografie,” *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* 6/1914 (and the title page picture).
- 82 See the note “Kinematograf,” *Głos Narodu*, 266/1896; column “Teatr, literatura i sztuka,” *Głos Narodu* 263/1896. Andrzej Urbańczyk, *Kinematograf na scenie. Pierwsze pokazy filmowe w Krakowie XI–XII 1896*, Cracow, 1986, meticulously analyzes the Cracow cinema debut in his publication commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the event.
- 83 Although quotes from Maxim Gorky’s enthusiastic film screening report are not a rarity, I present a less popular fragment, filled with mockery: “I am surprised that the fair did not take care of the matter and that it has not yet used X-rays to entertain the

of the cinematograph's amazing possibilities. Władysław Umiński wrote at the time: "today, we can move to the past at any time," and added, "Even though it may seem miraculous to some, this result has been achieved . . . with the use of very natural methods."⁸⁴ The audience of first cinematographic spectacles did not expect the continuity between scenes. The scenes were usually very short, sometimes only a few seconds long, while the whole spectacle rested on the sheer spectacle of (cinematographic) light, which required darkness. The reporter of *Głos Narodu* summarized with admiration the practice of Cracow theater to end spectacles with projections of "living photographs." He writes: "People hungry for a visual feast filled the auditorium to the last seat but, before they see the "miracles" of cinematography, they must impatiently sit through a play from a classic repertoire, which they would otherwise give no chance."⁸⁵

The earliest advertisements in nineteenth-century papers invited people not for a movie but for "cinematography," and they provided only a brief note on the

crowd. This is a mistake, a very big one. Anyway . . . who knows? Perhaps Roentgen rays will appear on stage tomorrow, used for belly dancing." Qtd. after A. Jackiewicz, *Gorki i film*, Warsaw, 1955, pp. 10–11.

- 84 See W. Umiński, "Z krainy czarów," *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 1/1896, p. 19. In "Żywe fotografie," *Wędrowiec* 1/1897, p. 8, Umiński states that, "[t]he uninitiated are inclined to believe that they are victims of a jugglery." The anonymous author of the article "Cud XIX wieku," *Kurier Lwowski* 1896 (September 16), maintains a very skeptical stance toward the new invention of cinematography and describes the spectacle as follows: "The audience sits on a bench in front of a white screen, the light in the room goes out, while a circular light image appears on screen. It is very vague due to enlargement. It moves quickly, vibrates and flickers. At the same time, there begin to appear on screen scratches, cracks, and bubbles. They were created during the casting of the collodion ribbon, which holds the negatives in the camera. The flaws are several times larger on screen, so that the diorama does not appear to be a scene from life but a tedious hallucination of a patient in fever. Therefore, the *cinematograph* is far away from nature, not just far from being useful – which it will never be – but even far from being a wonderful toy . . . And everything is so blurry that we heard spectators yesterday who misread the program and mistook *boxers* for *fencers*, *Ship at sea* for *Embankments*, and *Scene at a Madhouse* for *Scottish dance*."
- 85 "Teatr, literatura i sztuka," *Głos Narodu* 270/1896. Pra . . . aw., "Z miasta" (City News), *Diabeł* 24/1896, p. 6, makes a similar observation by indicating with irony: "Theater directors were bewildered by the calm behavior of the audience at the end of the show. Why is it that the audience did not go out and disturb the last act just as it used to do? This symptom of progress was taken into account and – after long debates – people learned that what the newspapers could not do, what respect for art could not do, was done by a *cinematograph*!!"

program. The Cracow November 1896 screenings were an addition to theater spectacles and – despite the shortness of the movie fragments – constituted a unity, even if offering but a series of short scenes.⁸⁶ Each scene was equal to one shot that ended with the image fading away, which was also the beginning of the next scene. This practice of showing several different fragments was popular in Poland for a long time, as proven by the form of press announcements. We learn from them that there is “a magnitude of funny scenes” in the “light theater,” and a program “with an amazing choice of both serious and funny images.” The program could have consisted of “a great many of humorous pictures” that made a “thrilling impression.”⁸⁷ As Gunning underlines, the foundation of “the cinema of attractions” was exhibitionism, because the audience became participants in a presented piece. The goal of the recorded scene was to pull the viewer in, abolish the barrier between the picture projected on the canvas and the audience. Movie characters often looked directly in the camera eye, winked, made it clear that they notice the comments in the theater, someone watches them, and then imitates. “The cinema of attractions” benefited from novelty, so it could count on good attendance only for as long as it amazed and astonished with the gesture of reanimating things normally absent in the dark room, with the use of the mysterious and scary machine.⁸⁸ The crucial elements of such cinema were those that,

86 The first reports of film screenings lack the word for a single screening. Most often, reporters refer to “images,” such as in “Kinematograf w teatrze,” *Nowa Reforma* 265/1896: “The inventor Mr. Lumière produced twelve images of living photographs, of which the most absorbing were the scenes of a train approaching the station, a swim in the sea, a comic on stage, etc.”

87 These expressions come from advertisements in *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* published in Cracow, issues 33/1911, 138/1911, 26/1907, and 210/1911.

88 Part of the early cinema history were also disasters caused by faulty functioning of projectors and maladjustment of rooms. Thus, apart from visual aspects of the train entering station La Ciotat or scenes from an earthquake in Sicily, the awareness of the possible risks of a projector’s failure contributed to the atmosphere of fear in the room. Spectators could read about such effects in press articles with telling headlines. “Ostrożnie z kinematografem” (Careful with the Cinematograph), *Gazeta Lwowska* 69/1899, writes about an explosion during a screening in Białystok: “Servant Oskierko died in the screening room; Mr. Masłowski, the owner of the cinematograph was taken to a hospital where he drew his last breath.” “Pożar kinoteatru” (Fire in a Theater), *Nowa Reforma*, 391/1911, writes about a fire in Pittsburg: “Twenty-five people died crushed by the crowd, many wounded.” “Katastrofa w kinematografie” (Disaster in a Cinematograph), *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 197/1911, reports on the death of twenty-nine in the fire in Pittsburg, “only women and children.” “Panika w kinematografie” (Panic in a Cinematograph), *Kurier Lwowski*, 391/1911, writes about

with time, lost their significance. The first to suffer was darkness and its partner in crime: the cinematograph. The names of the first cinemas in Cracow memorized those spectacles that used light to paint attractive pictures. There was the *Edison Circus* with the second word of the name referring to the fair and a technique of putting on breathtaking shows.⁸⁹ However, names like “light theater” or “electric theater” accentuated the medium of creation and the material able to transfer the whole visible world onto white canvas.

When characterizing “the cinema of attractions,” Tom Gunning indicates that the presented spectacle is “a series of displays – of magical attractions – rather than a primitive sketch of narrative continuity.” The story sketched on the screen is more of a pretext, it “provides a frame upon which to string a demonstration of the magical possibilities of the cinema.”⁹⁰ The attractiveness has many sources and subordinates to itself almost all elements of the spectacle. Contrary to expectations, the screenings of first “living photographs” did not repeat. The early screenings were a stage for improvisation and gave operators all the possibilities for the modification and supplementation of images registered on tape and presented on screen. The tape was like a music score that only outlines a performance, which has a broad array of possible executions. The operator could manipulate the tape speed, play some scenes faster, some slower and, thus, adjust the tempo to the audience’s loud requests. The screenings were never silent. Apart from the rattle of operating machines, other noises also shaped the soundscape of the room: the musical accompaniment – often very rich, with a whole orchestra – and the commentary of the operator or a person hired for that very purpose.⁹¹ Silence and passivity in the audience were not a part of “the cinema of attractions.” To some extent, the form encouraged spectators to participate actively in the experience. One might even conclude that the spectacle forced certain reactions on the spectators. An image of a train running straight into the screen meant to evoke screams or other physical signs of fear.⁹² Therefore, the

the fire in Pittsburg: “The victims are mostly women emigrants: Poles, Hungarians, and Croatians.”

89 In the nineteenth century, the press began using a pseudonym for Thomas Alva Edison, “the Wizzard of Menlo Park.”

90 Gunning, “The Cinema of Attraction,” p. 65.

91 See Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions,” p. 66.

92 In one of the earliest Polish reports on cinematographic experience in “Cynematograf,” *Gazeta Kaliska* 71/1896 (August 28), we read: “However, the most intriguing image is the one of a courier train entering the station. It approaches the station ever quicker, it arrives, it stopped, and a turmoil begins on the platform as people jump off the carriages. Porters rush to the packages, conductors open the doors of the cars, all push

audience's vivid reaction was equal to a symbolic completion of the spectacle. In fact, the aim of the whole undertaking was to continuously provoke actions, even if these actions meant only loud commentary to the watched scenes, making remarks about the music, or voicing demands toward the operator. Gunning locates an interesting form that is known in the history of cinema as "Hale's Tour" (1904–1911) in the convention of "the cinema of attractions." These were few-minutes-long shows arranged in rooms decorated in a way to resemble the inside of a panoramic railroad car. Conductors showed the spectators to their seats, from which the audience watched a movie of a real American landscape screened in the rear end of a car window. Moreover, sounds resembling the squeals of train wheels and the horn, and seats that simulated the trembling of the cars accompanied the projection.⁹³

Hale's Tours exemplified the pursuit of audience activation in the earliest cinematographic screenings. It had two prototypes, not mentioned by Gunning: one more, and one less famous. The former was a train exhibited by the Russians during the 1900 Paris Exposition, in which the spectators could experience a simulated journey from Moscow to Beijing. The exhibition was sponsored by Compagnie Internationale des Wagon-Lits Cook consisted of a four-day train journey squeezed into a forty-five-minute-long screening. Three layers of painted panoramas simulated the view outside of the windows and the motion of the train.⁹⁴ Each of the layers moved at different speed. The second prototype – a far less known example of Haley's Tour – also appeared in Paris, where in 1888 one could participate in a spectacle entitled *Tonkin en chemin de fer*, described in advertisements as a "panoramic and dioramic railroad." Every train running along the circling railroad consisted of five cars. Each of them

each other around running in a hurry in every possible direction. And it is incredible that photography and electricity can all of that. We want to run when the train enters the station because it is coming straight at us and fear grips us that we will lose our lives under its wheels."

93 See Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions," p. 66. See also Kirby, *Parallel Tracks. The Railroad and Silent Cinema*, pp. 46–47. This form was also known outside the USA; for instance, in England and France. In this context, we find very interesting information in the article "Zwycięski pochod kinematografu," *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 209/1911: "In American luxury trains, which travel long distances, the last carriage is a very elegant theater for cinematographic productions."

94 See A. Friedberg, *Window Shopping. Cinema and the Postmodern*, Berkeley, 1994, p. 84. The panorama of the Paris exposition promoted the Trans-Siberian Railroad. It preceded the completion of the project by a few years.

could fit ten spectators. On the sides of the cars, changing paintings created the impression of passing through various terrains of the French colony of Tonkin, its forests, valleys, and tunnels. The simulated trips across Vietnam had an educational function: it sought to acquaint the French with a terrain attractive due to its novel and pristine character.⁹⁵

The banners in Wieliczka were an element of the underground “pre-cinema of attractions.” They amazed in a similar way to the colorful fireworks and singing miners with torches pulled up on ropes during the “hell ride.” It is clearly visible in the reports from Archduke Rudolf’s visit that banners were responsible for establishing a relation with the visitors: welcoming, greeting (“God bless you!”), and even teaching them.⁹⁶ The eyes of the distinguished guest did not rest for a long time on the banners – there was no time – though their tour through underground tunnels by a “miniature horsecar” mobilized their eyes to even harder work. Although the horsecar was available when Prus visited Wieliczka, he did not use this possibility. Still, he traversed the Mine quite quickly. Prus had a brief

95 All information about this particular Parisian form of entertainment come from an advertisement: A. de Cavaillon, *Le Tonkin en Chemin de fer. Voyage Circulaire. Étude pour servir au Chemin de fer Panoramique et Dioramique*, Paris, 1888.

96 Among the slides meant to educate, one was outstandingly impressive. Prus only mentions it in passing. This was a composition from the representative Łętów Chamber. Czesław Jankowski, *W podziemiach wielickich*, Cracow, 1903, p. 22, writes about it without much emotion: “In the back of the chamber hangs a banner, quite banal one, lit from behind. Above it a writing “Viribus unitis,” below a mining emblem “Science and Work enrich the World,” with corresponding drawings. At the bottom, a woman symbolizing Austria. Although the banner is shabby and shrouded in all the light that has been shining on it for a long time, it has nothing to do with art, though it still pleases the eye, especially because it is so unexpected. . .” The lack of affection is understandable. After all, the banner was a symbol of Austrian authorities left in the Polish mining space. When Poland regained independence, the banner from Łętów Chamber disappeared following the political turmoil of the surface. Zdzisław Kamiński, *Przewodnik dla zwiedzających kopalnię wielicką*, Cracow, 1919, p. 12, writes in his guide to Wieliczka: “We remember the chamber from the Austrian times, when a banal inscription in German (*Durch Wissen und Arbeit zum Reichthum Und Macht*) displeased the visitors at the entrance. It was full of dark double-winged national birds under the unavoidable motto “Viribus unitis.” Today, in that place there is a magnificent banner by Włodzimierz Tetmajer. With a multitude of colors, the great artist reconstructed the beautiful legend of Saint Kinga, the wife of Bolesław V the Chaste.” The new banner must have come to Łętów Chamber before the war. The evidence for that is a postcard issued in 1910: “Wieliczka. Salt Mine. Banner in the Dancing Hall. Włodzimierz Tetmajer.”

look at the slide from Łętów Chamber. He also saw other slides, hanging over the underground lake, which he crossed by a boat. Prus's excitement steadily decreased as each new light attraction was less impressive from the previous ones or – should I say – due to Prus's weariness and the manifold attractions – less perceptible. At the end of the journey, when Prus saw something that seemed to be an extraordinary attraction in the underground world, he was once more amazed. Prus entered an “underground restaurant” (W 235), the same one where Archduke Rudolf arrived with a “miniature horsecar” and – surrounded by music – ate breakfast with his entourage. The last stop and its gastronomic offer surprised Prus. The salty monotony of taste was delicately interrupted by wine along with long-forgotten clinks of glasses and voices counting money interwoven with music. Colorful lanterns illuminated the restaurant's interior. Among the attractions awaiting tourists in the nineteenth-century Wieliczka Mine were also replicas from the overground world: streets, bridges, chapels, cathedrals, and even a forest.⁹⁷ The underground railroad station with the restaurant completed the list.

Salt was one of the reasons for laying railroads in the Western Galicia. The first line, namely the Emperor Ferdinand Northern Railroad was to connect Vienna with Bochnia (now Southern Poland) and Wieliczka, which facilitated the transport of resources (timber, coal) and food (salt, meat, cereal) to Vienna.⁹⁸ Due to financial problems, the line only reached Cracow and, from there, Bochnia, but only after an almost a ten-year-long break; under the name of Galician Railroad of Archduke Charles Louis. Finally, the line to Wieliczka was inaugurated in late January of 1857.⁹⁹ Prus came by train but – on his way from the station to the Mine – he still had to use a traditional horse carriage. Horses were also present in the Mine, where Prus saw a small carriage with recovered salt and pulled by a horse, which evoked in him a lot of affection for the toiling animal. From the

97 Prus's description of Majer and Rosetti Chamber included a thrill experienced by visitors: “Imagine you are inside an enormous church when an earthquake begins. At once, its high walls and thick vault crack and break into huge irregular blocks, that fall from above and from the sides, racing to be the first one to crush you” (W 234). The woodcuts in Ambroży Grabowski's guide *Kraków i jego okolice*, pp. 309, 311, 313, present both chambers. F. Piestrak, *Kilka słów o Wieliczce i jej kopalniach*, Kraków, 1903, p. 45: “The never-ending construction of cribs in the chambers of Wieliczka devoured forests, and moved them under the ground”

98 See W. G. E. Becker, *Über die Flötzgebirge im südlichen Polen, besonders in Hinsicht auf Steinsalz und Soole*, Freyberg, 1830.

99 See “Kronika miejscowa i zagraniczna,” *Czas* 21/1857 (January 27).

very beginning of his visit, Prus moved along a handy analogy: mines, corridors, chambers, and shafts were like streets and splendid city buildings, while the underground journey partly resembles a stroll in a big city, and this impression accompanied Prus with various intensity on each stage of his visit.¹⁰⁰ The feeling was definitely the strongest at the end of his trip, when weary and tired Prus felt that he was on a railroad station much more splendid than the one above the ground, in Wieliczka. It was here, where all the lines of the underground railroad met, Prus felt the greatest shock of realization that the underground world copied the overground world, and it could really make one feel as if in the labyrinth of a city. In that case, light was again of great importance. It contributed to the atmosphere of a metropolis; the cascades of fireworks created the illusion that one was not underground but in the heart of a European metropolis, where streams of colorful bright lights flooded the streets. This is how Walter Benjamin characterizes Paris undergoing modernization: "Arcades – they radiated through the Paris Empire like fairy grottoes. For someone entering the passage des Panoramas in 1817, the sirens of gaslight would be singing to him on one side, while oil-lamp odalisques offered enticements from the other."¹⁰¹ Benjamin also recalls Guy de Maupassant:

I reached Champs-Élysées, where the *cafés concerts* seemed like blazing hearts among the leaves. Brushed with yellow light, chestnut trees had the look of painted objects, the look of phosphorescent trees. And the electric globes – like shimmering, pale moons, like moon eggs fallen from the sky, like monstrous living pearls – dimmed, with their nacreous glow, mysterious and regal, the flaring jets of gal, of ugly, dirty gas, and the garlands of colored glass.¹⁰²

In the Mine, Prus was astonished and shocked in a way that only great metropolises will inspire; such strong astonishment would later be available only in the rooms of a "light theater" during screenings of "living photographs." Prus's shock was magnified and crystallized at Gołuchowski Railroad Station

100 "Imagine a city like Warsaw with its streets, gardens, palaces, houses and fill it with debris and sand up to the rooftops, which will create a thirty or even forty feet tall layer. Is that what a mine looks like? . . . Not exactly, we would need eighteen or twenty-four layers like this and stack them on top of each other. . . ." (W 226); "The corridors twist and bend. From time to time, you come across holes in their gloomy walls: these are the new street of this fantastic city," (W 231).

101 W. Benjamin, *The Arcade Project*, trans. H. Eiland, K. McLaughlin, Cambridge (Mass.), 1999, p. 564.

102 G. de Maupassant, *Claire de lune*, Paris, 1909, p. 222.

In the nineteenth century, there were three floors opened to visitors. The Station was on the lowest, third floor; this location was not accidental. Two important communication routes crossed in the station chamber. Moreover, it was the place where many lines of the underground railroad met. This railroad was installed in the 1860s, its cars were pulled by animals or people. On this occasion, the chamber previously called the Wąlczyn Chamber, received the name commemorating the Governor of Galicia, Agenor Romuald Gołuchowski. It is difficult to precisely determine what did the chamber look like at the time of Prus's visit. Guidebooks, reports from various visits to the Mine, and numerous iconographic resources allow us to recreate the look of the Mine from a slightly later period. The one after modifications aimed to accommodate the Mine to the needs of the constantly rising number of visitors. Czesław Jankowski paints the most complete picture of the Mine with his literary description:

If any of the readers has ever been at the bottleneck-like railroad station in Steinbrück, surrounded with sky-kissing rocks on one side and enclosed by a station building on the other, then you will have no difficulty with imagining the Gołuchowski Station. The endless salt walls take the place of the sky-kissing rocks and the buffet surrounded by a few floors of galleries replaces the station building. The rails stay exactly where they were in the provincial station, and they surface in the dim light of a few lamps.¹⁰³

The following fragment by Czarnecki complements the description:

In the last years, the look of the [Gołuchowski] Chamber has changed because of the timbering, decorated with galleries peeking from all the walls. Although constructed for safety reasons, the timbering was supposed to be aesthetically pleasing to the eye. For the comfort of the visitors, there also appeared a few rows of benches in the restaurant. Above them, lanterns silently hung, shedding a charming light on resting tourist groups.¹⁰⁴

The Gołuchowski Station was the last point of the nineteenth-century tourist route. Tired visitors arrived at it richer in unusual visual and acoustic experiences. In fact, words could not do justice to the richness of the experience. The nineteenth-century reports from Wieliczka have many common features, but the most prevalent one rhetorically is the topos of inexpressibility. The pen stops in the exact moment when one is supposed to at least sketch the underground excitement. The author of a railroad guide writes, "The terror and the beauty of nature are fighting here for attention, the viewer leaves the huge underworld – a

103 Jankowski, *W podziemiach wielickich*, p. 50. Steinbrück, today Zidani Most in Slovenia, was an important station on the Vienna-Trieste Railroad.

104 J. Czarnecki, *Otchłanie wielickie*, Wieliczka, 1907, n.p.

completely separate world – full of extraordinary impressions, amazed and delighted with all the peculiarities and wonders of nature that he saw in the Mine during his journey.”¹⁰⁵

Very often, these reports mentioned vertigoes. Prus refers to it many times. He scrupulously enumerated situations in which he felt confused. First, at the Cracow station where three different time zones overlapped, then during a meal at the Wieliczka diner due to alcohol consumption, and later when descending down the “tire-bouchon.” Other reasons for Prus’s confusion were dresses that blurred sexual differences, darkness, and his dance in the brightly lit Łętów Chamber: “I recall that I can’t dance at all” (W230). Finally, the restaurant at the railroad station, with its characteristic noise and commotion. The commotion at the Gołuchowski Station sharply contrasts with the overground Wieliczka Station, where trains from Cracow end their run. Wieliczka Station simply does not evoke such imagery. It seems that Wieliczka Station building did not differ from the rest of the town’s buildings, which are not very impressive or interesting.¹⁰⁶ The urban quality of nineteenth-century Wieliczka is very fragile. It is just a dirty little town in Galicia province, and – if it was not enough – it is also dark. Of course, Cracow was something else, yet it did not amaze Prus who constantly compared it to Warsaw, which revealed to him Cracow’s backwardness that did not even have its own waterworks. Only Cracow Railroad Station made a better impression on Prus. It was thanks to the glass roof that protected the people on the platforms from the rain. However, the traffic in the city and at the station was not very big, even though – as the writer calculates – there were at least five important transport routes. Long after Prus’s visit did Cracow experience the nature of an annoying provincial city. The city only came to life during visits of dignitaries, when splendid illuminations changed it into a pulsating European metropolis. The Wieliczka Mine created exactly the same illusion of a metropolis, though underground; quite unexpected, after first seeing a town quite miserably terrestrial. The small town was only an entrance to the great metropolis, to an extraordinary space, which lured and amazed with its dazzling play of light. The Mine foreshadowed the coming of two institutions, which were to greatly utilize small spaces and imitate (simulate) modernity. The first one was

105 G. Smólski, *Przewodnik ilustrowany po c.k. aust[iackich] kolejach państwowych na szlakach: Kraków – Tarnów, Kraków – Wieliczka, Tarnów – Stróże, Stróże – Nowy Sącz, Nowy Sącz – Muszyna-Krynica – Orłów, Sucha – Nowy Sącz*, Vienna, 1892, p. 16.

106 Montanus, “Wieliczka,” *Wędrowiec* 1/1896, p. 5: “Poorly and modestly developed [city of Wieliczka] is no different from ordinary small provincial cities and does not present any value for visitors.”

the amusement park,¹⁰⁷ while the second one was the film screening room. Both places “intensified” the gaze and made one go on a virtual journey. Both places bewildered, excited, and confused the spectator.¹⁰⁸

If we perceive Wieliczka Salt Mine as a harbinger of the amusement park, then each of its chambers may be viewed as an illusion generator. Just like the illuminated Cracow, lights in Wieliczka turned it into a metropolis with luminous corridors and chambers. A visitor could feel like Dante’s protagonist or a tourist visiting Herculaneum. The journey through the underground lake evoked associations with the crossing of the river Styx. Wieliczka’s “vision machine” generated imagined spaces that had overground counterparts in literature and in distant past. The Gołuchowski Station imitated the future. A great depiction of that is a scene from *Sielanka górnicza w kopalni wielickiej* (A Miner’s Pastoral in the Wieliczka Mine). At one point in the story, a young engineer and a girl discuss the mediocre artistic endeavors in the mine: “And here, you see, lies the solution to the puzzle. It is difficult for such a station to resemble the full lively

107 “Olbrzymi karuzel,” *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 10/1896, p. 199: “Modern technology has advanced to such extent that we may build enormous constructions just for our amusement. An example could be the famous Eiffel Tower in Paris or the gigantic Ferris wheel in Chicago. A new addition on this list of toys for big children is the huge roller coaster recently built in England. It is... a spiral slope twisting around the central cylinder, topped with a horizontal platform, and a pointed roof. On the slope, there are rails for small cars of electric railroad. One gets in the car when it is close to the ground and then the train slowly climbs the carousel until it reaches the top platform. Then the momentum of the train takes us down. The train increases speed to reach a dizzying tempo. The ride is even more impressive as the train goes in spirals. At the foot of the roller coaster, the train rides through a small tunnel and then stops, where we exit. On top of the building, there is orchestra and buffet in the pavilion where passengers can muster artificial courage for the awaiting descent. In the building, there is a room that can be used as a dance hall, music hall, theater, or anything of such kind. A dynamo supplies the machine with electricity for the cars and numerous lamps, which change the carousel into a huge torch. There is no doubt that this building may be the central meeting point for all those, who want to spend their free time carelessly. Therefore, the inventor will most probably make a great profit from the roller coaster. It is a new attraction for the bored.”

108 See V. Paci, “The Attraction of the Intelligent Eye. Obsessions with the Vision Machine in Early Film Theories,” in: *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. W. Strauven, Amsterdam, 2006, p. 122.

stations in the “world” at night, to show all that noise, turmoil, and shouting as a deep strong inspiration.” / “Or maybe it isn’t?” – asked the engineer.”¹⁰⁹

The peculiarity of the place stems from the gesture of repetition; from the transfer of overground matters to the underground. It is a result of creating a magical passenger terminal in the small Wieliczka Mine, which resembled those from the West. Therefore, it is not just about a city near Cracow, but about an amusement park with artificial chambers, horror rooms, carousels, and rollercoasters. It was a place with light and sound, which imitated the overground cacophony of visual and auditory stimuli produced by modern European metropolises. Prus did not perceive Cracow as modern, but he took part in a spectacle that imitated modernity. Tom Gunning writes that an evening in a *variété* theater was as exciting as a ride on a tram or an active day in the city crowd.¹¹⁰ The amusement park is the plebeian equivalent of a *variété* theater, which appeared in the public space in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Prus spent in Cracow a few days. He watched different institutions and also found time to visit the “summer theater.” This is how he recalls his evening at the theater: “This evening they performed *Okrężne w Sandomierskiem* [An Autumn Rural Fest in the Sandomierz Region]. It is a play that no longer makes any sense when juxtaposed with contemporary peasant relations. They also performed *Piosenka wujaszka* [Uncle’s Song], but neither its author nor actors follow drama rules” (K 168).¹¹¹ One could say that *Piosenka wujaszka* followed the “drama rules” as much as the underground spectacle witnessed later by Prus in Wieliczka.

Beside amusement parks, another space that almost simultaneously became an institution in which a small space conjured a vast one were motion-picture theaters. These offered a virtual journey that made spectators leave the room in a pleasant state of excitement. Prus presented such a journey in “Widziadła,” which interestingly described the early perception of the “cinema of attractions.” The “cinema of attractions” developed in Europe and America for a decade in 1895–1906. However, it seems that a Polish variety of the “cinema of attractions” continued to appear onscreen for a longer period. It definitely did not disappear completely before 1914. Małgorzata Hendrykowska writes about “Widziadła”

109 Kazet [Zdzisław Kamiński], “Między ziemią a niebem. Sielanka górnicza w kopalni wielickiej,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 78/1907; reprinted in Kazet [Zdzisław Kamiński], *W królestwie nocy. Nowele górników*, Lviv, 1907.

110 See Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions,” p. 68.

111 Prus also indicates the lighting in the theater: “Ten lamps along the gallery and a number of Argand lamps next to the prompter’s box were bright enough to show that half of the seats in the audience were empty” (K 168).

that the film described by Prus's protagonist "shows clear educational tendency." She also adds that, "all the elements of action and the visual attractions are subordinated to this educational tendency."¹¹² Hence – a documentary. I do not feel convinced in this interpretation, and I certainly do not read the narrative as showing a "clear" educational film. Hendrykowska considers a very significant element of the "cinema of attractions" and deprives it of the meaning ascribed to it by Prus. Hendrykowska writes about the close-ups that accompany the descriptions of flats in Warsaw Old Town Square and how they are meant to portray the "symptoms of wealth."¹¹³ A close-up is one of the key devices of the film image model defined by Gunning, which was the most unambiguous representation of the exhibitionism present in such films.¹¹⁴ The close-up allowed the spectators to see the following: "On the tables, little pieces of china and ivory ware; in the cupboard, silver plates and golden cups."¹¹⁵ After a few more sentences that characterize the presented images, a metaphor appears in the story: "Wealth is pouring through gates and windows."¹¹⁶ Such a metaphor directs the reader's attention not only to wealth but above all to the radiance of light that shines through openings in houses, through their gates and windows. Of course, the radiance also shines from the screen. Moments later, an even stronger and more moving radiance will strike the spectator: the buildings around Warsaw Old Town Square will shine. After a few more images, comes the finale:

The last image was simply a miraculous phenomenon. It couldn't have been the Old Town but a fantastic city! Houses sparkling with all possible delicate bright colors, covered with paintings and relief like little precious caskets. And the content of each painting was the several-centuries long history of each house and its owners! ... Instead of ordinary stones a colorful mosaic paves the streets of the Old Town and – in the center – there is a lovely garden burning with living flowers.¹¹⁷

From the very beginning of "Widziadła," Prus uses the device called *ilinx*. Readers are supposed to feel the dizziness that the characters experience. Therefore, first the main character Wzdychajło meets his old friend Poniewolski on the street of the latter's acquaintance, Pijankiewicz, which is a Polish pun on *pijak*,

112 Hendrykowska, *Śladami tamtych cieni*, p. 238.

113 Hendrykowska, *Śladami tamtych cieni*, p. 237.

114 See Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions," p. 66.

115 Prus, "Widziadła," p. 549.

116 Prus, "Widziadła," p. 550.

117 Prus, "Widziadła," p. 552.

“drunkard.” Together they go to Fukier’s bar, where the three men list and argue about their favorite wines but finally agree to go with the choice of Pijankiewicz, who is regular at Fukier’s. The alcohol quickly rushes to Pijankiewicz’s head, which leads him to take Poniewolski for Gwałciński and later Trombalski. The former surname is a pun on *gwaltowny*, “violent,” while the latter on *trąba*, “fool.” Yet, when a bright disc lights on the basement wall, Pijankiewicz regains clarity of mind and cleverly informs his astonished friends that it is a “talking cinematograph.”¹¹⁸ Soon after, we read about Wzdychajło’s thoughts: “I do not know if my companions had said anything more, for I have dived deep into all that I saw and heard.”¹¹⁹ After the film, when the protagonists are leaving Fukier, Pijankiewicz is forced to question his cinematographic experience. As they walk away, the barkeeper shouts after them: “I’ve seen many drunkards in my life. They’ve seen devils, snakes, worms. . . but never a cinematograph in an empty room. Such I’ve never met before.”¹²⁰

Can the “educational tendency” really be fulfilled in a movie, in which a party of drunkards is the main setting? After the last scene, even the reader is supposed to have doubts about the soberness of speakers. It is difficult to definitely decide if they actually watched a film or did at some point – due to an excess of wine – they lost their senses? We should notice that the formula of the “cinema of attractions” makes it possible to align alcohol abuse with the experiences of a cinematographic screening. After the film, spectators become intoxicated in a way, as they project the images they just saw onto their physiological reactions, which makes the screening a highly physical experience. “Attractiveness” is a state, in which the force of attraction is unleashed from the mind’s control. It influences the body and – through its activity – leaves marks on the body and manifests in a person’s movement. The “educational value” leaves marks that are invisible to the eye, yet three main characters of “Widziadła” leave Fukier’s bar – as one may suspect – in a rather unsteady manner. Alcohol does not facilitate education. Wine is there for joy, excitement, and to see the “phantoms” on the wall.

Gołuchowski Station does not appear in Ambroży Grabowski’s guide. However, we already know that Prus did not follow the guide’s recommendations and “looked for something else” (K 158). Therefore, the “railroad station restaurant” must have been a real underground surprise, especially as one of the items on the menu was wine. In the nineteenth century, the Polish word *dworzec*,

118 Prus, “Widziadła,” p. 549.

119 Prus, “Widziadła,” p. 549.

120 Prus, “Widziadła,” p. 553.

“railroad station,” still evoked associations with *dworek*, “manor house,” and the impressive residences of the gentry. For a long time, Polish railroad stations did not have a name of their own. In the first years of the railroad, Poles used calques from French and German (more often) to call the station building. The meaning of the word *dworzec* extended because of the architecture of station buildings at the biggest stations of the time. Their form and interior design resembled the residences of the nobility. At the time *dworek*, “manor house,” could be still called by the augmentative *dworzec*, “big manor house.”¹²¹ The station building was a space that imitated and assumed other shapes, it sought to assume associations with well-established appearances in culture. European train cars followed the same tendency. For a long time, the seat arrangement resembled the one found both in stage and private coaches. This imitation trend, which made Polish railroad stations look like manor houses, was also present in other countries. In England, railroad stations often resembled castles, while in France – city halls or other administrative buildings. Already the name Gołuchowski Station revealed and underlined the imitative character. Railroad buildings could also have other names, which would usually refer to the name of a route, which led through a station, or the city where the station was placed. Therefore, in Warsaw, there was the Warsaw-Vienna Railroad Station – commonly called the Vienna Railroad Station – the Terespol Railroad Station, the Petersburg Railroad Station; whereas Cracow had the Cracow Railroad Station. Gołuchowski Railroad Station – precisely speaking, Count Gołuchowski Railroad Station – could not have that name if it were to serve as a regular railroad station. Polish railroad nomenclature did not use such names. The Czech culture did, but the equivalent of Polish *dworzec*, that is *nádraží*, came from the noun *draha*, “scratch, groove, rut, track.”¹²² “Gołuchowski Station” could serve as the name for a palace or manor house of a noble family, just as in the case of *dwór Radziwiłłów* or *pałac Tyszkiewiczów*.

The underground journey through the Mine was an experience that almost equaled the one of spectators at first cinematographic screenings. Here, underground, was just like over there, in the overground world. The luminous chambers looked just like the brilliance of a big city. The underground spectacle resembled open-space illumination. The qualities of the Mine added an element

121 See F. Morawski, *Dworzec mego dziadka. Przez autora “Wizyty w sąsiedztwo”*, Leszno, 1851.

122 Therefore, in a chapter on Wieliczka, a nineteenth-century Czech guide by F. A. Hora, *Průvodce po Krakově, Věličce a okolí*, Kolin, 1884, p. 35, mentions “nádraží podzemní dráhy Gołuchewského (s buffetem).”

unknown to the overground world: the feeling of being trapped. It was not just about physical entrapment of underground corridors or necessary reliance on guides, but – most importantly – about the radical narrowing of the field of vision, a very particular effect of a tunnel vision present in Wieliczka. The lighting spectacle filled a narrow space right in front of the visitors and closed their perspective. The nineteenth-century Wieliczka light shows did not allow lateral vision. A glance not directed at the flash of light fell into impenetrable darkness. Gołuchowski Station restored the freedom of seeing. It made people feel as if they were not underground but on the surface. It also made a different impression than other underground structures, because it imitated a building that was already a form of imitation: it was simultaneously a railroad station building and a manor house. There were mine rails and trains departed right next to the station building. The inside of the station was bright and filled with voices but the timetables, clocks, or any informative plaques were nowhere to be seen. The nineteenth-century virtual journey through the salt mine, which ended at Gołuchowski Station, presaged later cinematic timelessness. In the nineteenth century, Wieliczka sold thrill. Prus experienced this thrill in the Mine: “This *thrill* became the main trait of modern entertainment.”¹²³

Four events formed the background of the above spectacles of light and the thrills they evoked. These four events remind us of the primary element: fire. On July 18, 1850, a devastating fire broke out in Cracow. It was the biggest fire in the history of the town, which gutted a significant part of the wooden buildings. However, the context of fires connected to modern consumption – that is, mechanized entertainment or railroad – seems more important for firework spectacles and illuminated parades. On December 8, 1881, just before a spectacle at the Viennese Ringtheater, a fire broke out in the auditorium. When the lights went off, panic spread. Over 400 people died. Most of them in the reckless escape.¹²⁴ On May 4, 1897, during a charity event in the Paris Bazar de la Charité, a celluloid tape in a cinematographic camera caught fire, which spread onto flammable decorations and the wooden construction of the building. Over 120

123 B. Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity. Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*, New York, 2001, p. 91.

124 “Katastrofa wiedeńska,” *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 315/1882, p. 2: “Fire started right next to the curtain, which soon ignited and spread the flames to the audience. The staff lost their heads and, instead of rushing to the taps for water, they turned off the gas and covered the whole room in complete darkness. Fear-driven escape began. Wrapped in a choking smoke, the crowd pushed forward in darkness, unable to find the exit.”

representatives of nobility died, among them two Polish women who partook in the event.¹²⁵ On August 10, 1903, near the Couronnes station of the Paris Metro, a short-circuit in the electrical system caused the fire of a wooden car which subsequently engulfed the whole train. The fire spread to other cars as the stifling smoke and panic hindered any attempts of evacuation. Over ninety people died underground. Most of them were workers on their way home.¹²⁶

125 “Katastrofa w Paryżu,” *Dziennik Krakowski* 404/1897: “The building, covered with canvas decorated inside with colorful festoons and ribbon garlands, became an easy prey for flames that surrounded it from all sides. Shops were made of thin planks covered with percale, ten meters wide at most. For this reason, the sales ladies and the Bazar audience stood in a narrow space, with only three narrow passages to the street. . . . The danger was also magnified by the cinematograph, located in the same building, and moved by an oil engine. A small malfunction sufficed: one of the festoons caught fire from a lamp, as it did, and the ensuing tragedy was inevitable.”

126 “Straszna katastrofa w Paryżu,” *Ilustracja Polska* 34/1903, p. 635: “The scenes in the tunnel resembled the ones of the fire at the Bazar seven years ago: in the dark, people fought to reach the exit. Many who wanted to avoid suffocation tried to kill themselves by beating their heads against the walls of the tunnel or scratching their necks with their nails. The tunnel turned into one big puddle of blood with floating umbrellas, hats, wraps, and other objects.”

Annex

Bolesław Prus, “Letters from a Journey [Wieliczka]”

Childhood memories and a trip to Wieliczka. – Extraordinary expressions of interest. – The author finds an acquaintance. – Wieliczka from the surface. – A group visiting Wieliczka and the terrible consequences of misunderstanding. – About kitchen salt. – The general form and size of the mine. – Where does salt come from? – Journey to the center of the Earth. – A shaft, a chapel, chambers, lighting, caverns. – What is darkness? – An underground horse. – The life of a snail. – A pond. – A restaurant. – An elevator trip.

So we set off to Wieliczka. The day is cloudy, the earth is sprinkled with showers and the station railway with farewells.

My clock shows different time than the one on St. Mary’s Basilica, and the church one shows a different time than the railway clock, so I came to early and am enjoying myself like a deaf on a concert. The only attraction is the image of a few Germans eating pork with potatoes and reflecting on how I imagined Wieliczka in the past? This is how I saw it:

There is a dune decorated with a few grass tufts and dwarf pines. Right when I rush with the whole energy of my youth to see the mine, someone shouts:

“Stop! Stop!”

I look down and see a hole huge as the Warsaw Theatre Square, deep as from Christmas and Easter. A miracle that I did not fall into it!

Then some people from there put me into a bucket, then a lady on me, then her daughter onto her, and they bring us all down with a heavy rope. The mine must be become narrower because it gets tighter in the basket and – as we all add – hotter, probably because we approach the burning center of the earth.

This is how I imagined a visit to Wieliczka when I was a child. I was soon to lose all my illusions. We were asked to take our seats in the cars. Seeing so many people head in the same direction made my heart grow – the more people, the less you pay for the entrance and the better the lighting.

We set off in a Terespol manner.¹²⁷

My compartment (why shouldn't I call it mine?) is occupied by four men: me and three other gentlemen. I expected them to talk about the mine, but they preferred to debate over politics, then poverty, again politics, and back to poverty.

“Are you going to Wieliczka, good sir?” I asked one of them.

“Indeed I do! The horses await me there.”

“What a shame! . . .” I thought to myself. “We already lose one companion.”

“And you, sir? Are you heading to the mine?” I ask another.

“No, I'm going home. . .”

And the third one of them was also heading home! My terrified fantasy at once whispered to me that the passengers of all compartments are heading home. . . I suddenly felt all sweaty.

One of the passengers, if only I knew why, immediately captured my interest. Never before had I seen a physiognomy like this, but he attracted me because he gave off the scent of ink. . . I approached him.

“Have you been living here for long, sir?”

“Quite some time now.”

“Then you must have visited the mine on a few occasions, am I right?”

“Not a single time!” He shouted joyfully. “When I lived afar I did plan the trip, but now, I keep putting it off.”

“And you, good sir, have you visited the mine?” I asked the second one.

He didn't visit Wieliczka, neither did the third gentleman, even though they all planned it a few times each year.

Only now have I recalled that it is so common for curiosity to weaken as the distance to the investigated object shortens. One Parisian very eagerly attended the spectacle, in which his poor neighbors were decapitated. To notice the tiniest detail, he spent freezing nights on an empty stomach at the execution square. He would have even given half of his fortune to sit right next to the guillotine. And who could tell. The time came, when he was taken to the guillotine himself. Yet, by then, the curiosity weakend in him so much that the executioner and his helpers had to hold him so he didn't run away.

“People change!” one lady used to say, whose husband serenaded her “before the wedding” and afterward beat her.

Halfway to Wieliczka, the passenger I took liking in suddenly asked:

“Don't you come from the Kingdom, good sir?”

127 Prus refers to the low-speed Warsaw-Terespol line.

“Where else can I come from?” I answered offended for the man didn’t recognize that my superficiality bears the traces of higher culture.

“I come from the Kingdom too!” The man shouted and his eyes flickered.

We fell into each other’s arms.

“My name is this and that.” He said.

“My name is so and so.” I replied.

“So it’s you! . . .” My new friend shouts, as he was a famous Cracow satirist, know even in the Kingdom, whose works are not a novelty to the readers of *Kurier*. He lives nearly above the shafts of Wieliczka, and he also tends to write spicy and salty texts!¹²⁸

Barely had we arrived when the friend says:

“I’ve got my carriage over here, let me take you to the mine.”

“Ha!” I think to myself. “I’ve walked, I’ve rode bareback, I’ve crossed waters with a canoe, but I’ve never tried a literary carriage! I’ll go with him, even if it’s just to the mine.”

So we got on the carriage and headed straight to the inn. And when we drank some vodka, tasted some caviar and some porter, and then another thing and another, such sensibility arose in me that I almost shed tears.

“Dear God!” I thought to myself. “Why do I keep enjoying breakfasts on other’s expense everywhere. . .”

In that moment, I realized that I should finally go to the mine. So I take my hat and the friend screams:

“God forbid! Don’t go! I’ll find a man to tell you when the time comes, it’s too early. Just taste some more. . . When we tried the new dish, I spoke up:

“But I must see the town.”

“What kind of town is this!” Says he. “Shabby as our Łosice! . . . But, if you please so then go, I won’t stop you, just. . . eat a bit more!”

And I ate this bit too, then a bit more, because of the damp air, the third bit for peace in the world, and the fourth to the joy of our unexpected acquaintance. . .

When I took to the street, I saw a breathless messenger running and shouting:

“Sir! It’s time.”

For the sake of the readers I must add that Wieliczka is not a sand dune, but a rather tidy local town with a church, school, brick houses, and even somewhat paved streets and a square.

128 It is a description of Mikołaj Rodoć [Mikołaj Biernacki], who lived in 1877 near Wieliczka. Rodoć worked for *Kurier Warszawski* and Galician magazines *Diabeł* and *Szczutek*.

People should know that social classes are not only an element of society, offices, and schools, but even of a mine visit. Those who want first-class experience with illuminations and music pay sixty-five gulden. And for a few gulden, you can get only one guide with one lamp.¹²⁹ It is obvious that the more people, the easier it is to chip in for the first class. It is also almost obvious that I was terrified thinking of what happens if I await the call by myself.

But providence provided the opposite, because in the office I came across a few Austrian officers in the company of ladies, and two other women. The clerk counted us like a herd of cows, and we expressed our wish to take the first class.

I was busy watching plans and cabinets filled with gorgeous salt rocks, which beauty could in some instances exceed that of rhinestones, when I was suddenly simultaneously called from two sides. The officers sharply demanded that I chip in five gulden and a few cents, and the two women equally sharply declared, they are on their way home from a spa and their budget has tightened so they will not contribute more than three gulden each.

Because the arguments of the fair sex always convince me, I passed them to the officers. They started giggling, counting the money, and finally responded that they will accept the ladies' offer if each of them pays five gulden and some cents.

"But sir," I said, "the ladies clearly said that each of them will pay only three gulden."

The officers started making a racket that made one of them sit on the table. The two other demanded lots of paper, started the calculations anew, and finally jointly agreed to accept the just proposal of the ladies as long as I pay ten gulden and some cents.

Everyone was making a racket now: ladies out of curiosity, officers out of thrift, and I out of the sense of justice. Respecting the fair sex and the statute of the officers, I explained in an unambiguous voice to the daring and cautious officers that I will not give a cent more than what I am due. I added that my compatriots irrevocably decided to step back and in this case, instead of paying five gulden, we will have to take on the burden that is eleven times higher.

The last remark made them think. Once again, they demanded some paper and, using complicated formulas, they calculated that each of us will only have

129 Gulden was a monetary unit in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. One gulden was divided into 100 krajczár (in Hungarian) or Kreuzer (in German). The fee of sixty-five gulden referred to first-class lighting for a group that could consist of thirty-one to forty people. The minimum rate for first-class lighting was forty-five gulden for a group of up to twenty people. In the fourth class, the price ranged from twenty gulden for a group of up to ten people to thirty gulden for twenty-one to thirty visitors.

to pay a few extra cents. The two women smiled maliciously and recalled that a year ago two Americans lit the whole mine from their own pockets and did not accept a single penny from other visitors.

If I couldn't be accused of the reprehensible intention of making bold hypotheses, then I would have said that an Austrian officer is something else than two Americans. Anyway, to avoid any clashes between the journalists, divisions into land owners and land workers, and other social anxiety, I am ready to take my words back at any moment.

The God's gift called salt is necessary for farm animals and civilized nations to produce *acidum salis* in stomachs and factories. It belongs to the mineral democracy that rises where it was not sowed and fills all the world's corners. Kitchen salt, together with bitter salt, which only pensioners know how to appreciate, is in the water of the seas and oceans in such abundance that you cannot take it in your mouth. Pure salt saturates the water of many Asian lakes, it blooms on the surface of the land in form of frost or it forms hundred-feet deep layers in the depths of the earth. And this is not all: in a Spanish town called Cardona, salt forms a 550-foot high mountain, and its circumference is so big that it takes an hour to go the full circle.¹³⁰

Just like bigos consists of meat and cabbage, and some dramas of good will and moral lessons, kitchen salt too consists of two elements: sodium and chlorine. Separately, they are harmful to the body, but jointly they form a useful substance. It resembles some dramas, in which the sole will and morale are praiseworthy, yet the very substance of the work is dull for readers and the audience. Anyway, we can learn about other chemical properties from proper books. For now then, to inform my readers, I will only add that salt may come in different colors: blue, green, yellow, and even black. It might also be transparent like glass or dark like a stone.

The salt-giving undergrounds of Wieliczka are almost three versts¹³¹ long and nearly one verst wide so they are much smaller than Warsaw. The excavation works reached 130 or 180 fathoms deep.

And now let's try a popular image of the size of the mine. Imagine a city like Warsaw with its streets, gardens, palaces, houses and fill it with debris and sand up to the rooftops, which will create a thirty or even forty feet tall layer. Is that

130 Cardona is a city in the north-east of Spain (Catalonia), in the vicinity of which there are significant deposits of rock salt. The deposit reaches the surface in the form of a large hill called Muntanya de Sal. It has been exploited since Roman times.

131 Equivalent of 660 feet.

what a mine looks like? . . . Not exactly, we would need eighteen or twenty-four layers like this and stack them on top of each other. . . Works of this kind are beyond man, so we usually leave them to nature.

Now, the reader won't be surprised to hear that the overall length of all caves and galleries in Wieliczka is 330 miles,¹³² and that four weeks would be necessary to walk through its entirety. Of course, under the condition that one would want to walk for eight hours every day. Yet, the visitors, strangely enough the ones from Warsaw, usually spend underground from three to four hours at most, and when they get back home, they put on a warm dressing gown, they say they've seen it all! However, as they say that, they rub their chins in a suggestive way, and so the families and friends are glad. Just like them.

The upper part of the mine is divided into three squares or fields. Moving deeper below, there are three enormous floors, but some say there are four, or maybe even five. From the fields, so from the outside, there are eleven shaft-openings that lead down to the mine.

I presume that an attentive reader would like to dig a new shaft on his own. A one that is not too large, just to find out how it is inside. Here's what he would find.

Chernozem makes up the very top layer of the surface, then comes a thick layer of gray clay and salt clay. Altogether, these three layers are thirty fathoms thick. Under the salt clay, we find salt clay again, but already containing huge rocks of green salt, as if carelessly thrown around. Underneath this layer, there is a huge, a few dozen fathoms thick deposit with so-called bronze salt and, even deeper, the purest shaft salt. Digging even deeper, we would once again find gray clay, and god knows what beneath it. . .

Where did the salt come from in this place? . . . Scientists say that it was the sea that left it here, which seems to be confirmed by the huge number of microscopic shells scattered among the peculiarly bronze salt. However, people of pure hearts and non-investigating minds do not understand this issue well, and neither do I. It is difficult for us to comprehend how immeasurable masses of sea and how many tens of thousands of years it took to leave so much salt. We understand less why salt in the higher layers is in the form of separate lumps, and even less – why at Cadorna the same salt came out to the top? Apparently, it must have been at the bottom before, from where it was later pushed out by the internal forces of the earth.

132 Probably the new Polish mile, which counted 8534 meters.

With all these facts in mind, it seems that the kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria was once a bottom of a sea that bowed with its waves at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains. Salt settled along the mountains, just like the shelves of dead crawfish and snails settle on the shores. As a result, we have Wieliczka and Bochnia mines and, on the eighty-miles-long space at the foot of the mountains, hundreds of water springs burst from deeply hidden layers. It is all obvious but not necessarily clear. By the way, the size of Wieliczka mine is not exactly known, at least to a private individual, and every author presents different data. Nevertheless, I would believe the least the opinion of miners who, according to the saying that everyone blows their own horn, like to exaggerate.

Having dealt with ticket office, we come under the authority of guides and together enter a wooden building that resembles in shape a second-rate railway station on the Vistula railroad. We see its two-story figure with two one-story wings. High above the door stands the inscription: "Danielowicz's Shaft."

The shaft was dug in the times of Sigismund III. We enter the room on the left, where ladies and men are given each an Austrian cap and a linen dressing gown that can be tied around with a string. As a result, the differences in age, social class, and gender among us disappear, just as it should be for people who will soon enter the depths of the earth. . .

When the ladies dress up giggling, the chief of the guides orders some music with his booming voice, to make for us a pleasant surprise in the mine. There is also a great search for lanterns and the lighting of candles, which gives me the opportunity to note that miners wear ordinary coats and hats, and are quite similar to the rest of mortals in general.

"Are you all dressed now?"

"Yes! Yes!"

"Then let's go!"

The guides start to stomp their feet, which creates a rumble similar to the sound of ground falling on a coffin. Probably under the influence of these gloomy impressions, one of the visitors looks into the eyes of his female friend. We set off.

The chief of the herd goes behind some inconspicuous bars with a torch in his hand, he shortens to half size and then disappears. One officer and his lady, the second guide, a few other people, and guides follow his example. I'm the last one. The last shall be first!

We are in a well with stairs twisting like a *tire-bouchon*.¹³³ I hear a rumble of lots of quick steps, and sometimes when we turn I bump into the last guide or

133 *Tire bouchon* – a corkscrew.

enjoy the sad light of the lamp he carries. Male bass voices accompany chirping ladies in hell-dark corridors. I try to count the steps but, after sixty, I lose my track and ask the guide:

“Is it still far?”

In return, the good man lets out a sinister laugh of a villain and runs straight ahead.

One of the ladies remarks that you can become dizzy when running around like this. It is still dark while the layers above us keep growing. There are five of them now, but our march continues. In the feeble light of the lamp I see that the person next to me in the death gown and national cap on the surface is a representative of the fair sex. Gallantry whispered into my ear that it is appropriate to entertain a lady, and so I ask:

“What would have happened if the mine collapsed just now?”

“Oh, stop it!” Answered the tired companion, as if it all was up to me and my good will.

“Well, it might happen,” joins in the rushing miner, “if God wants to!”

And he gasped piously.

There were over ten floors above us, which made the miner’s gasp startle all my remaining terrestrial thoughts. I thought that even the dead do not lie as deep as we are now. . .

Suddenly, the stairs end. We are in a dark, wet corridor with a ceiling within an arm’s reach. The guides go quickly and leave no time to gather thoughts. And then they slow down. Reddish lantern light and gray contours of the visitors blend and gather in one place.

“St. Anthony’s Chapel!” Says the chief.

“St. Anthony’s Chapel! . . . St. Anthony’s Chapel! . . .” – faceless voices repeat after him.

Everything here is made of salt. The quite regular vaults, the strong columns at the entrance, the steps, the great altar and the figures of angels. Everything is made of salt and everything is grayish, like those big and dirty piles of ice we see in the streets of Warsaw. Right here, eight generations of miners, people who say goodbye to the rising sun every day, unsure if they will greet the sunset, begged God for help and mercy.

We rush again. The short corridor goes slightly down. At its end, we see a huge chamber illuminated with chandeliers made of salt as pure as glass. We pass the barrier and, after a few steps, we get on a wooden floor. On the opposite wall, a banner shines, and there is music coming from an unknown place. A band plays polka, whose bustling sounds bounce off the cool walls and vaults. A high

dressing gown grabs a much shorter dressing gown and both start dancing thirty fathoms underground.

This view arouses in me a desire and a new paroxysm of gallantry. I want to imitate the cheerful couple, but when my choice is between two ladies and one guide, I recall that I can't dance at all.

Never before did human conscience speak more timely!

The chamber where we are has quite even walls, quite a smooth ceiling, it is taller and more spacious than a town hall meeting room and, apparently, is called Łętów. Despite the growing sound of music and the light melting amidst the indescribable darkness, the whole thing seems to be a huge basement. You can almost see the beer barrels and the waiter with an apron.

And again, we fall into a corridor like a whirlwind, from there onto stairs, and we run sixty feet down to a huge chamber – Michałowice. Its size resembles the inside of a temple with long wooden porches running under the vault.

A salt chandelier hangs there as well, but to make the guests more satisfied, the guides light Bengali fires.

Onward! Deeper and deeper. Fifty feet deeper, and then even deeper we no longer come across chambers but caverns. One of them, I think the one named after Francis Joseph, is more than 300 feet deep from the vault to the floor. You can watch it in two ways. First, from more than fifty feet long wooden bridge, second, from its bottom. In both cases, despite the Bengali fires and their colorful fumes devoured by the light-hungry murk, you see darkness over your head and darkness under your feet.

The farther and lower, the wilder the place, if these may still be called places. The corridors twist and bend. From time to time, you come across holes in their gloomy walls: these are the new streets of this fantastic city. When you stop for a moment, the lights shrink and then go out, human noise lowers and you are surrounded by deep darkness. What on the surface, under a starry, but cloudy sky, is only the lack of light, here becomes a thing completely grim. As you move away from lights and company, the darkness starts to weave an invisible web around you, it entangles you, chokes you, and finally crush. You fight with the fleeting enemy in silence, you touch the damp walls, and think: "Maybe I'll get lost?" And you feel that darkness penetrates your body, saturates your thoughts, dispels feelings. . .

Suddenly, behind, you hear a bell ringing, some stomping, and rattling. . . These sounds grow, and behind them there is light and some strange, unexpected contours. . .

It is a miner who carries salt in a small rail cart pulled by a small horse. The horse treads and nods his head, the miner rings, and you would like to kiss both

of them, especially the first one. Because even if the horse is little, what is it doing here?. . . Wouldn't it prefer to be outside?. . .

The group is already in the next cavern. Its walls and vaults consist of huge lumps of salt, resembling keyboards, of which some jump out and other step back somewhere into the depths, so that you can't see them. Thick columns of salt mixed with the ground or piles of beams, arranged in the form of wells, support the bending vaults, or rather cut into bizarre and dangerous shapes.

"Keep going! Keep going!" Mine regulations shout at us through the mouth of the guides.

Tens if not hundreds of thousands of years ago, particles of this salt, now forming a fossil mass, pushed away from the light and covered by huge layers of clay and sand, were part of the everyday life of the earth. The restless waves of the ocean, never asleep, always moving, threw the salt from one end of the earth to the other, maybe the wind stroked them or maybe the sunrays caressed. And this is not all. These thick lumps, which today are the toil miners and their heavy tools or explosive dynamite, used to be where billions of microscopic creatures floated and lived as they could.

Poor things, barely born and instantly married; they were not yet grown up, when they were ready to be swallowed by their own son, who did not commit patricide, because his small size did not allow for it. Later, both of them, so closely related antagonists, ate and drank what they could; they lived, lived, and lived. . . probably for an hour or so and, without a single look around, they quickly crossed the narrow boundary that separates their half-sleepy existence from death. They died or croaked, I don't really know how to say that, and today they both have been lying here next to each other for a hundred thousand years, a million years. . . perhaps surprised by the life that happened to them; the miserable and short days like the spark of a locomotive thrown out of a chimney!

If there walks a creature so much higher than humans as we are high next to the microscopic mollusc in the immeasurable abysses of infinity. If it ever wanders to the earth, walks among quiet graves, and thinks about the half-century length of our lives. If it sees through our series of unfulfilled desires, unrealized projects, momentary joys, and forlorn hopes that begin with a cry of pain and end with tears of disappointment. If it sees all of this, will it then think: "Why were they ever born and what did they live for?" As I think in this hour: "Why was this almost invisible inhabitant of oceans ever born and what did it live for?" What is our noisy and colorful existence in the face of its frightened and embarrassed half-existence?. . . Our extensive ideas in the face of its half-consciousness. . . Our burning feelings in the face of its almost floral indifference. . . Our pride as

great as the world in the face of its small humility. . . Ah! So small that its entire legions could fit in a drop of water. . . ?

You who created the tiny mollusc and in the depths of the mines allowed a man to be amazed at its grave – have mercy on both of us! . . . At the moment, we are at the lowest permitted point. Above our heads are several dozen floors of earth and salt and, under our feet. . . a sheet of water! These are the chambers Majer and Rosetti that have a salty lake. On the lake sits a raft. We get on it and swim toward some door decorated with a shining banner. The right bank of the lake has an amphitheater made of salt, with gently inclining stairs twisting upward. The left one bank shows the cracked and broken walls of the cave, arranged as if from many huge lumps, each sliding upward, one after another, and gradually becoming the vault.

Imagine you are inside an enormous church when an earthquake begins. At once, its high walls and thick vault crack and break into huge irregular blocks that fall from above and from the sides, racing to be the first one to crush you. Suddenly, an unknown force stops them. . . they freeze but still look at you like a wild animal preparing to jump. For a moment, you can only guess that there is clotted life in their giant black body. A mysterious leash stops the monster's rage, but when it lets go. . .

We swim in the company of serious orchestra music and colorful fires, ignite by underground spirits in various crevices of this large fang-filled muzzle. When we go through a narrow door, we see in the smooth wall on the right a statue of a saint who has been praying for travelers and miners since long ago. To the left, again, carved and damaged lumps of salt, similar to stairs set up so that – instead of going into the depths – they run ahead, and every next step hangs dangerously over their heads.

In the last cave we entered, the walls look like bookshop shelves, filled with books big like furnaces, other like large beams, gently curved or slanted, anyway, like I don't know what! . . . One could describe them only with a lot of difficult words, incomprehensible, improperly placed on paper, making fun of all the logical and grammatical rules. The same style should also be used for the description of the entire mine, with its long sidewalks, chambers, columns, and the damp grave cold.

At the end, they play for us Steinhauser in an acoustic cave, the music plays a grim chant, and a few minutes later we stand in a room brightly lit with colorful lanterns. I hear some counting: "Thirty cents! drei Gulden!" . . . and so on . . . the glass is buzzing, the music becomes very cheerful. . .

I wipe my glasses. We are in an underground restaurant, where at a moderate price you can drink wine of moderate taste.

Then they lead us to a kind of wardrobe divided into two floors. They close the wardrobe, we feel a slight trembling, some movement, and after a few dozen seconds our eyes are surprised by the rays of. . . natural sunlight. We are again in the hall of Danielowicz's shaft, but this time, instead of walking, we came from the depths of several dozen years ago with an elevator. . .

Before I could take a look around, I had already bought some small salt objects and some photographs. A boy offered himself to show me the way to the station and take care of my luggage.

"How many times have you been to the mine?" I ask him on the way.

"Not even once, sir!" He answers with confidence.

Before the night fell, I found myself under the guardian wings of Mr. Zyblikiewicz¹³⁴ and sixty members of Cracow's city council elected for three years. Now, I was sure that it would not collapse on me, at least not with the knowledge and authorization of the esteemed magistrate.

Today, when I remind myself of all those things, I think that for three hours I had a strange dream made of matters unknown and unexpected. . .

Bolesław Prus [Aleksander Głowacki] (1847–1912) – novelist, author of press columns.

First published as B. Prus, "Kartki z podróży [Wieliczka]," *Kurier Warszawski* 36–39/1878.

134 Mikołaj Zyblikiewicz (1823–1887) – Mayor of Cracow (1874–1881) and Marshal of the Galician Sejm (1881–1886). Zyblikiewicz's merits include the founding of the Crypt of Merit in the Church of St. Michael (1880), the reconstruction of the Cracow Cloth Hall, and the founding of the National Museum.

Chapter Two *A Kiss in the Tunnel: Three Heterotopies of Modernity*

Wanted to sell, film Kissing in a Tunnel, 26 ft. Price 7 s. 6 d. Only wants slight repair. Musical Bentleys, Palace, Bridlington.

– *The Era*, 10/1899 (June).

Kissing is almost unknown in Japan. A mother never kisses her child, a lover never kisses his sweetheart

– *Dundee Evening Post*, 1900, 12/1900 (October).

1. In the Tunnel

In 1826, the reader of Lviv-based *Rozmaitości* (Variety) could learn about the “invention of roads under rivers.” The press article presents a fragment from an eighteenth-century work by Georg Christoph Lichtenberg *Underwater Salt Mines and a Note on Negative Bridges*, which ends with the example of a road under the Thames, “a negative bridge” under construction at the time. The article also includes a bold prediction: “Time will probably bring more of such examples.”¹³⁵ Two underground objects constructed on the Western end of the Manchester-Liverpool Railroad soon proved these words true. The modern world cottoned to such type of constructions a bit later. Namely, at the time when plans for an underwater road between England and the European continent developed. Already then, the planners projected a plan far into the future, and they envisioned an even longer road that could lead by land to the wealth of the Eastern World. However, not only La Manche stood in the way of this bold idea. The Alps blocked the way on the European continent. In the nineteenth century, the railroad technology was just learning how to force its way through mountains. In late 1846, *Kurier Warszawski* reports:

An already famous Belgian engineer went there [to the Mont Cenis massif in Savoy], studied the landscape, and declared that a seven-mile tunnel could be made without the slightest obstacles and, therefore, a fifty-mile route would be only seven miles long.

135 See “O wynalazku dróg pod rzekami,” *Rozmaitości* (A supplement to *Gazeta Lwowska*) 4/1826, p. 31.

What a blessing for humanity, for trade! And then, who knows what does the mountain hide? Maybe gold and silver mines, so the cost of the venture could be paid; and what great fruit will it bring to science, mineralogy, and the whole kingdom of nature!¹³⁶

In December 1852, the Polish press informs about different plans to link the North and the South of the European continent: “Word has it that the Alpine Railroad will lead through the St. Gotthard Mountain, with a second part going through Splügen, which has been deemed the most appropriate route.”¹³⁷ From these four great projects of railroad tunnels under La Manche, Mont Cenis, Gotthard Pass, and Splügen Pass, the nineteenth century managed to accomplish two. Still, we should consider the nineteenth century as a very fruitful time in the history of underground construction. The century ends with a magnificent achievement of engineering: the nearly twenty-kilometer-long Simplon Pass on the border between Switzerland and Italy.¹³⁸ The opening ceremony and first train passage was registered on film.

From the very beginning, nineteenth-century tunnel constructions drew popular attention beyond the group of their direct users. The rich iconography of the Manchester-Liverpool line soon included the pride of its constructors: two underground lines squeezed below dense Liverpool housing that reached the docks of Wapping along with the passenger terminal at Crown Street. The interest generated by tunnels was also visible in culture. A composition *The Tunnel* opened an elegant lithographic album from 1831 by Thomas Bury. The album included a series of landscape images. *The Tunnel* depicted the inside of the Wapping Tunnel illuminated with gas lamps. Next to the left wall in the foreground, there are two workers, while on the right – a gentleman strolls in the company of two ladies. In the background on the left, there is the tunnel’s exit

136 See “Rozmaitości,” *Kurier Warszawski*, 284/1846, p. 1349. The excavation of the Mont Cenis Tunnel on the border between France and Italy started in 1857 and ended thirteen years later. The first projects of the Tunnel under the English Channel date back to the middle of the nineteenth century. See “Kolej żelazna z Dover do Calais,” *Przyroda i Przemysł* 24/1856; “Parowozy podmorskie,” *Księga świata* 1857, Vol. 1; “Projekt podmorskiego tunelu między Francją i Anglią,” *Księga świata*, Vol. 1, 1858. The 1870s, the 1880s, and then the turn of the centuries witnessed an abundance of such projects.

137 (LI), *Gazeta Lwowska* 276/1852.

138 The project finished in 1906 but it started much earlier. One of the reporters who commented on the process was the author of “Korespondencja *Ekonomisty*,” see “Tunele szwajcarskie,” *Ekonomista* 34/1880. Works on the tunnel started in the summer of 1898, see “Tunel pod Simplonem,” *Gazeta Narodowa* 249/1898.

outlined with natural light, which reveals barely visible silhouettes. Slightly to the right appear train cars with several men around them. The next composition, *Entrance of the Railway at Edge Hill, Liverpool*, depicts the same place from the perspective of its impressive entry. The entry was at Edge Hill station, where ended the equally impressive, long, and very deep cutting through the Olive Mount. This cutting appears in a different composition by Bury, which depicts its final preparations.¹³⁹ In an extensive 1836 article “Droga kolejna z Manchester do Liverpool” (The Railroad from Manchester to Liverpool), *Magazyn Powszechny* offers the Polish reader a lot of professional information about underground constructions. Moreover, the magazine depicts them. Among the prints included in the article, there are two that show tunnels: *Wejście do podziemia w Liverpoolu* (Entrance to the Underground in Liverpool) gives a view on the western portal at the Crown Street terminal, while *Maurowska brama* (The Moorish Arch) presents two eastern-style portals located next to each other in the vicinity of the Edge Hill station.¹⁴⁰

European newspapers, including Polish ones, regularly reported on big tunnel investments.¹⁴¹ With woodcuts and – later – photographs, they also depicted the investments. Some of the pictures showed the amazing effects of the works, while other the heroic effort of the men hired to work in the underground to bring about the effects in the future. The end of the nineteenth century witnessed the perpetuation of a certain scheme of reporting on the coming completion of tunnel works. These lasted for many years, especially the excavations of several-kilometer-long Alpine tunnels. They required huge financing and an enormous labor force. The meeting of the two groups of workers who dug from two

139 See T. T. Bury, *Coloured Views on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway*, London, 1831. A Facsimile of the Original Edition published in 1831 by R. Ackermann, with an Historical Introduction to the Railway by G. Ottley, Oldham, 1976, plates 1–3. Tunnels can also be seen in two other lithographs in the album: *Railway Office, Liverpool*, which depicts the Crown Street terminal with the Western entrance to the passenger tunnel in the background, and in *Warehouses at the End of the Tunnel Towards Wapping*, which shows the Western entrance to the freight tunnel in the middle of the composition. A lithography of *Excavation of Olive Mount, 4 Miles from Liverpool*, shows a deep cutting through the mountain.

140 “Droga kolejna z Manchester do Liverpool,” *Magazyn Powszechny* 115/1836, p. 916.

141 The French Nerthe Tunnel was the longest underground construction in the Alps before the times of enormous Alpine constructions; see *Gazeta Krakowska* 159/1847: “On the railroad from Avignon to Marseille, on 15 June [1847], a 4620-meter-long tunnel (over 3000 cubits) was completed. The tunnel leads through the entire mountain of Nerthe, and it is the longest one may encounter on a railroad journey.”

opposite ends was the signal of the near end of the construction. Soon after this signal, another important moment took place: the ceremonial march of engineers and officials through the tunnel; and – later – the passage of the first special train with guests, along a makeshift road. The press reported all these events, while photographic agencies provided images and – at the end of the nineteenth century – also documentary films. Numerous books, albums, postcards, medals, reliefs, sculptures, and monuments were to commemorate humanity's victory over nature. All of these publications demonstrated the greatness of human plans, the scale of the venture, which for a long time was only a dream, a utopia in the heads of engineers. On the other hand, the illustrations also show the effort of sweaty muscular male bodies, covered in dust and mud. It was exactly the moment when the two groups of workers met underground that offered a chance to depict young naked torsos, often joined in a friendly hug.¹⁴² An example of such depiction may be the figure that accompanies the article "Otwarcie tunelu Simplonskiego: (The Opening of Simplon Tunnel). The comment to the print includes a justification: "One of the prints depicts the last breakfast of engineers and workers before the tunnel's opening. The heat required the works to be conducted in the possibly lightest clothing."¹⁴³ In 1911, a medal with a similar image commemorated the end of the Lötschberg Tunnel construction. It portrays a group of five joyful men with bare torsos who embrace one other. Another example may be a plaque from 1914 that commemorates the tenth anniversary of an insurance company by Lötschbergbahn. It presents a young man walking briskly with an exposed torso and a mining hammer on his shoulder.¹⁴⁴

Undeniably, moral censorship opposed the presence of such images in the public space. It must have been strong in Poland, since one of the prints that depicts a tunnel near Miechów with the workers digging with only their sleeves rolled up; one of them even wears a hat! Moreover, this scene shows workers only as extras who accompany two ceremonially-dressed officials partaking in

142 In an account from St. Gotthard's tunnel excavation, "Tunel Świętego Gotarda," *Biesiada Literacka* 226/1880, p. 285, we read: "The heat inside the tunnel reached 32°C [96° F], so that the workers were forced to take some of their clothes of... There finally was a solemn and moving moment. Captivated by the feeling, everyone fell into each other's arms. Constant shouts echoed: evviva! evviva!"

143 "Otwarcie tunelu Simplonskiego," *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 22/1906, p. 429.

144 Both examples come from P. Belloncle, *Le Chemin de fer du Lötschberg*, Breil-sur-Roya, 1986, p. 50.

the meeting of two worker groups.¹⁴⁵ However, it were not such depictions but the ones with young half-naked workers that sent a clear signal about tunnels as a “different” space: an enclave disconnected from the modern world; a space independent from modernity, even if only partially and inconsequently; a space contesting the order respected on the surface. At the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, a similar space and similarly naked men could be admired in circus arenas.

In letters from Northern Italy, a journalist of the Cracow daily *Nowa Reforma* (New Reform) under the pseudonym Tourist, presented a rather cold description of the inauguration of the Simplon Tunnel. He writes: “We have tamed the Alps and tunnels to such extent that all the humorous publications repeat about them the same jokes over and over.”¹⁴⁶ The Tourist gives no examples, but the readers of “humorous publications” from the turn of the centuries could easily point to exemplary works. It is “a kiss in the tunnel.” Above all, the kiss was to be associated with a picture, more specifically – with moving pictures. By this, I mean The English movie *A Kiss in the Tunnel* produced in the Spring of 1899 by George Albert Smith. Soon, both sides of the Atlantic produced its numerous remakes, which popularized the film in Poland either in the original version or in one of the remakes.¹⁴⁷ Although the moving picture was not the only medium of the story about a kiss stolen in darkness, it played an important role in its canonization process. In Poland, the concept of a kiss in the tunnel became the subject of jokes even before Smith produced his film. Later, the joke remained without necessarily links to Smith’s several-seconds-long work. People laughed in Galicia from a kiss stolen in a tunnel, where a real train journey allowed passengers to experience a similar situation. They also laughed in Congress Poland, where there was no tunnel infrastructure, so the condition to have a comparable experience was a trip to Galicia or a long and expansive escapade to the West. The whole Europe and people across the Atlantic laughed at the joke. A joke always confirms and solidifies a certain “community of laughter.” Modern Western culture found the confirmation of its identity in a kiss in the tunnel. This

145 See “Spotkanie się robotników w chwili przebicia otworu pomiędzy dwiema galeriami w tunelu D[rogi] Ż[elaznej] Iwangrodzko-Dąbrowskiej pod Miechowem,” *Kłosy* 946/1883 (August 4), cover; see also “Tunel pod Miechowem,” *Kłosy*, p. 99.

146 Tourist, “Tunel Simplonński,” *Nowa Reforma* 29/1909 (September 26).

147 Following standard film studies usage, I use the title *A kiss in the tunnel*. However, when the film hit the screens, the first adverts announced it as *Kissing in the tunnel*. See the adverts in *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 1899 (April 1 and 3, and September 2).

funny scene was one of the building blocks of Europe's "imagined community."¹⁴⁸ According to the English press, Japan did not know kisses.¹⁴⁹

A kiss in the tunnel is part of the history of both early cinema and entertainment at the turn of the centuries. It is a component of popular culture, which entered the phase of intense industrialization at the end of the nineteenth century. Industrialization was an answer to mass demand. With a growing working class, the metropolitan environment needed performances that would help align the psyche with an unprecedented rate of changes, but also to defend the individual from the overflow of stimuli. The first modern medium that used the story of a kiss stolen in the tunnel was the press published in great numbers, in which in humor column offered funny drawings and jokes. The railroad humor soon received recognition and was distinguished in the form of a large group of distinct genres: amusing scenes "on a railroad station," "in a car," or "in the waiting room," funny portraits of boorish and muddle-headed travelers, or whimsical

148 Kazimierz Żygulski, *Wspólnota śmiechu. Studium socjologiczne komizmu*, Warsaw, 1985, p. 21, writes that "laughter makes it possible to identify and select," and he adds that, "he who laughs with us belongs to our community, who laughs with others is in a way culturally alien, even if he sits next to us in one room and speaks the same language as a fellow citizen." From here on, I also refer to Vanessa Schwartz's work *Spectacular Realities. Early Mass Culture In Fin-de-siècle Paris*, Berkeley, 1999, and what she writes about the nineteenth-century experience of community in the Western world.

149 See "Where They Never Kiss," *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* 1898 (December 12). The turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries was also a period of an increased interest in kissing. The cultural background of kissing was well known to the English press reader. See "The Philosophy of Kissing," *London Daily News* 1898 (January 5); "Should Babies Be Kissed?," *Edinburgh Evening News* 1898 (April 27); "Is Kissing Going Out of Fashion?," *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 1898 (August 8); "Selling a Kiss," *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 1898 (November 15); "The Crime of Kissing," *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* 1899 (November 6); "History of the Kiss," *Tauton Courier, and Western Advertiser* 1899 (December 20); "Character of Kisses," *Leicester Chronicle* 1899 (December 30); "The Origin of Kissing. Professor Lombroso's Strange Theory," *Dundee Evening Post* 1900 (October 27); "The Origin of the Kiss," *Dundee Evening Post* 1900 (November 5); "Crusade Against Kissing. New York Doctor Says It Is Barbarous," *Northants Evening Telegraph* 1900 (December 29). A permanent motif exploited by the daily press was an accidental (stolen) kiss. See "Stolen Kisses," *The Graphic* 1893 (November 18); "20 [Pounds] or Fourteen Days for a Kiss," *Illustrated Police News* 1885 (June 1); "An Accidental Kiss," *Illustrated Police News* 1896 (April 18). Part of this interest stemmed from a diagnosis of culture that a kiss is a component of Western behavior.

figures of railroad officials like conductors, superconductors, and stationmasters. These humorous images could form series and eventually emancipate in various collections intended for a more demanding audience.¹⁵⁰ For instance, one of such early American collections offers stories about what could happen in a mile-long tunnel in Bergen:

Once a gentleman, for some unexpected reason, undertook to change the lower portion of his apparel, during those dark seconds, but made a wrong calculation as to time! But kissing seems to be the choice sport. Kissing in a tunnel, think of that! I have been told by a friend that the charm is in the novelty of the thing. It is the darkness, the rank burglary; the nice calculation as to time; the sudden assault and desperate defence; the acute agony of the skirmish line hair-pins; the carrying of the outer works; the fierce struggle at the scarp; the sweetness of the surrender; the questionable honor of the victory. Then the horrid repairs, and the impossible attempt to appear serene before the other passengers.¹⁵¹

A few pages later, the reader could enjoy a humorous story “In the Tunnel,” which opened with a poem. The main characters were a student, “a gentle maiden,” and a tunnel “black as Egypt’s night.”¹⁵² Polish culture had a certain advantage in the folk domestication of the railroad. It could humorously utilize the word *pociąg*, “train,” which also means “lust.”¹⁵³ Therefore, one could say that Polish railroad intertwined with erotica from the very beginning.

In the Polish press, such erotica mostly appeared in jokes. Among them, there were jokes with a tunnel theme, in which – interestingly enough – a woman is not worried about the kiss: “In Switzerland, I passed through a very long tunnel.”

150 A good example are the poems of Emanuel Nelin Gordzewicz, a journalist from Kolomyia, published in Cracow’s *Diabeł* and collected in a separate volume, *Humorystyczny poradnik dla kolejarzy*, Stryj, 1890.

151 *Romance and Humor of the Rail. A Book for Railroad Men and Travellers. . .*, ed. S. Smith, New York, 1873, p. 104.

152 See *Romance and Humor of the Rail*, pp. 106–107. The English press from the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries abounded in funny stories about the tunnel adventure.

153 In these two meanings, the word “train” was the source of puns; see “Z teki kolejarza. Do... z Grodziska,” *Mucha* 10/1873; “Koleje żelazne. Rozkład pociągów miejskich” (“Na linii ‘Karnawał’ i ‘Chęć użycia,’” “Na linii ‘Obżarstwo i Pijaństwo,’” “Na linii ‘Młodość i birbantka’”), “Pociągi na kolejach nieżelaznych,” *Ilustrowany Kalendarz Diabelski na rok 1888*; “Rozkład jazdy na kolejach prywatnych w Krakowie,” *Ilustrowany Kalendarz Diabelski na rok 1893*. But it also was the source of linguistic-visual jokes, as in “W restauracji kolejowej,” *Diabeł* 7/1896. Unfortunately, the humorous use of railroad remains an unnoticed matter.

“Was it enjoyable?” “I am not sure, I was by myself in the compartment.”¹⁵⁴ “Are Smiths really happy together?” “Like a bride and groom in a tunnel.”¹⁵⁵ “Him (kissing an accidental travel companion): It’s a shame this tunnel is not ten times longer. . . / Her: You should be glad. / Him: Why so? / Her: Because in longer tunnels, they turn on the light.”¹⁵⁶

Joke is a spoken genre. For a long time, a joke goes unrecorded, it is not written down, and when it goes to print its form becomes fixed. Although it might have lived in numerous variations, and its melody might have differed, the joke then receives but one version. On the basis of rare and quite random versions we know, it is difficult to assess the popularity of such humorous stories. At most, one could assume that the presence of these jokes in print is an indirect proof of their popularity. At the very least, it shows what constituted and strengthened the “community of laughter” at a particular moment in time. At the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, the joke about an adventure in the tunnel was definitely one of the building blocks of the Polish community, which linked the Polish culture to the broader community of the whole Western world. Polish culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century knew the kiss in the tunnel in another stylization – that of a feuilleton. It also had its classical author: Zdzisław Kamiński.

Behind the kiss in the tunnel stands a modern approach to the concept of time. A brief moment becomes enough to fit an event that usually unfolds slowly and, step by step, turns from intention to action. A kiss in the tunnel means a rapid acceleration. A moment in the darkness becomes enough time for rapid and decisive act. All the barriers of our everyday life collapse. In darkness, people no longer have to slowly overcome these restraints through negotiations but, instead, usually quickly overcome them by the action of one of the sides of attraction. This is why a tunnel often means motionless anticipation:

Tunnel approaches, so the eager girl / Removes her veil and at her neighbor / Looks, checking if when the dark comes / He will give her a kiss and an embrace. // But the

154 “Po powrocie z podróży,” *Mucha* 29/1904.

155 “Wesoły kącik,” *Gazeta Toruńska* 72/1905.

156 “W podróży,” *Sowizdrzał* 32/1911. The following dialogue reproduced female activity and entrepreneurship, as in “W podróży,” *Sowizdrzał*, 3/1912: “– Don’t be afraid, if I kiss you, you can pull the safety rope, and I will pay the twenty-five-ruble fine. – Then give me the twenty-five rubles now and kiss me as much as you like.” Interestingly, the story by S. Cham (Antoni Pawlik), “Pierwsza nie ostatnia. Obrazek,” *Gazeta Toruńska*, 1355/1890, has Mrs. Jania be the one to decide for a kiss as a joke while going through a tunnel.

tunnel passes, and he is like stone / The ardent blasphemer of female looks. / She out of misery blushes whole / Thinking about the boy with no blood or heart. // Oh, the anger of the young maiden is futile / To no avail does she burn like a flare: / He knows that the tunnel is too short, / So agitation just isn't worth it.¹⁵⁷

Zdzisław Kamiński, also known as Kazet, published his feuilletons *Z gór* (From the Mountains) in *Gazeta Lwowska*. In Kamiński's writings, the tunnel assumes the characteristics of a space that condenses time, while the deficit of visibility translates into exquisite intensive touch. Kamiński takes his readers on literary journeys on the Stanisławów-Woronienka line. Tunnels on the way turn the train into a site of quick erotic adventures:

In a tunnel, the ride always gives passengers one hell of a ride. Indeed, as much as it should encourage joyful and sometimes even drastic behavior, the result is splendid. . . . No sooner does the train plunge into darkness that squeaks, squeals, screams, hisses, and kisses begin, which testifies to overwhelming fun. As we enter the daylight, all the passengers are back in their seats. Only one young gentleman shakes off some white powder from his sleeve, a beautiful lady, probably married, adjusts her disturbed coiffure. Meanwhile, my eyes wander around in search of the perpetrator, who probably had no idea whose leg he caressed so affectionately.¹⁵⁸

In a different story, the adventure happens in similar circumstances:

A sudden tremor wakes me up from dreams. I feel like a fly thrown from a window into a sea of ink. The coal-breathing train rushed into a tunnel. . . . However, not everyone knows that it is the "tunnel of kisses." The tunnel is precisely planned for one affectionate hug, kiss, and then the shaking of powder from the frock coat or the adjustment of a coiffure.¹⁵⁹

The situation incorporated into the feuilleton and legitimized by Kamiński's experience served him also in a literary narration. Kamiński placed it in the adventures of imaginary characters. *Sielanka górnicza w kopalni wielickiej* (A Miner's Pastoral in the Wieliczka Mine) changes only technical details of the adventure. A mine shaft and an elevator take the place of a tunnel and a train. The main transformation concerns the consequences of the event. An erotic adventure without consequences now becomes a true and noble relationship.¹⁶⁰

157 "W podróży," *Sowizdrzał* 21/1911.

158 Kazet (Z. Kamiński), "Z gór," *Gazeta Lwowska* 252/1907.

159 Kazet (Z. Kamiński), "Z gór," *Gazeta Lwowska* 222/1909. See also Kazet (Z. Kamiński), "Z gór," *Gazeta Lwowska* 183/1910.

160 Kazet (Z. Kamiński), "Między ziemią a niebem. Sielanka górnicza w kopalni wielickiej," *Gazeta Lwowska* 81/1907. The author gave a similar name to the main character, Zdzisław Miński.

The cultural significance of a kiss in the tunnel is the result of a synthesis of three spaces of “otherness;” regardless of whether the event happens in a fictional sphere of joke, inside a real rail car, in a film, or among the audience gathered in a film theater. Three modern heterotopias came to life in the nineteenth century: the tunnel, the train, and the cinema. The author of the concept of heterotopia, Michel Foucault, incorporates two of these three phenomena right into his reflection on the matter: the train and the cinema. The tunnel is only implicated in Foucault’s argument, in which he mentions “heterotopias of deviation” and prisons.¹⁶¹ In pre-modern culture, underground structures like cellars, dungeons, and mines were places of isolation and punishment, a margin in space and society. It seems that the railroad tunnel corresponds even more to the characteristics of heterotopia than prisons, dungeons, or mines that employed slaves and prisoners of war. Tunnels do not serve marginalization. After all, twentieth-century totalitarianisms built many tunnels with the hands of political prisoners, thus returning to the tradition of prisons and dungeons.¹⁶² A tunnel is a place in which all other cultural spaces of modernity “are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.” The underground railroad route is a model incarnation of the “counter-site,” a modern and extremely specified “nowhere,” an object without geographical coordinates, a site “with no real place.”¹⁶³ This property of tunnels was recorded in names, language units, which basic function of separating and identifying the so-called object was subject to various disturbances.

First modern underground buildings emerged in an atmosphere of the unnamable. Although the word “tunnel” is borrowed from French, it is already present in English at the beginning of the nineteenth century and means a kind of funnel-shaped net for catching birds. The railroad meaning began its career after it was used as a proper name. The Tunnel referred to the London “road under the river” and was a project by Marc Brunel, who also implemented the idea. In names of both underground routes between Manchester and Liverpool, “tunnel” was already a common word, unrelated to a specific object or place. The first

161 See M. Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” trans. J. Miskowicz, *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), p. 24.

162 Among the underground projects conducted by the prisoners of totalitarianism, the undersea connection with Sakhalin comes to the fore, whose construction stopped after Stalin’s death. The postwar Soviet Union continued this practice, among others, on the Baikal-Amur Railroad. For the Western world, the series of tunnels on the route to Kunmingu in Yunnan province became a symbol of the Chinese communist authorities’ repressions.

163 See Foucault, “Of Other Spaces. . .,” p. 22.

similar structures erected on the French line Paris to Saint-Germain-en-Laye fell into the category of *souterrain*. Only after some time did the “undergrounds” of railroad receive a name that distinguished it and made specific. For that purpose, the French used the word *tunnel*, which was a calque from English.¹⁶⁴ However, the French “underground,” *souterrain*, was also used as an adjective in the compound *souterraine galleries*, which preserved its original scope of application that includes the railroad. Therefore, it remains a living synonym of the “tunnel.”

Both English and French language patterns influenced the introduction of the word “tunnel” in Polish. In the previously mentioned fragment from Lviv-based *Rozmaitości* (Variety), there is a mention about “negative bridges” and an example of such a “bridge” that was to run under the Thames. In other reports from London, it is an “underground road under the Thames” or “a road under the Thames River in London, called Tunnel.”¹⁶⁵ At about the same time, when Brunel’s nearly finished work was consistently called Tunnel – capitalized to underline the proper name – the tunnels of the Manchester-Liverpool line that led into the city were called “underground,” which is the Polish equivalent of the French *souterrain*.¹⁶⁶ However, certainly already in the early 1840s, the proper name Tunnel definitively became a regular noun. It received a phonetic adjustment and eventually entered Polish as “tunel.” Erected since the 1870s in both Galicia and Congress Poland, Polish underground structures were consistently referred to and written about as “tunnels.” None of these tunnels had their own proper name.

The only underground construction in Congress Poland, built on the line from Ivangorod (now Dęblin) to Dąbrowa was simply a “tunnel,” occasionally called *tunel miechowski* (Miechów Tunnel). The latter denotation can hardly be

164 See E. M. Grant, *French Poetry and Modern Industry 1830–1870. A Study of the Treatment of Industry and Mechanical Power in French Poetry during the Reigns of Louis-Philippe and Napoleon III*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1926, pp. 51, 195.

165 See (G.B.), *Gazeta Warszawska* 155/1827; (letters from London), *Gazeta Korespondenta Warszawskiego i Zagranicznego* 215/1827; (letters from London), *Gazeta Krakowska* 39/1830; “Wiadomości zagraniczne,” *Tygodnik Petersburski* 41/1836; “Droga pod rzeką Tamizą, zwana Tunnel,” *Magazyn Powszechny* 19/1834.

166 The very early use of the appellative “tunnel” in this role is documented in “Droga żelazna między Manczester i Liwerpul,” *Tygodnik Petersburski* 13/1830: “In the autumn of 1826, there began the work on the railroad to connect these two great cities of manufacturing and commerce. The length of the road is only thirty-three English miles, but the ground created great obstacles. For example, the way required the construction of two tunnels, one 2000 meter-long, the other 700 meters-long, near the town of Liverpool. Furthermore, six big mountains stood in the way.”

considered a typical proper name. It is rather a description, in which the characteristics of the indicated place and its location in reference to another fixed geographical place overlap with the identifying role. However, *tunel miechowski* was not located next to the town of Miechów but next to the Miechów Station and, at the time the railroad line opened, the only thing Miechów town and Miechów Station had in common was the name. The guide to this line reads: “The tunnel near the Miechów Station is also noteworthy, so far the only one on the iron roads of the Kingdom.”¹⁶⁷ The object in question was of a strategic nature. It was Russian policy that forced its construction and localization. The passage through the “soft underbelly” of the Empire carried a threat in case of a military conflict. The destruction of the tunnel made it possible to block the route quickly and easily and prevented enemy forces to use it for a long time.

Tunel miechowski reversed the natural relation between a communication route and terrain obstacle. Usually route constructors want to avoid such obstacles, and they make their way through them by means of artificial sections like bridges, viaducts, or tunnels only if it is technically impossible or financially unprofitable to avoid the route. In this case, the route had to find an obstacle, so its course was planned so as to reach a hill where a tunnel could be drilled. The tunnel significantly increased the cost of the line’s construction. It was ready to use in 1884. For military reasons, it was located “nowhere.” It was a few kilometers away from the nearest station, which lent the tunnel its name. The city was at a similar distance, even though the shared name would suggest there was spatial proximity among the three. Between 1912 and 1913, the line transformed into a two-track line thanks to the construction of the second tunnel. This change did not affect the object’s identity and did not have any name-calling consequences. From a linguistic perspective, it was still one place.¹⁶⁸ The individuality of the object’s name was further reinforced in the early 1930s. The railroads constructed a new branch that began at the southern end of the tunnel, which shortened the distance from Warsaw to Cracow. The station located at the new branch was named Tunel.

167 S. Sienicki, *Opis Drogi Żelaznej Iwangrodzko-Dąbrowskiej*, Warsaw, 1885, p. 9.

168 A note about the construction of the second line of the Simplon Tunnel attempts to separate the underground construction and its parts by naming: “Druga tuba tunelu Simplon,” *Przegląd Techniki* 24/1908, p. 305. However, the word *tuba* (tube) does not appear anywhere later. Instead, we often read about *przekop* (ditch) or *tunel* (tunnel). “As we know, the Simplon Tunnel consists [...] of two separate parallel tunnels, joined together by cross-bars at certain intervals. However, only one ditch is finished; the second one was to be a backup and used for ventilation.”

The basic form of identifying Polish tunnels was not the name of the tunnel itself, but it was the name of the route and – within the route – the name of the obstacle on the way and the length of the object. This method was typical for guides published in Galicia since the 1880s. At the end of 1894, a line from Stanisławów to Woronienka opened. In order to put up the line, the constructors had to drill three tunnels, including the border tunnel, under the Jabłonicka Pass. The railroad guide, published even before the completion of the whole project, informed travelers:

Besides the bridge, which has viaducts on both sides, the railroad passes also near Jamne village through a 524-meters-long tunnel. Further south, the line passes near Bukówna Mountain close to Narywne with a 224-meters-long tunnel. Then, it reaches the station Mikuliczyn. [...] Apart from this [Woronienka] station, the railroad crosses the waters and the border of the country through a 1216-meters-long tunnel, whose 653 meters lie on the Galician side.¹⁶⁹

The last of these tunnels was mentioned in the report on the opening ceremony of the route. A correspondent from *Gazeta Lwowska* writes the following about the last of the above tunnels:

The tunnel behind Woronienka is 1220-meters-long, nearly five quarters of a kilometer. It penetrates the Carpathian wall, which is the border between Galicia and Hungary, at an altitude of 836.68 meters. No other tunnel in the country is at such high altitude, and no other tunnel is so long. It runs in such a straight line that – on a sunny and dry day – when you stand on one side of the tunnel, you can see a spot of light in the darkness at its other end.¹⁷⁰

The description of the border tunnel uses a paradox: the tunnel connected what incalculable nature and capricious politics separated. An artificial straight line counterpoints the complicated course of the Carpathian ridge and the border it creates. The perfection of the line adds to two other record parameters: it is the highest located tunnel and the longest one at the same time. The tunnel crossed the border or – rather – the border crossed the tunnel. Somewhere in its dark center, there was a line that the passenger in the car crossed without seeing. When you looked out “on a sunny and dry day” from one end, you could see the opposite one, but certainly not the border dividing the tunnel. Woronienka was in the middle of nowhere, on the borderlands of the Borderlands, in a liminal space.

169 A. Inlender, “Stanisławów – Woronienka,” in: Inlender, *Przewodnik ilustrowany po C[esarsko-] K[rólewskich] austr[iackich] kolejach państwowych*, Vienna, 1984, Vol. 32, pp. 95–96.

170 “Stanisławów – Woronienka. II,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 267/1894.

“Apart from station buildings, there are no settlements or summer residences here.”¹⁷¹ When the line and tunnel were under construction, it was necessary not only to build houses for workers, but also to literally seed civilization here. “Almost like in an American wilderness.”¹⁷² The anonymity of the tunnel that entered into service magnified the uniqueness of the “site without place.”

The Galician tunnel near Woronienka had its other end where another country and another language began. The translanguaging and transculturality of underground connections were even more present in all the long Alpine tunnels. They left their mark with a particular augmentation, a parallelism of names, given to the tunnel by two communities from their opposite ends. The tunnel under Mont Cenis, built on the French-Italian border, had different names: for the French it was *tunnel du Mont Cenis*, for the Italians *traforo delle Alpi*, *traforo del Cenisio*, or *traforo del Frejus*. The St. Gotthard Tunnel, drilled on the German-Italian border, created a doublet of names *Gotthardtunnel* and *tunnel del Gottardo*, while the Simplon Tunnel that connects the French-speaking canton of Switzerland with Italy resulted in the pair: *tunnel du Simplon* and *tunnel del Sempione*. Nevertheless, these juxtapositions of naming symmetries obscure a symptom, which emerged and quickly deepened after each construction. It could be defined as the “blurring” of the Italian element. It is visible in the use of appellative *traforo*, which first consistently indicated the first connection under the Alps. A decade later, after the construction of the Swiss St. Gotthard Tunnel, a calque *tunnel* replaced *traforo*. Therefore, the Simplon Tunnel benefited from a domesticated lexical “internationalism,” it is super-Italian. Alpine tunnels physically connected countries and cultures but they did not succeed in effectively counteracting European divisions or neutralizing power relations.

The tunnels did not bring down the division into prosperous Western and Northern parts of the continent and the poor Eastern and Southern parts. Moreover, the traditional division of labor was preserved during the construction process. The West and North provided engineers and machinery, while the East and South provided cheap labor. The Italians drilled a large part of European tunnels. Their efforts found no reflection in the names. Time successfully erased from the names any Italian element. Modern maps of Europe show transcultural Alpine tunnels bearing the names of the stronger neighbor. Michel Foucault placed heterotopias beside a utopia. He writes:

171 W. F., “Beskidy Wschodnie,” *Ziemia* 34/1911, p. 561.

172 “Stanisławów – Woronienka. II,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 267/1894.

First there are the utopias. Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces. There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality.¹⁷³

Tunnels, and Alpine tunnels in particular, are the exact examples of such heterotopias. They are places, in which the nineteenth-century culture found its perfect reflection and – simultaneously – dramatic negation. The shafts and galleries of European mines were a place where a new attitude toward nature formed. Aggression and exploitation of minerals took the place of respect and reverence for the Earth and chthonic deities. Modernity matured and took shape in these acts of nature's desacralization, the "disenchantment of the world," which meant treating natural environment not as a living organism but as a dead and perfectly plastic matter from which man – supported by the powers of reason and technology – can create a new environment that meets his needs and aspirations. The stakes of these activities were the values that the European culture long placed outside of the world, in a place, where the saved spirits of the dead would find themselves. The epoch of modernity contrasted the heavenly happiness – promised after death and life filled with suffering – with the happiness achieved by the efforts of human minds and hands. One could encounter obstacles on the way to prosperity and earthly happiness; from mid-nineteenth-century the latter two were visualized by the Crystal Palace.¹⁷⁴ However, one learned how to overcome them by erecting bold bridges and digging kilometers-long tunnels.

The Alpine tunnel documented the modern approach to nature and signified its successful "conquest." In the report from the opening of the Mont Cenis Tunnel, the Polish reader receives an image of a triumph that ended the gigantomachy, in which the premodern portrait of the earth as a defiant giant paradoxically regains its value:

A few hundred meters from the entrance to the tunnel, blown up with gunpowder and accumulated in the last thirteen years, fragments of rocks created a huge plane, high for twenty-five meters. The organizers decided to arrange a tent for a feast at this artificial

173 Foucault, "Of Other Spaces. . .," p. 23.

174 See P. Sloterdijk, "The Crystal Palace," in: Sloterdijk, *The Crystal Palace*, trans. M. Daffoch, Windsor, 2008.

hill. After such a great victory, Italian and French engineers had the right to throw the defeated giant to the feet of the guests. The 200-metre-long tent, dressed in a simple but tasteful style, could accommodate 1200 guests.¹⁷⁵

A very laconic report from the speeches is followed by a pompous sentence: “At this very moment, work and science received monarchic power to bring nations closer together and ensure peace.”¹⁷⁶ An intimate bond is to connect the nineteenth-century world and the Mont Cenis Tunnel, while the Alpine construction becomes the cradle of modernity, the place where the new savior was born. Many accounts of the tunnel construction emphasize a unique coincidence. The significant underground meeting of two teams occurred when France, after several military defeats, was bleeding in the war with Prussia and the enemy forces stood at the gates of Paris. The tunnel was completed more than thirteen years after the construction had begun. French and Italian workers fell into each other’s arms on December 25, 1870.¹⁷⁷ In a way, the underground triumph became a repetition of the act that founded the culture of the West. The new birth of God happened in the depths of the Alpine colossus on Christmas. Mary Barker Dodge published her poem “The Mont Cenis Tunnel” in the spring of 1871, first in the American-Canadian literary magazine *The Galaxy*, but soon dailies reprinted it and added as a kind of artistic commentary to the reports on the finalized works on the tunnel. Fifteen years later, Barker Dodge included “The Mont Cenis Tunnel” in her collection *The Gray Masque and Other Poems*. She made some corrections that captured later great achievements in European tunnel engineering.¹⁷⁸ In today’s reissues of *The Gray Masque and Other Poems*, one writes about a collection of “forgotten poetry.” The complete oblivion has

175 “Przebiecie Alp. II,” *Sobótka* 42/1871, p. 520.

176 “Przebiecie Alp. II,” p. 520.

177 There are many indications that the date of completion was not a coincidence. Already in November, the press, also in Poland, informed about the approaching end of works. See “Tunel pod górą Mont Cenis,” *Gazeta Warszawska* 279/1870. On December 19, 1870, both teams were very close to each other. The Christmas Day was the hundredth day of the Prussian siege of Paris. Information about the course of the war pushed the report of the triumphant completion of the works to the background. It did not reach Paris until the first days of January 1871. See a note in *Le Figaro* 5/1871. A popular illustrated weekly published a longer article about the tunnel much later in February, on the last pages and without figures. See “Percement du Mont Cenis,” *Le Monde Illustré* 1871 (February 4). War reports dominated the whole issue.

178 See M. Barker Dodge, “The Mont Cenis Tunnel,” *The Galaxy* 1871 (April), pp. 533–534; reprinted in: Barker Dodge, *The Gray Masque and Other Poems*, Boston, 1885, pp. 15–18. I use the latter version.

affected not only the poems, but also the author herself. It is difficult to find the slightest mention of Mary Barker Dodge's rather abundant body of work. Even the dates of the poet's life remain unknown.

"The Mont Cenis Tunnel" is not an outstanding work, yet raises interest for at least a few reasons: as a document of the euphoria accompanying the world after the digging through the Alps, as a testimony to the cultural absorption of the great engineering achievements of the late nineteenth century, and as an example of how the reports of the major event helped to turn the West into an "imaginary community." In a later version, published in Barker Dodge's collection, the poem begins with a motto: "France and Italy first shook hands through the opened tunnel on Christmas-day." It can be said that this sentence establishes a perspective of representation, by transferring the event from the level of concreteness to the level of generalization and abstraction, in which two nations take the place of miners working underground and cosmology takes over the role of history. People are hardly visible in Barker Dodge's poem. Allegorical creatures and personified abstractions appear in the foreground and operate on the stage of cosmic dimensions. First, we meet the goddess Peace, "fleecily draped in white" accompanied by "trooping children." A moment later, the goddess Peace has a new companion, France – the one who "will be joyous anew, / Gaily forgetting in sunshine / The shade which the cypress threw." One cannot see the people on the big stage but can hear them as the Christmas greetings echo in the tunnel. They have a note of hope in them, which will be confirmed by the approaching brightness: "War and its train of evils / In the past shall forgotten be / While dawneth a radiant morrow / Through the tunnel of Mont Cenis!" The tunnel became brighter, the light shone, and it overcame the eternal darkness. Just as once in a stable in Bethlehem, now in the basement of Mont Cenis dies the world of sin. The "brave Faith" appears on the stage. This "brave Faith" is mentioned in the next passage: "Fitting she deems Christ's birthday / For this birth of fuller time, / A larger civilization, / A clasping of hands sublime" Underground, Mont Cenis is born. This is the name of the "a babe, the father of giants." The newborn has powerful parents: the mother is Titan(ia), the father Cyclops-Science. It was the father who played a decisive role in the cosmic act of birth. The underground world painted by the American poet is dominated by men, which is somewhat anachronistic, should one remember that the 1870s is a time of intensified emancipation movements, and the breaking of the monolithic patriarchal culture. In "The Mont Cenis Tunnel," everything continues as it used to. Men rule and they are the real heroes of the tunnel narrative. The poem ends with a portrayal of Science which underground shows its masculine character and fathers a great

achievement. The final verse of the poem is devoted to the masculine and decisive Science:

Thirteen years of waiting – / For the fruit of hidden toil! / From the granite of trust and labor, / Felt Science no recoil? / No; though grave heads were doubting / That failed the end to see. / Patient he stood, and loyal / To Faith and Mont Cenis.

The author wrote the poem about the Franco-Italian tunnel Mont Cenis at the beginning of 1871 in the United States. At that time, the USA was still working on the Hoosac Tunnel. At the time, Europe and America were connected through a telegraphic cable for several years, and Mary Barker Dodge's poem shows a different type of bond, which created a single "imaginary community" on both sides of the Atlantic. The nineteenth century witnesses the birth of this new phenomenon. There formed a large cultural group for which the bond was not based on direct contacts between its members. The bond emerged through images, which – thanks to the press and other new media (photography and cinema) – reached in an identical form people who were very often distant from each other and in no other way related. Behind the community of images, there was a community of experiences, such that images express and such that emerge from contacts with images of important events. The fact that it was a really singular culture developing on both sides of the Atlantic may be confirmed by a comparison of Barker Dodge's poem with two Polish commentaries on the completion of the tunnel works. Let me to repeat the words of an anonymous witness of the event: "At this very moment, work and science received monarchic power to bring nations closer together and ensure peace." It would be enough to change the spelling of "work" and "science" by introducing capital letters to find the "Work" and "Science" from Dodge's poem. At the beginning of 1872, the weekly *Przegląd Tygodniowy* changed its layout by adding a decorative vignette to the title page with an image of a train emerging from the depths of a tunnel. Ksawery Pillati's composition clearly refers to the type of representations that showed the first trains passing through the newly opened Alpine tunnel. A board with the visible name of the locomotive reinforced the meaning: *Progress*.¹⁷⁹ The

179 See *Przegląd Tygodniowy życia społecznego, literatury i sztuk pięknych* 1/1871–1872 (December 26 – January 7). The source of inspiration for Pillati could have been the graphics: "North Entrance to the Mont Cenis Tunnel, Modane," *The Illustrated London News* 1871 (September 30). Polish press also published this graphics, see "Przekop Góry Cenis i jego otwarcie," *Kłosa* 329/1871, p. 244, and "Entrance to the Tunnel at Bardonecchia," from the series "Opening of the Mont Cenis Tunnel," *The Graphic* 97/1871 (October 7), p. 17. In reference to the graphics, Adam Wiślicki writes that

size of the tunnel project made people discuss it in the highest, most abstract tone, by using amplification to replace living people with personified concepts and extend the area of activity to the whole world and the whole nineteenth century. The discussions on the Mont Cenis Tunnel were similar in Poland, the USA, and . . . Italy. In small forms like in the two Polish examples, in larger ones as in the American poem by Dodge, and in the most monumental forms – as in the *Excelsior* ballet by Luigi Manzotti, the author of choreography and libretto, and Romualdo Marengo who composed the music.

The monumentality of Manzotti's work must be understood quite literally. The artist revealed the "monumentality" in the libretto's prologue when he addressed the Milanese audience at the premiere:

Look at the monument raised in Turin in honor of the magnificent Mont Cenis tunnel and imagine the choreographic work you are about to see. It is the titanic battle waged by *Progress* against *Reaction* that I am presenting to this intelligent public; it is the grandeur of *Civilization*, beats down and destroys, for the good of the people, the historic power of *Obscurantism* that has kept them in the darkness of servitude and ignominy. Beginning with the age of the Spanish Inquisition, I arrive at the Mont Cenis tunnel, demonstrating the wondrous discoveries and awe-inspiring achievements of our century [all emphases in the original].¹⁸⁰

The ballet premiered in January 1881 at the Teatro alla Scala and was applauded by the audience. The Milan press also gave it a warm reception, while the theatrical periodical *L'Asmodeo* informed that "the present generation does not remember a success that would equal Manzotti *Excelsior* performed on Tuesday 11 in front of a full auditorium."¹⁸¹ In May 1881, the ballet returned to La Scala and became part of an artistic accompaniment that supported the first national

"Each new moment, year, and century must wear new clothes" in "Opinia publiczna," *Przegląd Tygodniowy* 1/1871, 1872, p. 2.

180 Qtd. after A. Mallach, *The Autumn of Italian Opera. From Verismo to Modernism, 1890–1915*, Boston, 2007, p. 11. The monument that Manzotti talks about is a work by Luigi Belli. Its unveiling occurred in Turin on October 26, 1879, under the official name Monumento al Traforo del Frejus. It has the shape of a pyramid formed of boulders, on top of which there is a winged figure of Genius-Science. On the sides of the pyramid, there are bodies of titans knocked down by Genius, which justifies its name: Monumento ai Caduti del Frejus. The unveiling had a Polish accent, as it coincided with the opening of an exhibition of steel products in an industrial museum funded by Count Aleksander Brochocki. See "Korespondencje *Gaz[ety] Nar[odowej]*," *Gazeta Narodowa* 266/1879.

181 Reviews from *L'Asmodeo* after S. Adamo, "Dancing for the World. Articulating the National and the Global in the 'Ballo Excelsior's' Kitsch Imagination," in: *Moving*

exhibition opened in the city after the unification of Italy. Before the end of the season, it was performed 103 times. Almost exactly two years after its Italian premiere, the ballet visited Paris, where on January 7, 1883, it inaugurated the new L'Eden Théâtre.¹⁸² From then on, the theatrical conquest of the scenes of Europe and both Americas began. In 1885, the *Excelsior* ballet could be admired by the audience in Prague and Vienna while, in 1887, the ballet appeared in St. Petersburg. In 1889, on the occasion of the International Exposition, the ballet returned to Paris. In 1913, it reached a completely new mode of popularization: It became the subject of a film adaptation.¹⁸³

Manzotti's *Excelsior* went down in history as one of the greatest works of theatre. The play performed in Milan required great strength and resources. It involved up to 500 performers (mostly amateurs), animals like horses, cows, and elephants, impressive costumes, and elaborate decorations. The stage had to fit running trains, sailing steam ships, huge bridges, the Suez Canal, carefully reconstructed telegraphic stations, and the Mont Cenis Tunnel.¹⁸⁴ The main characters of the ballet were three allegories: Light, Civilization, and Obscurantism. The fictional plot relies on eleven or, in some instances, twelve scenes. The inside of the Mont Cenis Tunnel provides the background for the ninth scene. The whole performance closes with a finale with the *March of Nations*.

The 1886 libretto to the Alpine tunnel section is a narrative about Obscurantism, which – defeated in other fields – seeks refuge in the depths of Mont Cenis. However, it witnesses here the works that are about to end the “greatest undertaking of mankind.”¹⁸⁵ In the tunnel, the “modern titans”¹⁸⁶ work. The end of

Bodies, Displaying Nations, National Cultures, Race and Gender in World Expositions Nineteenth to Twenty-First Century, ed. G. Abbattista, Trieste, 2014, p. 149.

182 “Échos des théâtres,” *Le Gaulois* 174/1883.

183 Adjusting the plays according to the time and place of the production was an inherent part of the popularization process. In the Paris premiere version from 1883, Hungary substituted Prussia as a source of references. In Vienna, instead of the Mont Cenis tunnel the viewers watched the Arlberg tunnel. In the play put on in Paris in 1889, the final *March of Nations* crossed the stage with the Eiffel Tower in the background, while in the London adaptation from 1905 people walked in front of the Parliament.

184 The scene depicting the digging of the Suez Canal became part of the play in 1883.

185 See: *Excelsior*, di L. Manzotti, musica di R. Marengo, edizione completa per pianoforte, riduzione di M. Saladino, Milan, 1881, p. 104.

186 See: *Excelsior*, p. 106.

the construction works seems very near. The workers hope to soon meet those who drill the tunnel from the opposite side. Yet, the sound coming to the ears of the workers gets quieter. At that moment, doubt creeps into the souls of engineers and workers, and there is a growing fear that the two teams digging the tunnel passed each other. However, seconds later, the last planted mine explodes. “Engineers run to the wall that has just collapsed; this time, they can clearly hear the hitting of a pickaxe. The hits become more audible. Victory!”¹⁸⁷ The workers are overwhelmed with joy, which the libretto puts in the following way: “It’s all over. Comrades who worked on the great construction talk to each other and embrace each other.” Soon after comes the Light which “observes this moving scene.”¹⁸⁸ The fight against Obscurantism brings another beautiful triumph.

The Polish report and the vignette from *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, the American poem, the Turin monument, and the *Excelsior* ballet; all these works use a set of personified abstractions. These sets differ in particular realizations, but they may be reduced to a clear distinction between the forces of good and evil. The poetics of allegory transfers notifications from the level of language code to that of cultural images. The former differentiates the West, the latter makes it a community. In Manzotti’s work, universalization overwhelms the material. The viewer watches personified abstractions in motion, while the language on the stage is music and dance. In his analysis of *Excelsior*, Sergia Adamo emphasizes the specific context that European exhibition practice provided for Manzotti’s ballet. The premiere of the ballet was a few months ahead of the first national exhibition after the unification of Italy, and the ballet returned to the stage during the event, attracting huge crowds to the performances. In 1889, when Paris became the site of the world exhibition, Eden Théâtre gave three hundred performances of *Excelsior*. As the researcher argues, the ballet instructed the viewer how to watch the exhibitions, understand the achievements, and perceive the presented inventions. We may also treat the words from the Milan prologue as a key to understanding the exhibitions. In the theater and in the exhibition pavilions, the viewer was to see “progress and civilization.”¹⁸⁹ The ballet sends a message similar to that one accompanying all European exhibitions. It turns Mont Cenis Tunnel

187 See: *Excelsior*, p. 110.

188 See: *Excelsior*, p. 112.

189 See S. Adamo, “Dancing for the World. Articulating the National and the Global in the ‘Ballo Excelsior’s’ Kitsch Imagination,” in *Moving Bodies, Displaying Nations, National Cultures, Race and Gender in World Expositions Nineteenth to Twenty-First Century*, pp. 143–146.

into an element of the language, with which the West spoke to the world and documented Western cultural domination. The ballet ends with a scene of the *March of Nations*, in which dancers are dressed as representatives of various nations who walk toward universal peace.¹⁹⁰ This movement in the finale gave new meaning to the construction of the Tunnel. From an engineering project and a purely technical solution, the Tunnel became part of a symbolic road that Europe follows to a happy future. Such interpretation of the undergrounds monumentalized the efforts of the miners. In the photographs that show underground works, readers of European press were to see participants of the victorious “march of nations.” The world exhibition in Milan confirmed the semantization of the Alpine tunnel through ballet exhibitions. Opened in May 1906, the event was dedicated to transportation and communication. One of the attractions of the Italian part of the exhibition was a huge model that meticulously recreated the interior of the Simplon Tunnel, under construction at the time.¹⁹¹

The Alpine tunnels “represent” own culture but simultaneously “contest” and “reverse” it. In this sense, they meet the conditions captured by Foucault’s definition of heterotopia, because this space of triumph does not cease to be the space of death, a cursed place. If the nineteenth-century civilization is presented as a march of intellect toward happiness, then the tunnel emerges as the place where one cannot rest, a place where one cannot survive, a space marked by illness, suffering, and death.¹⁹² Should we compare magnificent projects of modernity to

190 In the finale from the ballet staging in Prague in 1885, a dancer depicting Poland took part in the march scene. See: E., “Kronika praska,” *Gazeta Lwowska*, 263/1885.

191 In the correspondence from Milan, *Gazeta Warszawska* presented the following description: “You enter a tight corridor, in which everything was placed with naturalistic fidelity, as it was in Simplon. The light of flashlights set up here and there illuminates the underground porches; the walls made of artificial rock are supported by logs. There is little room in this stuffy place. One can feel the damp, dust, and mud, because the fidelity of the copy reaches even such an extent that in one of the branches of the tunnel water explodes from the walls, as it often happened during the miners’ work. [...] After a quarter of an hour in this cramped and stuffy depths, so filigree in comparison to reality, one comes into the world of God, into the sun, with joy to breathe freely the world, the sky.” “Korespondencje,” *Gazeta Warszawska*, 219/1906. See also: the guide to the Simplon Pavilion: *Il Sempione et Il Padiglion del Sempione. Note explicative*, Milan, 1906.

192 A commentary to the finished construction could look as follows: “The excavation of the St. Gotthard tunnel, which started in 1872 and finished March 1, this year costed many lives. Around hundred-and-fifty people lost their lives in the construction process, and over 400 have to now struggle with disabilities.” *Tydzień*, 16/1880.

the carefully maintained “winter gardens,” then the underground constructions appear as some kind of hole, a breach, a desert. Hundreds of reports from the construction of Alpine tunnels are narratives about human suffering, pain, illness, and death. For many workers, the tunnel became a grave. In 1908, during the excavation of the Lötschberg Tunnel, workers encountered a large watercourse that immediately flooded the tunnels, cutting off the evacuation route for more than twenty miners. None of them survived.¹⁹³ At the turn of the centuries, sensational press extensively utilized the theme of being buried alive.¹⁹⁴ On March 1, 1910, this theme became richer with a new variant: in the American Cascade Mountains, a huge avalanche descended on a train trapped in snow. A few dozen passengers died under the tons of snow. Most of the victims’ bodies could only be reached in late spring, a few months after the catastrophe.¹⁹⁵ At the turn of the centuries, a tunnel was also a space for assassinations and unexpected deaths. A space of various human tragedies.¹⁹⁶ The European reader could have

193 See: “Katastrofa w tunelu,” *Czas*, 169/1908 (July 25); “Katastrofa w tunelu,” *Głos Warszawski*, 118/1908 (July 25); “Katastrofa,” *Kurier Lwowski*, 344/1908 (July 25); “Katastrofa przy budowie tunelu,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 170/1908 (July 26); column: “Z różnych stron,” *Gazeta Toruńska* 171/1908 (28 July).

194 See: “Katastrofa w tunelu,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 230/1891 (“On the Ovadi-Asti railway line a part of the Panieata tunnel collapsed. The entrance to the tunnel was buried, and twenty workers were completely cut off from the world”); “Colapse of a Tunnel,” *Dundee Courier*, 1901 (August 12). “The entrance to one of the tunnels of the Albula line collapsed yesterday, burying fourteen people.”; “Siedm dni żywcem zasypany!,” *Gazeta Toruńska*, 147/1909. “On Tuesday, in the collapsed Burgundy tunnel in Switzerland, a human voice was heard coming from underground.”

195 See: “In the Cascade Range an enormous avalanche came down on a train. So far, sixty bodies have been taken from under the snow”. (*Czas*, 100/1910.); “Seattle, March 5. According to the latest news, the rescue team cleared the way to one more carriage. Out of the travelers buried in the snow for sixty hours, ten were still alive. One of the rescued lost his senses.” (*Gazeta Toruńska*” 52/1910.) In the catastrophe at Wellington Station, Washington, D.C., ninety-six passengers and railwaymen lost their lives. See: G. Krist, *The White Cascade. The Great Northern Railway Disaster and America’s Deadliest Avalanche*, New York, 2007.

196 “The functioning of the Mont Cenis Tunnel is still not flawless, as no one knows how to deal with the excessive heat of 32° R [112° F] and what to do with the smoke from the locomotives, which has already strangled two test train drivers.” *Gazeta Warszawska*, 142/1871; “The tunnel under Mont Cenis poses significant difficulties for the railway traffic. In the first attempt, two of the three engine drivers suffocated.” (*Katolik*, 33/1871). On the planned assassination of King Edward in the Simplon Tunnel, see “Zamach na Edwarda VII?,” *Gazeta Toruńska*, 106/1907; on the plans of

learned about this dark side of the underground from two works: Emil Zola's short story "The Death of Olivier Becaille" and Maxim Gorky's *Tales of Italy*.

The story of Olivier Becaille uses the theme of illusive death and burial alive, quite popular in the literature of the nineteenth century. However, the novelty here is the technologization of the approach.¹⁹⁷ After falling into a cataleptic numbness, the protagonist hears the preparations for his funeral and – when lumps of earth fall onto his coffin – he loses consciousness to again dream the scene that tormented him many times: imprisonment in a train blocked in a tunnel. This leads to a double ending, because the loss of consciousness shuts hero down while catalepsy previously stiffened his body. However, the return to consciousness means a return to a state worse than his nightmare, because thought processes make burial alive a traumatic experience of the highest degree. The double ending, the unconsciousness of a cataleptic, finds in Zola's story a technological equivalent in the catastrophic train journey. The train is trapped in a "basement without exit."¹⁹⁸ The train and the tunnel are both closed spaces and we may say that – in the story – they jointly form a casket with double walls. When the two entrances to the underground collapse, the passengers can exit the cars, but they remain trapped. They live with the awareness that "long and terrible dying has begun."¹⁹⁹ The protagonist of the story repeatedly asks himself what death is. We may transfer this question to the situation that appears in his nightmare about a catastrophe. Are the passengers of the buried train still alive? They exit the carriages, move in the dark, but after exhausting food supplies, their fate seems sealed. "Nothing more frightening than a whole train trapped underground, buried alive with a whole bunch of travelers, dying one after the other."²⁰⁰ Help can come only from the outside. There is a moment of hope in Olivier's history: someone called a doctor, who might discover that the motionless man is still alive. However, the doctor states that the man is dead, which diagnosis extinguishes the last spark of hope in Olivier. The story of a train crash that tormented the protagonist for years has different variants. The image that

the assassination of the Russian tsar in the St. Gotthard Tunnel, see "Z Rosji," *Gazeta Toruńska*, 250/190.

197 At the turn of the century, the topic returned as a medical issue. See: "Rozpoznanie pozornej śmierci," *Ilustracja Polska* 17/1903.

198 E. Zola, *The Death of Oliver Becaille*, p. 18, <https://spensabayalibrary.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/the-death-of-olivier-becaille.pdf> [accessed: December 11, 2019]. For the original, see: *La Mort d'Olivier Becaille*, in: Zola, *Nais Micoulin*, Paris, 1884.

199 Zola, *The Death of Oliver Becaille*, p. 18.

200 Zola, *The Death of Oliver Becaille*, p. 19.

appears after his loss of consciousness provides a technological equivalent in the form of rescue, because at some point, people imprisoned underground hear the work of crews that dig a rescue shaft. The workers seen from below, busy with setting up an elevator, are like a doctor summoned to help, “whose professional routine has turned him into a machine.”²⁰¹ Zola’s story offers a very dark, claustrophobic vision of the tunnel. It is the story of a place that can become a grave for the living. There is no doubt that this way of writing may partly reflect civilizational unrest at the end of the century. Let us also remember that – shortly after the publication of Zola’s story about the cataleptic hero – the writer combined the underground with suffering and death in the novel *Germinial*. Although Olivier Becaille managed to return to the living, after that story Zola’s tunnels always meant “long and terrible suffering.”²⁰²

When Zola published his story, the Mont Cenis Tunnel was no longer the longest underground construction. At that point, St. Gotthard’s Tunnel inherited the title. Besides, there was also another vividly discussed construction, meant to be even longer. It was supposed to connect the Swiss and Italian railroad under the Simplon Pass. Zola’s tunnel was a figment of the protagonist’s imagination supported by the reality of the world. Gorky, in turn, mentions a real tunnel, which Italy boasted about at the Milan World Exhibition at the time when Gorky was still working on his story. However, the exhibitions’ narrative and the *Tales of Italy* portray the Simpon Tunnel differently. For Milan, it is a component of a clear story of progress, while for Gorky, it is a space mentioned by a “a workman, like some dark coloured beetle.”²⁰³ Gorky reduced the great and sublime story of the victorious march of civilization to a story told by those for whom progress was a physical experience, a physical effort proved by sweat and blood. The main character is a young Italian worker with a “medal for working in the Simplon tunnel”²⁰⁴ decorating his chest. There is also the second character, Paolo’s father,

201 Zola, *The Death of Oliver Becaille*, p. 12.

202 Railway tunnel as a place of cruel death was also a motif used by Emile Zola in the scene of Flora’s suicide in *The Monomaniac*. Zola’s novel *La Bête Humaine* was first translated into English as *Human Brutes*, and published in the United States in 1890. In Britain it appeared as *The Monomaniac* in 1901. In Alec Brown’s translation from 1956 the novel was given the title *The Beast in Man*.

203 M. Gorky, *Tales of Two Countries*, London, 1914, p. 13. *Tales of Italy* was written in 1906–1913 and printed in Russian newspapers in 1911–1913. The story was first translated into Polish only in 1947. See Gorky, “Tunel,” trans. W. Woroszyński, *Świat Młodych*, 19/1947.

204 Gorky, *Tales of Two Countries*, p. 13.

who died before the construction was finished and did not see the underground meeting of the two teams of diggers several weeks after his demise. The father and son introduce different viewpoints to the story. From Paolo's perspective, we learn about the tunnel excavation. However, in the background of his accounts, there are fears and doubts of a father: "To cut through a mountain from country to country," he said, "is contrary to the will of God, who separated countries by mountain walls."²⁰⁵ After some time, Paolo finds this religious perspective not that convincing but, during the works, he was often inclined to agree that tunnel excavation is a modern blasphemy:

The farther we went in the tunnel, the hotter it became, and men fell prostrate and were overcome. Water gushed forth faster from the hot springs, whole seams fell down, and two of our fellows from Lugano went mad. At night in the barracks many of us talked in delirium, groaned and jumped up from our beds in terror.²⁰⁶

The story begins with a depiction of the blue surface of a lake, shining in the first rays of the sun. It ends with Paolo's account of how, following his father's request, he brought news of the completion of the work to the grave: "Father – it is done!" I said. "The people have conquered. It is done, father!"²⁰⁷ The combination of triumph and death is the guiding thread of the entire work. Hence the contrast between the wonderful image of vivid pristine nature and the image of a "worker as black as a beetle" sitting by a pile of gravel.

2. In the Cinematograph Room

The nineteenth-century tunnel, especially a long one, utilized two elementary narratives. The heroic narrative about the beginnings of a tunnel, about people's brave struggle against the adversities of nature, and an ordinary narrative, focused on everyday life, the passengers enjoying the comfort of the underground route who replace the hard-working miners. Such passengers were usually unaware of the workers, who sacrificed their lives for the construction. These two storytelling patterns emerge from two different points of view. The narrator of the heroic story usually looks forward, concentrates on the wall of ground, and carefully listens to the sounds that might indicate that the crew moving from the opposite end is already very close. In these stories, what is important is in front of the eyes of the diggers. It draws one's attention even when it is just a solid rock. The result

205 Gorky, *Tales of Two Countries*, p. 17.

206 Gorky, *Tales of Two Countries*, p. 18.

207 Gorky, *Tales of Two Countries*, p. 22.

of the struggle is a radical transformation of the underground space, opening it to penetrating gazes, breaking the last barrier, and seeing smiling male faces in windows created in the rock. The friendly embraces of the mining crews seals the opening of the passage and – through its physicality – amplifies the underground perspective. What is important and solemn is that which unveils in front of their eyes and which is the promise of the future collision-free circulation of trains. The heroic narrative is conveyed in the light that heralds the end of the tunnel.

A gaze perpendicular to the one that drives heroic narratives produces everyday stories. When the lights in a train are on, a look out of the window when passing through a tunnel is very impoverished. Darkness and glass form a barrier that keeps stimuli from entering the train. Therefore, numerous accounts from the journeys through Alpine tunnels discuss the activity of the body. To help the eye, a traveler stands up, turns to the window, and lowers it. The journey through the underworld is visually impoverished, yet it provides a modern traveler with another rare experience. Namely, waves of wind brushing the face of the one who leans out of a window, locomotive smoke irritating the nose, and the feeling of temperature rising in the tunnel. There is one more contrasting feature that distinguishes everyday narratives from the heroic ones. The miners excavating a tunnel are only young men, who know each other well, as they often come from the same area and as they have been working together for a long time; in a word, they are connected by strong emotional ties.²⁰⁸ Meetings on a train result from pure coincidence. In one compartment may meet people who have never seen each other before and then will never see each other again. They are passengers with different itineraries, characters, and temperaments. The shared space may bring together honest individuals and ordinary bastards. The nineteenth-century train mixes people of all states and occupations, young and old, men and women. In many cases, this combination becomes a factor conducive to making new acquaintances. The experienced physical proximity may be a springboard to an engaging conversation or subtle flirtation. It could both create new social relations and wash away the ones existing before the trip. Hundreds of jokes in the humorous press from the turn of the century took as their theme a situation “at the railroad station” or “in the car” when, for a long time, he and

208 Such strong emotional bonds connect the two male characters from the melodramatic “novella” “Dramat w tunelu.” They also share affection for the beautiful Margarita. When one of the men is arrested and executed because he was an Austrian deserter, his friend and denunciator commits suicide in Mont Ceniz Tunnel by standing in the way of a machine that bores the sidewall. See L.F. [Lucjan Falkiewicz?], “Dramat w tunelu. Nowela,” *Wędrowiec*, 33/1889.

she touch each other's bodies and when the evolving flirtation scatters into pieces as a third actor enters the stage. Usually, it is the much older husband waking up from a short nap.²⁰⁹ In this atmosphere of imposed intimacy, darkness plays an outstanding role by suspending social relations and weakening barriers between the sexes.

However, darkness was not only conducive to innocent flirtation, but it could also support evil people and intentions. Daily tunnel narratives often exploited the darkness. When the interior of the railroad car was not illuminated, darkness transformed the safe compartment into a space of fear, which usually gripped women, especially those who decided to travel alone. Darkness accompanies almost all heroic narratives and stories about people's underground struggles with the forces of nature. Only rarely can the protagonists of such stories be someone other than a miner hired for excavation works, and only in a special case the European reader had a chance to see the tunnel through the eyes of a tourist. *Kłosy* takes their readers on such a virtual journey through the Mont Cenis Tunnel in an article taken from "three letters by a young tourist." In the first of the three letters, the reader learns about the experience of going through a tunnel: the monotony of darkness, only endurable thanks to the explanations of the engineer-guide. The finale of the report is the image of a growing bright spot:

Straight ahead, seemingly extremely far away, in the very depths of the tunnel, a star appeared. The closer we got, the brighter it grew; white light refracted in the dark red light of lamps hanging on both sides of the tunnel. You would say that this star is hanging from the very ceiling, where it motionlessly hovers above the depths. But with every step, the light grew bigger; one more kilometer and the illusion is gone – this star was a bright, gentle day, an exit from the tunnel – the darkness was over a few minutes later, when the sky appeared, and we rushed out of the mountain tunnel.²¹⁰

This is an unusual perspective, essentially reserved only for those who dig the tunnel. The account in *Kłosy* presents two more journeys through a tunnel; this time ordinary ones, which could have been repeated by the readers of the magazine. The inside of each tunnel is an impressive monument to designers

209 See Fotofero, "W wagonie. Jedna z komedii grywanych w pociągach dróg żelaznych," *Mucha*, 12/1872; "W omnibusie," *Mucha*, 42/187; "Jak się podróżuje. (Kilka typów w wagonie kreslonych)," *Mucha*, 39/1883 [figure "W tunelu"]; "Na dworcu," *Mucha*, 30/1885; Kamerton, "Balada kolejowa," *Mucha*, 42/1888; "W wagonie," *Mucha*, 40/1897; Graphics with a description: "Pociąg spacerowy Warszawa – Otwock; poleca się zwolennikom emocyjnego flirtu," *Mucha*, 26/1903; "Wstydliva," *Mucha*, 34/1905; "Flirt w wagonie vel przygoda handlowca," *Sowizdrzał*, 43/1913.

210 "Przekop Góry Cenis i jego otwarcie," *Kłosy*, 329/1870, p. 244.

and builders. It is an underground record of the effort of male heads and arms. Therefore, if anyone from outside the construction team could have seen the tunnel, it was possible only through accounts of another male set of eyes assessing the work.²¹¹ The woman entered the tunnel only in the role of a female passenger. A woman could not see much outside the window, and when the light in the car was on – almost nothing.²¹² When she was careful, she avoided the company of a random man, and if she had to share a compartment with one, she had to remember the advice given by the authors of textbooks for railroad travelers:

Male passengers have sometimes been assaulted and robbed, and females insulted, in passing through tunnels. And this has been most frequently the case when there have been only two occupants in the carriage. In going through a tunnel, therefore, it is always as well to have the hands and arms ready disposed for defence, so that in the event of an attack, the assailant may be instantly beaten back or restrained.²¹³

Advice formulated in this way turned the tunnel into a space where a woman had to devote all the attention to the interior of the train.²¹⁴ Touch trumped sight as the most important sense.

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- 211 The opening ceremony of the Mont Cenis tunnel in Italy provided women with a different attraction. In the evening, in Turin, on September 16, 1871, there were colorful illuminations. Their main element was a model of the tunnel. See A. Gallenga, *Italy Revisited*, Vol. 2, London, 1875, pp. 109–110.
- 212 Zofia Sokołowska, one of the few women traveling alone, wrote the following about passing through the Mont Cenis tunnel. “The night adds to the impression one gets here. After the terrifying whistle the whole train rushes with a deafening rumble into an underground corridor, illuminated every few dozen cubits by lanterns; in their pale and flickering light one can see the brick walls of the tunnel, the second line of rails shining like silver threads, and clouds of smoke with flaming sparks.” Z. S[okołowska], “Listy z podróży,” *Wędrowiec*, 223/1881, p. 216.
- 213 *Caution in Passing through Tunnels*, in *The Railway Traveler’s Handy Book of Hints, Suggestions, and Advice, before the Journey, on the Journey, and after the Journey*, London, 1862, p. 93–94. Rape on a train became the subject of a scandalous pornographic novel *Raped on the Railway*, which came out anonymously in Paris around 1899 with a false print date: 1894. There were 300 copies in the first print. Around 1904, the house reprinted 500 copies. The scene of the night journey of Ewa Pobratyńska, the heroine of Stefan Żeromski’s very popular and scandalous Polish novel *Dzieje grzechu* bears some resemblance to the French publication.
- 214 In the section devoted to the Box Tunnel, the author of one of the first railroad guides to England warns: “And now, timid lady-travellers, screw up your nerves for a rush through the Box Tunnel.” G.S. Measom, *The Illustrated Guide to the Great Western Railway*, London, 1852, p. 48. Later, on page 61, Measom writes about the “unjustified” fear that Sapperton Tunnel might have caused. On the other hand, Murray’s guide

The idea that train travel prepared passengers for the role of future cinema viewers can be easily agreed with the thesis that routes with tunnels played a special role in the process of focusing the gaze, which was sometimes directed out of the window, where it encountered impenetrable darkness. To an extent, a tunnel is an equivalent of darkening after a projection, marking the limits of a shot or, more often, a single-shot image.²¹⁵ If a viewer of first cinematographic screenings had some travel experience behind them, they could find similarities between the new situation and the experience of being a passenger, with which they had already become familiar. Working machines were present both in the cinematograph room and on train. The machines manifested their presence by means of characteristic sounds. In both spaces, the rotation of machine elements produced new images with clearly marked frames. Both in the cinematograph room and train compartment, a motionless body collided with moving images. The spectator-passenger in the seat could enjoy the dynamics of real travel images and the changing scenes from a “virtual” journey. In both cases, industrialization serves mass consumption: train produces and allows the mass consumption of travel, while the film theater offers viewers the possibility to spend free time in the company of others. Lynne Kirby indicates another common element: trains and films allowed people to experience time in its modern forms, to feel the synchronicity and simultaneity of events. Standardization imposed on the world time zones, in which the same time was in force. Fully materialized in Washington, D.C.,²¹⁶ the concept appeared earlier in railroad timetables, replacing the local time of serviced towns and cities with one conventional time for all stations of the line. Synchronization enabled by telegraphic communication resulted in the same indication of clocks everywhere. Timetables allowed

calms the readers: “The passage of the [Mont Cenis] tunnel occupies from the N[orth] about 28 minutes, from the S[outh] somewhat less. The carriages are well lighted, and the tunnel is furnished with gas lamps.” *Handbook for Travelers in Northern Italy*, 16th ed., London, 1897, pp. 3–4.

- 215 Benjamin Gastineau presents his protocinematic experiences in a fragment popular among film experts: “Running with the speed of fifteen knots per hour, the steam, this powerful theatrical engineer, opens the trapdoor, puts on the decorations, changes the points of view every time, repetitively paints in front of the astonished traveler joyful scenes, sad scenes, burlesques, shining fireworks, visions that disappear in the blink of an eye. It moves nature dressed in dark and bright dresses, shows skeletons and lovers, clouds and sunrays, attractive vistas and dark images, weddings, baptisms, cemeteries.” B. Gastineau, *La vie en chemin de fer. Les romans du voyage*, Paris, 1861, p. 31.
- 216 See S. Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880–1918*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1983, pp. 11–16.

their users to imagine that certain events happen in parallel, and that two trains can leave different stations at the same time. Simultaneity also appeared quite early on the screen by means of a trick called parallel editing.²¹⁷

But the most important link between the train journey and the experience of cinematographic screening was shock. When writing about shock, railroad historians usually follow the path of thoughts that Wolfgang Schivelbusch outlined in his fundamental monograph.²¹⁸ Interestingly, in the analysis of earliest cinema experiences, film experts refer to the same work.²¹⁹ Schivelbusch writes about shock as a result of the contact between body and machine, and he reconstructs the history of medical reflections, focused on the concept of “railway spine,” a “spinal shock.” “Railway spine” appeared as a disease in the 1860s as an attempt to explain the sources of ailments reported by victims of railroad accidents. It relates to physically healthy people, without visible injuries caused by the accident, who nevertheless – after some time after the accident – suffer from headaches, insomnia, or loss of appetite. “Railway spine” was a diagnosis of the changes in the spinal cord caused by the accident, which caused various states of discomfort over time. This shock was understood as somatic: it was a disorder in the functioning of the central nervous system, which resulted from a sudden impact equaling an uncontrolled movement of the body experienced by the injured person. Such ailment was typical not only for people injured in accidents but also those, whose bodies had been exposed to mechanical vibrations for a long time: most often workers, among them drivers and firemen. The growing number of cases confirming the theory of “railway spine” pushed doctors toward the concept of male hysteria, a condition that had previously been diagnosed as characteristic only of women. The disorder connected with hysteria passed from the soma to the psyche; shock understood as a result of physical contact between the body and the machine gave ground for a radically new approach: shock as a result of the overload of stimuli that it engendered. Shock as a consequence of the sensorial overload is an important part of diagnoses about culture at the end of the nineteenth century. The rapidly increasing pace of life gave the most dramatic results in the urban space, where the psyche of the individual was constantly bombarded with sensuality in doses overwhelming normal defense

217 See Kirby, *Parallel Tracks. The Railroad and Silent Cinema*, p. 7.

218 See Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey. Trains and Travel in the nineteenth Century*, trans. A. Hollo, Oxford, 1980, chapter “Railroad Accident, “Railway Spine,” Traumatic Neurosis. *Excursion: The History of Shock.*”

219 See Kirby, *Parallel Tracks. The Railroad and Silent Cinema*, chapter “Inventors and Hysterics. The Train in the Prehistory and Early History of Cinema.”

mechanisms. Culture came to the rescue. At the end of the nineteenth century, a rich set of forms of entertainment develops, which immunize the individual by providing shock in small and harmless doses. Among these forms was film.

A technical formula *phantom railway ride* defined one of the earliest film genres.²²⁰ It was an excellent response to the need to tone down the urban shock. It offered a large dose of sensation, however, in control of the viewers, who always know that they watch images in a screening room and the dynamics of visual impressions will not endanger their safe static location in any way. *Phantom railway ride* presented a view that opened up in front of the camera lens placed on the front of a moving locomotive. Since the lens's field of view usually showed no train part responsible for movement, the viewer had the impression that an unknown mysterious force carries him ahead.²²¹ Train travel and window views were a training that accustomed the modern eye to perceiving "moving photographs." The attractiveness of the *phantom railway ride* genre resulted from a completely new perspective. A dramatic and completely untamed look at the objects right in front of the train and next to the tracks replaced a gaze perpendicular to the direction of train movement. Instead of a safe perspective, limited and controlled by a window with glass, the viewer faced a dynamic image, restricted only with the edges of the screen. If the viewer's gaze through the window confirmed his passenger role and the passivity of the eye fed by shifting landscapes, then the locomotive perspective on film positioned the viewer in the engine driver's cab, where he had an impression that he drives the machine or – at least – he ensures the safety of travel by carefully watching the route ahead.²²²

220 Contemporary film studies use a slightly different formula of *phantom train ride*. From here on, I will use the name *phantom railway ride*, which consistently appears in the first press advertisements. The alternative was *phantom ride*.

221 London screening announcement of films produced by the American Mutoscope Company brought about the earliest characteristics of the genre: "One of the most successful pictures ever shown in this latest development of photography is that of the Empire State Express, a train rushing along at the rate of a mile a minute; but now an ingenious operator has hit upon the idea of presenting still life – meadows, trees, hedgerows, and houses on the line of a railway, as seen from the front of a locomotive going at full speed. The sensation of entering and leaving a tunnel, as recorded by the camera, is so realistic that the spectator of the rapidly-changing scene on the canvas experiences exactly the same feelings as if he were in reality standing on the locomotive." *The Era* 16/1897 (October). The scene from this quote went down in history as *The Haverstraw Tunnel*.

222 Once again, I refer to the characteristic of the genre published by a popular London entertainment weekly in October 1897, after screenings of films produced by

Phantom railway ride is a genre of cinema attractions that turned the viewer into a participant of displayed events. It is the quintessence of what could have been experienced during the film screenings. At the World Exhibition in St. Louis in 1904, one of the attractions was a spectacle called Hale's Tours of the World. In a room styled like a panoramic car, the viewers could see on screen the views that appeared behind the train. In this way, the cinematographic spectacle became a simulation of a railroad journey. Railroad props like whistling locomotives, trembling seats or ticket inspectors dressed as conductors allowed viewers to forget that their journey was only a projection.²²³

Just over seventy-seconds-long, the 1899 *A Kiss in the Tunnel* can be considered an outstanding achievement of the *phantom railway ride* genre. George Albert Smith's work consists of two distinct compositional units. The first one is a classic *phantom railway ride* shot by Cecil Hepworth as *View from an Engine Front. Train Leaving Tunnel*, which – in accordance with the logic of the composition stated in the title – has two parts: before the entering and after leaving the tunnel.²²⁴ These shots constitute an event frame for a scene between them, which happens inside a compartment. A man inside seizes the opportunity of tunnel darkness, stands up and kisses a lady sitting in the opposite seat.²²⁵ The montage linking the three shots – entrance to the tunnel, stolen kiss, and the exit from the tunnel – juxtaposes two different viewpoints. In both tunnel scenes, the viewer is an active participant of the events. He follows the route through the eyes of the engine driver. In the scene of the kiss, the viewpoint has no real counterpart, as it is located on a line perpendicular to the direction of travel. Moreover, the camera lens is in such a distance that the whole frame becomes subjected to a motionless gaze. Foucault combined the heterotopia of cinema with the ability to

Mutoscope Company: "Instead, therefore, of looking on at a scene, the spectator now participates, so to say, in the movement – becomes, as it were, part and parcel of the picture. With a very slight stretch of imagination he can fancy himself tearing along at express speed on a cow-catcher, with the landscape simply leaping towards him." *The Era* 30/1897 (October).

223 See Gunning, *The Cinema of Attraction*, p. 65. In the early twentieth century, the Hale's Tours became very popular all over America and soon came to Europe.

224 The division is reflected by the title. The advertisements presented the film as *Phantom railway Ride (Kissing in the Tunnel)*. See *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 1899 (April 1, 3, and September 2).

225 The kiss scene, played by Smith and his wife, was soon put on sale. It could be used with any phantom [railroad] ride record, therefore it could be used for other productions. The double authorship of this *A Kiss in the Tunnel* is sometimes marked in the literature as "Smith/Hepworth film."

radically juxtapose different spaces on screen. Heterotopic character also reveals itself in places, in which two different perspectives converge – as in *A kiss in the tunnel* – one has roots outside of film, while the other is an artificial creation. *Phantom railway ride* increased its attractiveness when the registered route ran through bridges and tunnels.²²⁶ Such a film allowed viewers to disconnect their eyes from bodies, as such technique portrayed a record of a visual experience of someone else, an unknown cameraman. However, while watching a film of this genre, viewers felt alone in front of a speeding locomotive. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, this unusual perspective – unattainable for the average viewer – materialized thanks to two new increasingly popular means of transportation. *Phantom railway ride* found a non-film equivalent in cycling and driving a car.

New and technologized speed was common for trains, bicycles, and cars. When it comes to the train, the speed was subject to strict control of its route and restrictive regulations. No limits seemed to restrict the speed of bicycles and, even more so, the speed of cars. Moreover, it gave rise to suspicions that the human body could become addicted to speed like a drug and create a completely new disease of “speed frenzy.” This danger was to await cyclists affected by another sad ailment. Fast riding did not allow the cyclist to grasp the intensely absorbed stimuli, which resulted in “superficiality of perceived impressions and dilettantism.” “A walker moves forward slowly. Thus, he may hone his gift of perceptiveness, whereas a cyclist rushes like the wind. . . barely preserving in his memory the mere contour of surroundings.”²²⁷ Car was a threat to mental health

226 In 1898 alone, the English Warwick Trading Company produced twelve *phantom railway ride* films. Films of this genre were often parts of larger compositions or formed several-part series. See F. Gray, “The Edited film In England, in: *The Silent Cinema Reader*, eds. L. Grievson, P. Krämer, London, 2004, pp. 55–56. Shortly after Smith’s and Hepworth’s *A Kiss in the Tunnel* a remake appeared, produced by Bamforth Company. The compositional framework for the kiss scene are shots of a train entering and leaving the tunnel, both with a static camera. The most famous reference to Smith’s and Hepworth’s film is Edwin S. Porter’s *What Happened in the Tunnel* from 1903. The viewer learns about a kiss when – after emerging from complete darkness – women’s laughter fills the compartment and means that the young man made a mistake and, instead of a white girl, kissed her black nanny. See J.M. Gaines, *Fire and Desire. Mixed-Race Movies in the Silent Era*, Chicago, 2001, pp. 52–57.

227 B.M., “Filozofia rumaka żelaznego,” *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 18/1903, p. 318. It is easy to notice that –half a century earlier – opponents of railroad used the same argument. The newspaper also wrote about the negative effects of cycling: “The abuse of cycling affects mainly the heart and blood circulation in general, though there are

to an even greater extent: "If speed frenzy is similar to morphinism, then it must also resemble alcoholism. The characteristic feature of alcoholism is the powerlessness that devours an alcoholic. This leads to excessive abuse and resulting madness."²²⁸

Many warned that car manufacturers want to turn the vehicle into "a sport toy for rich amateurs who wish to introduce a new sensation to their blunted nerves in any possible way."²²⁹ Bicycles and cars were cultural allies of the *phantom railway ride*. The film was a cheap substitute of the intense excitement provided by the luxurious entertainment of driving a car. The interior of the cinematographic room revealed yet another affinity. It provided attractions found on various types of slides, on the merry-go-round, and on roller coasters. The *phantom train ride* also had its faithful copy in amusement parks: it was the passage through the "tunnel of love."

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the "tunnel of love" and the railroad tunnel met in a cinematographic projection. *Phantom railway ride* was a genre of cinema of attractions, which assumed that the viewer becomes a part of the events on the screen, and that film protagonists know of the audience's presence. Lively reactions, comments, whistles, or even stamping were inherent to the spectacle. The viewer co-created the image. Viewers could set the pace of projection by encouraging the acceleration or, on the contrary, slowing down of the moving tape. The viewer assumed the imposed role of participant by turning the illuminated fictional space and dark room into a single space. Viewers could now admire what they saw, but also imitate. The darkness during the projection was a kind of invitation to treat the tunnel and the screening room as one place, and to steal a kiss from the neighbor using her excitement. This kiss was part of the scenario that the cinema of attractions predicted. It related to the role that the male spectator had to play when he looked from the front of the rushing locomotive at the underground work of other brave men. The modern love in a car,

other symptoms that should be mentioned. The body is often affected by nervous movements, which negatively influence the state of the mind. A person under this influence experiences an immoderate desire for continuous movement, a desire to move quickly from place to place." A. D., "Cykl i zdrowie. II. Studia dra Richardsona," *Cyklista*, 14/1895, p. 2.

228 "Szał szybkości," *Ilustracja Polska*, 17/1903, p. 339. See also comments on the "sports mania" of car driving: "Mania samochodów," *Wiek Ilustrowany*, 141/1900.

229 "Na łeb, na szyję. . ." *Ilustracja Polska*, 23/1903, p. 452.

testing the bravado of the rich driver, found its plebeian equivalent in the film kiss, stolen yet not forced.²³⁰

Phantom railway ride was emerged from early cinematographic and graphic practices, which took advantage of the possibilities offered by the train at the end of the nineteenth century. At the time, train was still the fastest and most accessible means of transportation. A poster by Leopoldo Metlicovitz promoted the 1906 World Exhibition in Milan – dedicated to modern communication – and it directly referred to the opening ceremony of the Simplon Tunnel. The poster shows the exit of the Tunnel with the emerging contours of Milan along with two naked figures sitting on the front of the locomotive with eyes set on the city. The locomotive emerges diagonally from the left-hand side of the composition, the foreground shows its boiler, while the background two figures behind the engine. Viewer's line of sight aligns with the line of sight of both figures. The centrally located rounded outlet of the tunnel contributes to that effect. The natural light coming from the outlet meets the artificial light of the locomotive's lanterns. The lantern on the boiler shines the upper backs of the figures. Behind the figure on the right and almost on the axis of the composition, we can almost see the front lantern of the locomotive. The figure of the young man on the right is Mercury, the Roman god of commerce, who wears a helmet with wings. On his left is a young woman. This attractive couple came together thanks to culture, which had already known cinematographic screenings rooms. And just like the screening room, the tunnel in Metlicovitz's poster is dark. An even clearer link between the two was the recording from the front of a locomotive. The couple from the poster realizes the *phantom railway ride*.

In the spring of 1913, there appeared first two amusement parks in Galicia, in Lviv and Cracow. They were equivalents of New York's complex on Coney Island. In Cracow, the park was built by the Rudawa River, on the site where previously grew wicker bushes. The park retained the historical name Oleandry.²³¹ Already when the park is under construction, Cracow's daily *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* describes the entertainments that will appear there, mostly for the gentlemen:

230 One of the first Polish articles about "automatic carriages" includes a romance context: "For sportsmen, the American system will be particular charming. It presents a coach on which a twentieth-century romance can take place. Never before had any generation stood in front of a promise of such a pleasant flirtation as today." W. N., "Wozy – automaty," *Cyklista* 2/1895 or 1896.

231 See "Oleandry" in the column "Co dzień niesie?," *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 94/1913.

Apart from the old attractions, there are plenty of new ones. A permanent concert of military music *Glodomór*, which yesterday ended its tenth day of fasting, a “hell ride” for children, and most importantly, an excellent program of an interesting variety theater Bagatela. A real sensation here are the fabulous productions of the beautiful half-naked Indian dancer Maharome Aranaz, who performs splendid eastern dances with unique charm and unrivalled artistry under the influence of opium and among magnificent decorations.²³²

Press announcements from the first season of the park’s activity enumerate a long list of attractions. In Cracow the attractions included: “horseback riding, swings, merry-go-rounds, hell ride, shooting range.” Apart from that, there were also “eccentrics on bicycles,” “Egyptian dancers,” and a “troupe of Arab dervishes.”²³³ In the Lviv park, located in the vicinity of the High Castle, visitors could enjoy “world-level entertainment attraction:” shooting ranges, a “madhouse,” a “Giant” wheel, merry-go-rounds, a nickelodeon, and a laughter wheel. Moreover, a restaurant, a café, and a “concert of the whole military band.”²³⁴

In its earliest beginnings, the railroad was a component of various entertainment undertakings. In 1808, Richard Trevithick demonstrated his self-propelled steam engine *Catch-me-who-can* to Londoners. The vehicle pulled wagons along a circular track, and for a fee, all the interested could experience impressions comparable to the one offered by a carousel. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Parisians could play on “Russian hills,” going down specially prepared tracks in wooden carriages. An initiative to connect St. Petersburg with a suburban leisure district marked the beginnings of the railroad in Russia. This was a chance to celebrate this occasion by erecting a “voksal” in Pavlovsk, located at the end of the Czar Line. It was a magnificent concert pavilion, which emulated the London public amusement park Vauxhall. It also emulated its name. The first railroad projects in Poland – the line from Warsaw to Grodzisk launched in June 1845 – followed the patterns set St. Petersburg. The train became a kind of a mechanical toy, while the journey to Grodzisk was a harbinger of attractions

232 “Oleandry,” *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 126/1913.

233 See the advert “Oleandry. Park zabawowy,” *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 157/1913.

234 See the advert “Lwowski park zabawowy,” in “Konduktor.” *Rozkład jazdy na szlakach kolejowych Galicji i Bukowiny* (Galicia and Bukovina Railroad Timetable) valid since May 1, 1913, Lviv 1913, pp. 65, 85, 92. The White City amusement park copied the American model. White City opened its gates in Manchester in the spring of 1907. Among the attractions was the pavilion offering the Hale’s Tours of the World. The visitors could for instance make a “virtual” trip to Canada. See “To Canada for Sixpence,” *Cornishman*, 1907 (March 14).

awaiting visitors at the railroad station. The train journeys organized in winter followed the tradition of sleigh rides.²³⁵ Modern playgrounds from the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries selected experiences that had previously appeared randomly on railroad journeys. The amusing “tunnel of love” – similarly to the “Giant” wheel, the “madhouse,” and carousels – was a machine specialized in producing powerful stimuli. The playground was a space of illusion or – to use another term – the space of joke.²³⁶ The connections between the type of entertainment offered by the Cracow Oleandry Park and the train confirmed the heterotopic character of the later. Oleandry Park and their Lviv equivalent are places “that teem once or twice a year with stands, displays, heteroclitic objects, wrestlers, snakewomen, fortune-tellers, and so forth.”²³⁷

3. In an Express Train

Foucault says that “the ship is the heterotopia par excellence.” He also adds in an aphoristic tone that “in civilizations without boats, dreams dry up.”²³⁸ At the end of the nineteenth century, a new type of train fueled dreams in Europe. The train offered travel comfort comparable to that of a ship. One of the new connections operated by this luxury train extended by a ship journey. The rail link between London and Mumbai, running from Calais through the whole of France, through the Mont Cenis tunnel to the Italian port of Brindisi, went down in history as *La Malle des Indes*.²³⁹ The idea of the luxury train originated in America, from where it came to Europe thanks to Georges Nagelmackers, a Belgian entrepreneur and founder of the International Sleeping-Car Company (CIWL).²⁴⁰ The trains on new connections had both sleeping and restaurant cars. They introduced to travel a level of comfort, previously associated only with large passenger steamers. From then on, people slept, ate, read the press, and talked in lounge cars. In an extensive article in *Wędrowiec*, one finds the characteristics of that novelty, which meant that a journey ceased to be a journey: “They are not cars, they are small buildings.” Further description consistently draws an analogy between a car and a house: “Then we enter a room sufficient for a

235 I elaborate on it in *Inna droga. Romantycy a kolej* (Another Way: Railroad and Romantic Authors), Warsaw, 2012, pp. 30–38.

236 See Kirby, *Parallel Tracks. The Railroad and Silent Cinema*, pp. 89–100.

237 Foucault, “Of Other Spaces. . .,” p. 28.

238 Foucault, “Of Other Spaces. . .,” p. 30.

239 See A. Laplaiche, “La Malle de L’Inde et de L’Australie,” *La Nature*, 672/1886.

240 See Laplaiche, “L’Orient-Express,” *La Nature*, 575/1884.

small flat.” A car-house means that the whole train became a small self-sufficient city able to fulfill all the needs of its inhabitants. Apart from passenger cars, there was also a “baggage car” and a car that “stores food and drink supplies.” As we read, there was also “a place for laundry.” The center of social life is the lounge car with a reading room. Adjacent to it were “women’s offices” with tables designed for “knitting, other lady activities, and card games.”²⁴¹ One of the pictures shows “the interior of the lounge car” with four passengers. Only one of them is busy watching the landscapes. The reader of *Gazeta Lwowska* learns from one of the “Listy paryskie” (Letters from Paris) about the comfort of the new way of traveling:

It is indeed a program created for an Epicurean. When sitting at an exquisitely prepared table, one may admire from the windows of the warm [restaurant] car the panorama of the mountains as if it were one of Ronacher’s wonderlands. [...] Then, even more sweetness comes with a bite of a clementine as your spirit can prepare for further pleasures. You imagine frozen waterfalls over a cake like *Gateau de Provence*, golden bridges over *fromage de Brie*, and finally the summit of Arlberg over black coffee. Meanwhile, the wonderland suddenly disappears, as if rapidly torn away, everything blacks out and the air around you thickens. You are in a tunnel. This gloomy atmosphere highlights the social side of people and increases their talkativeness in the car. At that moment, I heard a voice right next to me asking: “Garçon, haben sie einen caviar?”²⁴²

Let us remember this luxurious hedonistic way of traveling when reading Maria Konopnicka’s poem “W błyskawicznym pociągu” (In an Express Train).²⁴³

Luxury appears only in the title. It is an astonishing poem and not just for the fact that Konopnicka – a former realist – skillfully uses an outstandingly modernist stylistic to adjust the optimistic message associated in her youth with railroad into an indefinite sadness, from which one cannot escape. Already two initial verses astonish the reader: “Bang, whizz, wild run. . . / – Everything mixed:” It is enough to compare these verses with the description from *Wędrowiec* and a fragment from “Listy Paryskie” to conclude that the traveler on the “express train” does not use anything the luxury interior has to offer. And it could offer a great variety of medicines for sadness. There is a lounge car in which one can

241 See S., “Pociągiem błyskawicznym na Wschód,” *Wędrowiec*, 9/1889, p. 103; 10/1889, p. 115.

242 Pak, “Listy paryskie,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 32/1893. Ronacher Theater in Vienna specialized in a rather light repertoire, which became famous at the end of the nineteenth century for its costumes and decorations.

243 See M. Konopnicka [from the cycle “Z podróźnej teki. IV”], „W błyskawicznym pociągu,” *Biblioteka Warszawska* 1901, pp. 351–354. All quotes come from this edition.

have a conversation, there are “women’s offices,” an ideal place for work or cards games and, finally, there is a restaurant car with a long list of exquisite dishes and finest alcohols. Next, Konopnicka prepares a negative of all the associations readers linked for twenty years with the term “express train.” Particularly striking is the metaphor of flight. On the one hand, it is a very productive way of depicting speed, which appears already in the first descriptions of train travel, and on the other, it is something extraordinary, because Konopnicka’s poem shows flight as a direct contact with nature and an elementary lack of support and stability offered by modern cars. Flight stands also for a feeling of disorientation, because the subject’s insane run appears as a hectic unpredictable movement of animated landscapes: “The world trembles, boils, runs / Right on the edge Something carries it. . . / It will fall out of its axis. . .” Flight means many inconveniences: “The heats burn me / The snows chill me. . . /The abyss’ edges / Tempt me and run. . .” The speaker displays qualities difficult to harmonize with the perspective offered by luxury trains. Another noteworthy fragment comes at the end of the poem, in which the disharmony of perspectives foregrounds simple contradiction: “Terrible forces / Rush me in radiance / To underground nights. . . / They rush me, gaping / with a horde of specters, / Until they bring the sun back, / And resurrect me for the day. . .”

The way through the tunnel in the final part of the poem is the key to a peculiar perspective Konopnicka employs. Let us notice that the subject’s insane run has a very mysterious source. If it was not for the title, it would be difficult to guess that it is a train. The train in the poem is not a vehicle but a force. “Terrible forces” plunge the speaker into the darkness of the tunnel and then bring her into the sun. They are the ones that make the “world escape.” Why are they so mysterious? Why do we fail to see where they come from? Konopnicka wrote the poem at a time of her many travels. She spent a significant amount of time in the West, where she could experience modernity to an extent unknown in Poland for a long time. An important part of this new culture is the cinematograph and the most popular genre of early cinematographic screenings: *phantom railway ride*. The hypothesis that Konopnicka’s viewpoint refers to this trick helps us imbue this poem with meaning. The *phantom railway ride* explains the physical location of the speaker and the nature of the stimuli, but more importantly, it provides a context that accompanies the reception of the images recorded by the camera placed on a locomotive. *Phantom railway ride* screenings happened in dark cramped rooms, very often in the company of others. When the train entered a tunnel filled women with horror that could have been soothed by the touch of her partner’s hand. A kiss was another powerful sign of the presence of someone dear and a meaningful proof of security. A “love tunnel” in an

amusement park triggered the same code. Similar behavior could be expected on the “Giant” wheel in Lviv. *Phantom railway ride* and a kiss in the tunnel constituted a cultural unity at the end of the nineteenth century. With this strong relationship in mind, it is easier to understand why the fastest and most luxurious train cannot help Konopnicka’s speaker leave the sadness behind. The modernist subject on the “express train” bears resemblance to Konopnicka. They are both lonely women.²⁴⁴

We may also look at the three modern heterotopies from a different point of view. The same technology that helped to tame nature provided tools to calm the fears reinforced by the new and rapidly changing artificial environment (“urban nature”). One of the ways to familiarize tunnels were jokes, but the greatest aid in that quest were cinematographic screenings of *phantom railway rides*, amusement parks with “love tunnels,” and “express” trains that provided unprecedented travel comfort. At the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, thousands of passengers traveled through Europe in luxury trains. Thanks to sleeping and dining cars, trains reached the level of heterotopia Foucault ascribed to ships. Launched in September 1871, the Mont Cenis Tunnel gave the European railroad unprecedented grandeur. This was the route for those who traveled to the exotic Eastern lands of Egypt, India, China, Japan. . . The Mont Cenis Tunnel and the Suez Canal were fragments of a gigantic route, a modern road that created unity in a world enjoying a prolonged period of peace. In the Italian port of Brindisi passengers changed luxury train cars for exquisite cabins of fast steamers.²⁴⁵ However, there were many indications that this period was coming to an end in the summer of 1914. There was no doubt about it in the late autumn of 1917. The passengers on trains passing through the Mont Cenis Tunnel were now soldiers. The underground construction returned into the hands of young armed men. One of these transports with French soldiers on leave, crossed the tunnel in the evening of December 12. At the first French station in Modane, a new locomotive is attached to the wagons and the train changed direction. The transport is back on its way shortly before 11 pm. The

244 Compare with the previous type of loneliness that does not use the *phantom railway ride* technique: M. Konopnicka [from the cycle *Drobiazgi z podróźnej teki*. I:] “W wagonie,” *Kurier Warszawski*, 33/1894.

245 See the poster from the late nineteenth century, “South Italian Railroad: Adriatic Lines. India Mail: London – Brindisi – Bombay,” with an offer of a weekly train service to Brindisi with a “Peninsular Express.” At the end of the nineteenth century, the “gallop brillante” by the French composer Georges Lamothe entitled *La Malle des Indes* gained considerable popularity.

train is overloaded, with nineteen cars. A very steep descent makes the train accelerate to such a speed that cannot be limited by the brakes of a single locomotive. The speeding train passes La Praz Station and falls off the rails after the Les Sorderettes Tunnel to almost immediately burst into flames, fourteen kilometers from Modane and one kilometer from Saint-Michel-de-Maurienne Station. The Polish press writes: “*Gazette de Lousanne* reports that a French train with soldiers on leave derailed in a tunnel near Modane. Between 800 and 900 people are said to have died. The remains of the train burned down.”²⁴⁶ The press soon provides further details:

A few days ago, in France, there was a railroad disaster that equals none of the previous transportation disasters. A French train derailed in the Mont Cenis Tunnel. It was filled with soldiers temporarily released from service on the front. The cause of the catastrophe remains undetermined. Over 900 soldiers lost their lives in the disasters. The number of injured is also significant. The tragedy was even more extensive than it could have been due to a fire that broke out in the crashed train. Mont Cenis is located on the border between France and Italy. Built by both countries, the railroad tunnel opened in 1870; it crosses the Alps twenty-two kilometers west of Mont Cenis.²⁴⁷

The disaster at Modane took the lives of French soldiers on leave, who were supposed to spend Christmas at home. Less than half a century earlier, in December 1870, two teams of miners excavating the Mont Cenis Tunnel from opposite ends had come closer to each other and met on Christmas Day, during the ongoing Franco-Prussian War. Since then, the Mont Cenis Tunnel had become an important binder of the European “imagined community,” a sign of a civilizational breakthrough, a sign of “progress.” The disaster from December 12, 1917, happened fourteen kilometers west of the tunnel, but its symbolism required that it be located in the same place where *la belle époque* was born; so as to locate the beginning and end of this epoch in one place.²⁴⁸

246 *Kurier Warszawski*, 1917 (December 14). *Kurier Lwowski* shows the same telegram in “Katastrofa kolejowa,” *Kurier Lwowski* 585/1917 (December 15). The last sentence in *Kurier Lwowski* reads “The train wreck went up in flames.”

247 “Największa katastrofa kolejowa na świecie,” *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 348/1917 (December 17). *Gazeta Łódzka*, 349/1917 (December 24).

248 André Pallatier analyzed press reports about the disaster in *Le tragique destin d'un train de permissionnaires. Maurienne 12 decembre 1917*, Paris 2013, in which he shows that the French-speaking Swiss press (including the *Gazette de Lousanne*) had used untested information about German sabotage in the Mont Cenis tunnel. The gossip always corresponds to the expectations of the community in which it is created, reinforcing its image of the world.

Annex

Mary Barker Dodge

„The Mont Cenis Tunnel“

France and Italy first shook hands through the opened tunnel on Christmas-day

The boom of the cannon is over
That deafened us with its roar;
The trailing crimson of carnage,
Dread demons of conflict wore –
Unlike the robe of the Master,
Which, touched, bade sin to cease –
Is lifted in sad folds slowly,
From the steps of the goddess, Peace!

Slowly and wearily lifted –
Its fringes and tarnished gold,
Humid with life-ebbing currents
And burdened with grief untold;
Yet Peace, with her trooping children,
Fleecily draped in white,
Shall over the stained fields gather
And cover the deadly blight.

Bathed in the light of her presence
France will be joyous anew,
Gaily forgetting in sunshine
The shade which the cypress threw.
Even now the voices of miners
Deep in the Alpine chain –
Lost amid clangor of battle –
Echo the resonant strain:

Echo of Christmas greeting,
That rung through each rock-ribbed hall,
As they forced the lock of the mountain,
And shattered its hindering wall.

War and its train of evils
 In the past shall forgotten be,
 While dawneth a radiant morrow
 Through the tunnel of Mont Cenis!

A dawn where brave Faith is standing
 With her veil unloosed for aye,
 As she looks down the open pathway
 So trammelled but yesterday.
 Fitting she deems Christ's birthday
 For this birth of a fuller time,
 A larger civilization,
 A clasping of hands sublime.

But the meeting of Gaul and Roman
 Is little, to eyes which see
 That a babe, the father of giants,
 Is delivered of Mont Cenis.
 Yes, she is a Titan-mother,
 And her stony heart has thrilled
 To the voice of the Cyclop, Science,
 Who hath ruled her as he willed.

Willing and winning her fealty,
 See, they are one in soul –
 Day after day have been trending
 Earnestly to the goal;
 Till now in jubilant measure,
 Over the unsealed stone,
 The workmen cheer to the triumphs
 Which for toilsome years atone.

Thirteen years of waiting –
 For the fruit of hidden toil!
 From the granite of trust and labor,
 Felt Science no recoil?
 No; through grave heads were doubting
 That failed the end to see,
 Patient he stood, and loyal
 To Faith and Mont Cenis.

Mary Barker Dodge (18- -?) – an American poetess.

First published in “The Galaxy” 1871 (April), pp. 533–534; reprinted in: M. Barker Dodge, *The Gray Masque and Other Poems*, Boston, 1885, pp. 15–18 (this latter version is presented here).

Maria Konopnicka
“In an Express Train”

Bang, whizz, wild run. . .

– Everything mixed:
 Silence, cries,
 Lakes of glass,
 Forests and hills,
 Shadows and lights,
 Blue and the clouds,
 Power and fainting,
 Flowers and snow,
 Winters and springs. . .
 The world trembles, boils, runs
 Right on the edge
 Something carries it. . .
 It will fall out of its axis. . .
 Hang in there, World!

– We fly, fly, fly. . .

Farther! Farther
 Away from my sadness!
 – River after river,
 Frothing they run,
 Peaks over peaks,
 Blink and climb,
 Highlights of cascades
 Tremble entranced. . .

Like a winged bird
 I strike a buoy,
 From worlds to worlds,
 I fly up and down. . .
 From valleys to crags,
 From crags to mountain pastures

I fly above,
 In a cerulean crystal. . .

The earth escapes. . .
 The clouds run backward. . .
 – Far away! – Away
 From my sadness!

Bang, run, angry whizz. . .
 Huge rocky walls
 Come very close
 That they will crash,
 They must just smash. . .
 But no! – They ran away. . .
 They ran away with their soul
 A wild hunt,
 The world escapes somewhere
 Like a monstrous serpent
 Of colors, lights, shapes,
 Assaults and strikes. . .
 Before the eye's ray
 Will fall from above
 Into a blooming plain
 Soon in its depth
 Will hell start its whirling,
 A bluish bonfire. . .
 Some giants
 Crowd and press
 Until the smokes will
 Hang over them with darkness,
 Eat out their pupils,
 Blacken their faces. . .
 With a bang, with a thud,
 With a tail of a comet,
 Blowing with sparks
 From corroded eyes,
 The blind giants
 Run after us,
 Determined they run
 We fly, fly, fly!
 Farther! Farther
 Away from my sadness!

. . .

The heats burn me
 The snows chill me. . .

The abyss' edges
 Tempt me and run. . .
 In smoke, in sparks, in bangs,
 Terrible forces
 Rush me in radiance
 To underground nights. . .
 They rush me gaping
 With a horde of specters
 Until they bring the sun back
 And resurrect me for the day. . .
 In fiery dusts
 I barely breath
 I barely feel my breath. . .
 While blood in my veins
 Pulsates like a bell. . .
 I care not, I don't ask
 What, how, why. . .
 I fly down, fly up,
 The world escapes somewhere. . .
 Farther! Farther
 Away from my sadness!

Maria Konopnicka (1842–1910) – poet, novelist, author of children books, publicist, translator.

First printed in: M. Konopnicka, “W błyskawicznym pociągu,” *Biblioteka Warszawska* 2/1901, pp. 351–354. Reprint from: M. Konopnicka, *Poezje*, ed. J. Czubek, foreword H. Sienkiewicz, Vol. 5, Warsaw, 1916, pp. 128–130.

Chapter Three A Catastrophe's Productivity: Monte Carlo, March 10, 1886

However amazing the invention of railroad may be, we should not admire it with closed eyes and go to sleep thinking that everything is in perfect order.

– “Koleje żelazne i wypadki na nich (Railroad and Railroad Accidents)”, *Sobótka*, 36/1871.

Until quite recently, cultural studies have neglected disasters and how people write about them. Today, we can talk about a significant breakthrough in this field. Cultural studies deal with the causes and consequences of disasters, analyze their narratives, organize conferences, write and publish books, but also publish articles in journals.²⁴⁹ This radical change in attitude was caused by misfortunes, the most painful of which happened in the East. In this respect, it would be difficult to overestimate the role played by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster or the hecatomb in Bhopal, India, in the reorientation of cultural and scientific interests. Let us underline that both these enormous disasters do not only share the mutual element of a remote location but also are “technological disasters;” that is, whose cause of death and suffering was modern technology, which was supposed to be completely obedient to people and more effectively protect them from the whims of unpredictable nature. Of course, the present interests of spokesmen in the “anthropology of disasters” – the name of the new specialization – is not limited to Indian Bhopal and Soviet Chernobyl. The world, including the West, constantly presents new cases of misfortunes. It shows that “anthropologists of disaster” will not lack subjects for books and scientific meetings. Unfortunately, with time, we are increasingly eager to organize our culture around misfortunes, constructing periodization based on spatial indicators: on sites of catastrophes. Therefore, we stretch the massive epoch of

249 From the long list of books, I name those that I will use here: *The Angry Earth. Disaster in Anthropological Perspective*, eds. A. Oliver-Smith, S.M. Hoffman, New York, 1999; *Catastrophe and Culture. The Anthropology of Disaster*, eds. Hoffman, Oliver-Smith, Santa Fe, 2001; Rozario, *The Culture of Calamity. Disaster and The Making of Modern America*; Huet, *The Culture of Disaster*.

modernity between the Lisbon earthquake and the site of Titanic's sinking. Other disasters turn out very helpful in dividing this epoch into smaller units. They prove that we live in the society of risk and, if anything distinguishes modernity from previous cultural periods, it must be the previously unknown level of risk poisoning our everyday life today.

The example of anthropologists shows that, today, it is difficult to avoid a world in which nuclear reactors explode and thousands die in torment because of the release of many tons of radioactive substances into the atmosphere. Literature never avoided the images of intentional and unintentional human misfortunes, which thus appears to be a great research field for anthropologists of disaster. Literature's place in this type of reflection is unusual – for several important reasons. However, we should first refer to the accusation usually made against researchers who examine the cultural contexts of disasters such as those in Bhopal or Chernobyl. Opponents claim that – in order to cross the threshold of scientific maturity – the anthropology of disasters should deal with the ambiguity of key concepts like “disaster” and “risk.” The opponents ask what connects eighteenth-century Lisbon devastated by an earthquake, fires, and a tsunami, with Japanese Fukushima, where another deadly factor was radioactive contamination? Is there any point in comparing an earthquake from the time when seismology was in its early stages of development with the same event that happened in times of highly advanced techniques for predicting the movements of the Earth's crust? The opponents continue and ask: what is a disaster after all? The answer to this question is sometimes another question: what is culture?²⁵⁰ Has the notorious lack of agreement about the meaning of this word ever spoiled the good mood of culture experts? Does not anthropology develop dynamically thanks to the fact that it willingly accepts broad concepts, fuzzy terms, vague definitions, otherwise condemned to banishment in disciplines that enforce greater “discipline” through terminological purges? A literature expert can provide valuable support to “anthropologists of disasters.” We should recall that “catastrophism” is a well-established concept in historical and literary reflection, and it would be difficult to support the view that works on catastrophes must all be vague, if we do not know what a disaster is. I believe that literary studies help anthropologists of disasters in their struggle for independence, for the former show how literature – for at least two centuries – is filled with

250 I repeat the argumentation of Anthony Oliver-Smith from “What is a Disaster?” *Anthropological Perspectives on a Persistent Question*, in: *The Angry Earth, Disaster in Anthropological Perspective*, pp. 18–19.

catastrophic moods, so after giving up on the vague notion, researchers of nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature would simply have to go silent. And yet, literary scholars successfully addressed the issue of catastrophes long before the Chernobyl disaster and before anthropologists organized their first conference on the consequences of the explosion.

A literary scholar must share the interests of anthropologists of disasters, and the latter should feel comfortable in the company of literary scholars, because the cultural dimension of catastrophes becomes primarily visible in their social reception, which comes most fully and abundantly to life in various narratives. Experts argue that misfortunes happen in a physical space, so they have a "solid" component, which results in destruction and, above all, in the dead and injured. Nevertheless, besides the physical, there is a vast sphere in which catastrophe occurs as a "soft" form; that is, as a more-or-less complex sequence of texts that each catastrophe produces.²⁵¹ There also is another significant factor: this production very often occurs in the space of a text – in an openly inner-cultural space – because one narrative gives birth to a counter-narrative, one story becomes a starting point for another. A catastrophe may be a topic, but once written down, it undergoes processing into further texts. Writing changes into rewriting.²⁵² Of course, literature partakes in the formation of such sequences "after a catastrophe," as it often emerges not as an account of an eyewitness, but more often as a new text about an accident from the past that had already received multiple descriptions.

In fact, we may not speak here of fully separable narrative modes, as even an account written from the perspective of a disaster participant may – and usually does – include what one could not see or know. One more way of presenting a disaster seems to influence the typology of literary catastrophes. Literature may portray real events, that is, those that undoubtedly had a "hard" component, authenticated by victims and other accounts, but also those that never happened, and which appear only in one text, because their ontology derives from an act of artistic creation. A literary narrative produces the catastrophe. This is the case

251 See Oliver-Smith, "Theorizing Disasters. Nature, Power, and Culture," in: *Catastrophe and Culture*, pp. 39–41; Rozario, *The Culture of Calamity. Disaster and The Making of Modern America*, pp. 14–15.

252 Beginning with the late nineteenth century, photographs and graphics prepared on the basis of photographs accompany publications about catastrophes. The intensive "postproduction" of iconographic materials like retouching, changing caption, format modification, or changing context is the equivalent of rewriting. See P. Burke, *Eyewitnessing. The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, London, 2001.

when the “soft” component of the disaster is not supported and determined by any “hard” component. But here, as well, the situation does not have to be clear at all. This is because literary catastrophes are very often more-or-less a transformation of real catastrophes. There are also situations when a “hard” component of a catastrophe serves as an inspiration for a whole story or part of it but is later absent from the layer of images; hence, it becomes completely untraceable in the fictional world. In such case, only biographical materials can inform us that – behind fictional events – there hides an experience of a real catastrophe.

The home of the catastrophe in its “soft” version is culture. The cultural dimension of a disaster should be associated with the institution of power. Having power means being able to decide whether “hard” will translate into “soft” and in what way. When the fourth reactor at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant exploded, the communist authorities withheld full information for quite a long time. Instead, they sent a laconic and calming message to the public saying that there had been a “failure” at the power plant, but the situation is “stable.” Whoever has power, decides what happened and on what scale. From today’s perspective, it seems that Chernobyl was an illustrative lesson of power over social communication, a demonstration of how two narratives clashed: the official narrative, in which there was only a “failure” in the nuclear plant and the overall “stable” situation, and the unofficial one, fueled by disturbing reports from the West, which possibly pointed to the greatest nuclear catastrophe in the history of mankind. Experts draw attention to the practice of making sense of what happened. Moreover, they add that negotiations concerning the causes of an unfortunate event, its course, number of victims, and the list of the responsible for the catastrophe reveal the unity or, on the contrary, the division in the community.²⁵³ Non-experts say that disasters can unite or divide. They weaken internal tensions when people join forces in the fight against the disaster or intensify them when versions of what actually happened are different and irreconcilable. In such order, literature enjoys a privilege of a dissenting opinion. If great literature focuses on real catastrophes, it does so rather to problematize them and show that there are no simple solutions even when the situation seems clear. Literature has the right to speak with the voice of those already judged and excluded by society for having caused misery. Great writers like Sienkiewicz have us focus on the fate of the lighthouse keeper fired from work, not with the fate of victims of a maritime tragedy caused by his shameful negligence. Here,

253 See Oliver-Smith, Hoffman, “Introduction. Why Anthropologists Should Study Disasters,” in: *Catastrophe and Culture. The Anthropology of Disaster*, p. 11.

once again, I signal a special place where the cooperation of literary studies and anthropology of disasters can occur. Great literature avoids the obviousness of catastrophe explanations to convince us that the imagined world based on common sense has nothing to do with the experienced world, in which – despite the progress of knowledge – the number of misfortunes and undeserved human suffering by no means diminishes.

Anthropologists write about catastrophes in an interesting and stimulating way but quite unilaterally. They focus on enormous accidents from their “hard” side. Still, the list is extensive. It includes Chernobyl, Bhopal, the Exxon Valdez oil tanker disaster off the coast of Alaska, hurricane Katrina that passed over New Orleans, Fukushima, along with the older events like the Marseille plague epidemic (1720–1722), the Lisbon earthquake (1755), the sinking of the Titanic (1912). What may be very worrying is that there are no railroad disasters on this list, even though they were so characteristic of the nineteenth century and played a significant role in the founding of the identity of modernity. However, works by “railroad historians” partly compensate for this lack. Historians follow the way paved by Wolfgang Schivelbusch's monograph on railroad travel in the nineteenth century and the then ongoing “industrialization of time and space.”²⁵⁴ If anthropologists of catastrophes examine great disasters, then quite a large group of exegetes of Schivelbusch's book concentrates on less spectacular but, interestingly, culturally very productive accidents. First of all, there is the excellent Ralph Harrington, who writes about the consequences of railroad accidents for many years now and shows how the concept of *railway spine* was born. Harrington also presents how the practice of diagnosing and treating this ailment steered the development of modern psychiatry since the end of the nineteenth century, laying foundations for describing a condition known today as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.²⁵⁵ The list of accidents in these reflections is already quite long,

254 See Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise*, Munich, 1978. This monograph entered the scientific circulation thanks to the English translation *The Railway Journey. Trains and Travel in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. A. Hollo, Oxford, 1980. The chapter “Railroad Accident, ‘Railway Spine,’ Traumatic Neurosis” was also devoted to catastrophe.

255 See R. Harrington, “The Neuroses of the Railway,” *History Today* 7/1994; Harrington, “The Railway Journey and the Neuroses of Modernity,” in: *Pathologies of Travel*, eds. R. Wrigley, G. Revill, Amsterdam, 2000; Harrington, “The Railway Accident. Trains, Trauma, and Technological Crisis in Nineteenth-Century Britain,” in: *Traumatic Pasts. History, Psychiatry, and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870–1930*, eds. M. S. Micale, P. Lerner, Cambridge, 2001.

but it is inevitably dominated by events that occurred in the nineteenth century on the railroads of the United Kingdom. The comparison of the list constructed by anthropologists with the one by railroad historians makes it clear how much there still is to be explored. Therefore, if we include literary studies in our analyses and consider the mentioned peculiarities of literary approaches to catastrophes, we will find that we operate in a huge area with only individual points identified and analyzed so far.

In this chapter, I will deal with a disaster that quite unfairly slipped into social oblivion. As soon as the event occurred, it generated many discussions, which resulted in a rich textual accompaniment that stands for its “soft” component. Today, the site of the disaster does not exist anymore. The texts that documented the catastrophe and profiled its meaning gather dust on library shelves, and they share this fate with a poem that adds a decadent meaning to the catastrophe. I mean Andrzej Niemojewski’s “W pociągu” (On a Train),²⁵⁶ about which I found no scholarly commentary, most probably because it is unclear. How could it be clear, when all the knowledge of the event to which it refers dispersed in time? I have only found one sentence, or rather a part of a sentence, of literary criticism from the times of Niemojewski; it says that the poem is a “very accurate political allegory.”²⁵⁷ An allegory of what? Literary historians highly value Niemojewski’s volume with the long poem “W pociągu,” and they link the date of its publication with the beginning of Polish Decadentism. This poem collection is important, because it marks a literary breakthrough. It includes the long poem “W pociągu,” which literary historians apparently do not appreciate or do not understand, since they do not even mention it in any synthesis of the epoch. However, Niemojewski included the poem in his collection, which means that he attached to it considerable value. After all, what is the poem about? In the last part of the work, entitled “At the Destination” there is a clear depiction of a railroad disaster, for we read: “A dragon flew into a dragon, they checked their strengths / And in clutches fell down still smoking / Through muzzles with sparks and thunder.” At the very end of the poem, there is an important complement to the image of the catastrophe. We already know that the iron dragons “fell down” after a collision, but then the part ends with a rhetorical question: “What of it that a small group fell into an abyss?!”²⁵⁸ Is it a real or fictional catastrophe? It may sound very

256 See A. Niemojewski, “W pociągu,” in: A. Niemojewski, *Poezje*, Cracow, 1891.

257 Anonymous note-review, *Dziennik Polski* 33/1891.

258 Niemojewski, “W pociągu,” pp. 73–74. In his *Wybór poezji*, Warsaw, 1899, p. 36, the first fragment has a slightly different punctuation: “A dragon flew into a dragon, they

old-fashioned, but I think, it is an essential question for the understanding of this work. It is decisive in answering the question whether Niemojewski creates a catastrophe or reproduces it. If Niemojewski recreates it, then the poem's meaning will derive from its relationship with the textual setting created by all previous texts on that particular catastrophe. My interpretative hypothesis bases on the relationship between "W pociągu" and a real catastrophe with written and rewritten narratives that formed its "soft" image. I would also like to take this opportunity to show that the event recorded by Niemojewski was culturally productive, as it resulted in many texts that contributed to the atmosphere of the period labelled with the French term *fin de siècle*.

At the end of "W pociągu," Niemojewski portrays a train crash that happened in the afternoon of March 10, 1886, near Monte Carlo Station. Time distance proves the impact the disaster had on Niemojewski, as he wrote the poem five years after the catastrophe. However, these five years turned out to be a deadly long period for the work's reception. Already at the very moment of its publication, the poem was almost unclear.²⁵⁹ The reconstruction of the unlucky event is now possible thanks to the excellent material printed by the French scientific weekly *La Nature*²⁶⁰ a month after the accident. It is this text that I will make the basis of what I call a canonical approach to catastrophe. The article in *La Nature* is highly specialized and firmly rooted in the reality of nineteenth-century railroad traffic. It is difficult to separate the article from a peculiar "multitext" that consists of various press reports about Monte Carlo from the twenty-year period preceding the catastrophe. One must remember that the catastrophe occurred not only in the geographical space depicted by physical maps but also in a very unusual place of the European cultural space reflected by various mental maps. To put it briefly, Monte Carlo was a place where the flourishing and prosperous Europe witnessed the early arrival of *fin de siècle*.

Alexandre Laplaiche, the author of the extensive article "La catastrophe de Monte Carlo" in *La Nature*, introduces himself in the signature as a railroad commissioner for administrative supervision. In every fragment, his text convinces

checked their strengths / and in clutches fell down still smoking / through muzzles with sparks and thunder."

259 A confirmation of it is the fact that the scrupulous Piotr Chmielowski seems not to notice the large poem when he presents the figure of Andrzej Niemojewski and characterizes Niemojewski's debut collection. See Chmielowski, *Współcześni poeci polscy. Szkice nakreślone przez. . .*, Petersburg, 1895.

260 See Laplaiche, "La catastrophe de Monte Carlo," *La Nature* 673/1886 (April 24), pp. 528–532.

us that the person commenting on the disaster is an expert who has a good understanding of the situation.²⁶¹ The article begins with a brief description of the railroad section where the accident occurred. It was a fragment of a long trunk line of the Compagnie des chemins de fer de Paris à Lyon et à la Méditerranée, a French railroad company usually referred to as PLM. The line runs from Paris to the Mediterranean Sea and then along its shores to Menton, the last French station before Ventimiglia in Italy. Nice-Ventimiglia was a single-track route that ran in difficult terrain. It climbed a high cliff and crossed the ridge of Alpes-Maritimes through numerous tunnels and magnificent viaducts. A short section of the line crossed the Principality of Monaco, where the train stopped at two stations: Monaco and Monte Carlo. Still in France, there is the Cabbé-Roquebrune station between Monte Carlo and Menton. The PLM timetable allows us to complete the characteristics of the line described in *La Nature* in its entirety. Monaco is 240 kilometers from Marseille, Monte Carlo – 242 kilometers, Cabbé-Roquebrune – 245 kilometers, and Menton – 249 kilometers.²⁶² *Carte de la Principauté de Monaco* from 1878 allows for even greater precision.²⁶³ Monte Carlo station is slightly before the signpost that indicates the seventeenth kilometer of the route when counting from Nice. A single-track line requires that trains pass each other by at stations adapted for this purpose. Therefore, the trains had to keep to a timetable, while railroad regulations defined the precise procedure for the whole operation. There was a backup procedure for the passing of trains on a station, used when there occurred a significant delay of one of the trains.

The event of the afternoon of March 10, 1886, happened between the neighboring stations of Monte Carlo and Cabbé-Roquebrune, in Monaco territory. The disaster occurred due to a change of the station where the trains were supposed to pass each other. According to the timetable, train 479 should have passed by the train 502 in Menton. The delay of train 479 led to the decision to move the operation to Cabbé-Roquebrune, where, according to the timetable, train 502 was to pass by the train 483, also coming from Nice to Menton. The

261 Alexandre Laplaiche published many articles in *La Nature*. The main topic of them was railroad safety. The dissertation *Manuel du candidat à l'emploi d'inspecteur particulier de l'exploitation commerciale des chemins de fer*, Paris, 1892, crowns his professional achievements.

262 See *L'indicateur illustré des chemins de fer Paris à Lyon et à la Méditerranée*. I use the Paris 1880 edition.

263 See *Carte de la Principauté de Monaco par Favret et Garrus, Ingénieurs Civils*, Paris, 1878.

change of stations involved the stopping of train 483 at Monte Carlo station and preparing the whole operation of passing with train 502, which was not included in the timetable. As a result of the mistakes made by the staff of Monte Carlo and Cabbé-Roquebrune stations, trains 483 to Ventimiglia and 502 from Menton ran in opposite directions on the same track. The tragic head-on collision happened one kilometer from the Monte Carlo station. According to a map from 1878, it was at the eighteenth kilometer of the Nice line, where the track ran next to the shore on a narrow shelf of a thirty-meters-high cliff, from which a few cars of 502 train fell and sank in the sea.

Laplaiche, the author of the report about the catastrophe, pays great attention to details. He presents with utmost precision the procedures in force at PLM, which should be applied when trains pass each other and when the station for this operation changes. Laplaiche's careful approach reveals a sequence of mistakes made by railroad men.²⁶⁴ Another crucial piece of information in the report is the precise location of the disaster. The catastrophe happened in Saint-Roman district, over the small bay Anse de Tenao. Crushed train cars fell into the sea in an area that belonged to the former parish priest of Roquebrune. A map of the Principality of Monaco from 1878 shows a railroad route there that runs close to the sea. A little farther in the direction of Cabbé-Roquebrune lies a small cape Pointe de Tenao, where the track separates from the coastline. Farther east is the border of the Principality of Monaco and the route once again enters the French territory. Illustrations complete Laplaiche's detailed analysis of the event. The first one is a graphic with the movement of trains 479, 483, and 502 between Monte Carlo and Ventimiglia, between 4.18 and 5.30 pm. The remaining three illustrations base on photographs taken by an employee of Giletta and Gilly company from Nice, which depict the crushed train cars. These include "a view from Cabbé-Roquebrune," "a view from the sea level," and "a view from Monte Carlo." The full description of the first figure reads: "The disaster in Monte Carlo. The condition of tracks after the accident. View from Cabbé-Roquebrune." Noteworthy, the author of all the photographs was

264 Their worst mistake was the one made by the worker of the Cabbé-Roquebrune station, who on that day replaced the station master. The worker confused two trains: the delayed No. 479 and the later and also delayed No. 483. This mistake piled up on the top of others. The station master of Monte Carlo misread the telegraphic signal, the driver and the chief conductor of the train No. 502 should have left Cabbé-Roquebrune only after receiving a written driving order, the railroad watchman from post No. 61 did not react to the signal to stop the trains sent by the station master of Monte Carlo when he realized he had made a mistake.

Ferdinand Neri.²⁶⁵ The picture “view from Cabbé-Roquebrune” is retouched. Other reproductions of his photographs show two men quietly standing next to the pile of broken wagons, which indicates that the photo must have been taken some time after the accident. Probably on the next day, when crews arrived at the scene of the disaster to clean the wrecks, and probably around noon, judging by the shadow of a small wall. I will return to the matter of this retouching below. At the end of the article, Laplaiche mentions the complicated legal matters concerning the catastrophe. The disaster happened between stations located in two countries, so both prosecutor's offices from Monaco and Nice had to participate in the investigation. According to later data that I use, in the accident near Monte Carlo six people died, including three railroad men and three passengers, while forty-seven were injured. Six of the injured were railroad men and forty-one were passengers.²⁶⁶

Now, I would like to reconstruct a text that I would call “Monte Carlo: 1866–1886.” Why? Anthropologists of disasters strongly repeat the thesis that a catastrophe – whether small or big – is not a “lightning bolt from the sky,” but a culmination of a long process in which various risk factors accumulate and intensify.²⁶⁷ It would be an exaggeration to say that the history of the Monte Carlo catastrophe dates back twenty years, but it is worth noting that the events that shaped the Principality of Monaco also influenced the reception of the disaster. One after another, there occurred three events that seem to be most significant: the establishment of the casino, the launch of a railroad connection with Nice, and the opening of a modern pigeon shooting range *Tir aux pigeons*. The Principality of Monaco faced bankruptcy due to political-dynastic turmoil in the middle of the nineteenth century, not to mention the secession of Roquebrune and Menton to France. Now the main a remedy for the budget of the Principality could have been income from gambling. However, one had to first be able to get to Monaco. In 1866, a German businessman François Blanc founded a casino in the Eastern part of Monaco, formerly known as Les Spélugues. In honor of Charles III, the name was changed to Monte Carlo. However, Monte Carlo

265 The print in Bibliothèque Nationale de France collection is signed with the photographer's name and the author's commentary clarifies: “The catastrophe of March 10, 1886 on the railroad from Monte Carlo to Roquebrune (Monaco).”

266 See A. Picard, *Traité des chemins de fer. Économie politique – commerce – finances – administration – droit – études comparées sur les chemins de fer étrangers*, Vol. 3, Paris, 1887, p. 553.

267 See Oliver-Smith, Hoffman, *Introduction. Why Anthropologists Should Study Disasters*, pp. 3–5.

Casino became a major European attraction when the railroad line reached Monaco in 1868. The railroad from Nice brought a new cultural quality, namely the democratization of gambling. Already in 1869, 170,000 tourists visited to Monte Carlo by train. This number convinced the doubters that the casino could become a real gold mine for the small country. In winter, visitors could try their hand at shooting pigeons at the shooting range located right next to the station and in close vicinity of the Casino. In January, the range hosted the prestigious Grand Prix du Casino with an exceptionally large prize pool.²⁶⁸

When the gambling industry began flourishing after establishing the rail connection, Monte Carlo became a peculiar heir to the German resorts of Bad Homburg and Baden-Baden, where the European elite had previously relaxed and enjoyed themselves, sometimes also at the game tables. As a result of the gambling ban in the German states, Monaco became a unique enclave with the only legal gambling salons in Europe. In the eyes of many, it became the plebeian successor to the aristocratic Baden-Baden. In a *New York Times* 1878 article "An Italian [sic!] Gambling Hell. Monte Carlo and Its Tables," we read that Monte Carlo and Baden-Baden, were as different as a turnip and a splendid peach. Moreover,

Even the respectable ladies who go to Monte-Carlo think there must be something wrong, for the people do not answer in the least to the descriptions they have had from their friends of Badeners in the old days. There are no brilliant toilets, there are no resplendent jewels, no flashing diamonds. The majority of men are covered with railroad dust, while ladies are enveloped in their mantles. Even the best class of *cocottes* will not go there, and the artistes of the Théâtre Français, after one shuddering visit, keep to Nice, which is slow, but not low.

An earlier thread is interesting, in which the correspondent supports a very popular view in the nineteenth century: gambling was to be a kind of pathology, while the abuse of games was to lead not only to social but also biological degradation. The passion for gambling is an affliction similar to madness and alcoholism. It can be tolerated, if one is a savage. From such a perspective, moderation in game would become an irrefutable proof that Europeans were in fact civilized:

The instinct to gamble is universal, but it is seldom that in civilized lands one sees that supreme devotion to it which completely inebriates the victim. This is common enough

268 The committee awarded the winner with a prize of 20,000 francs and a statuette valued at 5000 francs. The names of the winners of the Grand Prix du Casino were put on a marble board. There was a Polish name on the board. In 1894, "comte Casimir Zichy, Autriche" was one of the winners.

for savages, for red men, Malays, Chinese, are all intense gamblers. When, therefore, one beholds the “fearful examples” of Monte Carlo, one cannot but regard them with the same curiosity that our forefathers had for “painted savages and merry Indians.”²⁶⁹

A similar perspective and comparative scale appear in the Józef Ignacy Kraszewski's correspondence to the editorial office of *Biesiada Literacka*. The article published right after the Monte Carlo catastrophe must have been created directly before the event, as the text features the following description of the place:

All who have seen Homburg at its best will not wonder at the excess and splendor of Monte Carlo. The guests who arrive here are far less respectable, less elegant, perhaps more passionate, but they do not equal the great cold-blooded players that gathered at the foot of Taunus mountain range. In Monte Carlo, there is a much more fanatical fervor and wild dedication.²⁷⁰

The parallel between a gambler and a savage, between passion for the game and cultural barbarity, appears whenever someone reads the proper geographical name Les Spélugues literally and treats it as meaningful. “Hell” becomes the equivalent of a “cave” or, as Kraszewski writes about the richness of Mediterranean nature, it was not just a hell but a “hell in paradise.” There is also another important feature of plebeian Monte Carlo connected with wilderness: the pigeon shooting range welcomed everyone willing to follow their most primitive instincts. There are hundreds of examples associating Monte Carlo with a cave. To the similar extent, Monte Carlo was for many the place, where one could hear the shots fired at pigeons and – also – the suicide shots of casino's victims. The cave, the train, and the shots are the leading themes in the cultural characteristics of Monte Carlo. However, they are not the only ones, because the train combined with a loss in the casino could lead to a suicidal death on the tracks.²⁷¹ From the 1860s, Monte

269 GAR, “An Italian Gambling Hell. Monte Carlo and Its Tables,” *The New York Times*, 1878 (April 7).

270 J. I. Kraszewski, “Listy z zakątka włoskiego,” *Biesiada Literacka*, 13/1886 (March 26), pp. 197–198.

271 In a guide to Monaco, John Polson indicates a different connection between these elements: “The pigeon shooting, which is one of the “distractions” of Monte Carlo, is to the pigeons, what the play is to the players. The shooting takes place on a plateau on the top of a bluff overlooking the sea. The prizes are often as much as 20,000 francs. The pigeons are put into little tin boxes in the centre of the plateau, and the competitors are at the landward extremity of the ground and shoot seawards. At a given signal a string is pulled, and one of the boxes collapses; the pigeon flies out, generally seaward, but is often killed at once and drops within the enclosure. Some can fly further, but drop into the sea. Some are winged, but struggle back to their dovecots, and some escape

Carlo grew to become a clear proof that European civilization entered its elderly years; that it degenerated, backslides, and becomes increasingly primitive. *Fin de siècle* was a Parisian invention but – before the concept assumed its full shape – Monte Carlo slowly filled its substance, as it was home to the new atmosphere of degeneration, anarchy, and morbid anxiety. Here – at the roulette tables and the pigeon shooting range – satisfied and replete Europe confronted its deep otherness, and looked into a disturbing abyss, similar to the one that devoured the crashed cars of the trains between Monte Carlo and Cabbé-Roquebrune on March 10, 1886.

The aforementioned description of Monte Carlo has a versatile character. Same perspective appears in English and American press, but also Polish. For instance, on March 22 there appeared a report. If we account for the speed of nineteenth-century information flow, we should consider the Polish report as up-to-date: “Monaco devours still new victims. Journalists report on three more suicides of ruined gamblers. One of the miserable men was a Hungarian count who killed himself in the gambling room with a knife, in the presence of a large group.”²⁷² However, there is also a specific tendency in the Polish press, absent from the accounts in other languages. One day after the catastrophe, *Biesiada Literacka* published an article written probably before the catastrophe. It was part of a cycle “Z Warszawy” (From Warsaw) written by a journalist under the pseudonym Sęp.²⁷³ The text was rich in patriotism and positivism:

If the slogan “We shall not go to Monaco” should be a mirror for us, then we must undress it from its political suit and let it wear an everyday dress. Only then will it be a warning for us at home and away. The one who goes to Monaco is not only a gambler at a table but also the one who wastes time at home, shies away from work, sets his mind aside, and waits for the blind fate to come. “We shall not go to Monaco” should be written over the doors of our houses. Just like a hawk scares away the evil spirit that is to override horses, so should the slogan “Monaco” remind us that the enemy also wants to make us into animals that he could torment.²⁷⁴

altogether. So is it with the players, some die on the spot, some at a distance; some return to their homes hit hard, and some escape.” *Monaco and Its Gaming Tables*, 4th ed., London, 1881, chapter “More About the Suicides,” p. 62. Polish *Prawda* reports in 1888: “In Monte Carlo, forty-nine people lost their lives last year as a result of gambling losses.” [A note], *Prawda* 14/1888 (March 26).

272 A supplement to *Kurier Lwowski* 82/1886 (March 22).

273 Sęp means vulture in Polish.

274 Sęp, “Z Warszawy,” *Biesiada Literacka* 12/1886 (March 19), p. 179.

“The persecutor of Poles knows where to send them” is a significant sentence from the editorial introduction, which precedes the picture *W Monaco* (In Monaco), published first in *Biesiada Literacka*, and then reprinted, among others, in *Gazeta Narodowa* in Lviv.²⁷⁵ The railroad disaster from March 10, 1886, happened in a place that was cursed for Poles. Both from a moral and a political perspective. It should be added that – for Niemojewski – it was also a place that reminded about the blind forces of nature. A year after the disaster, an earthquake hit the French and Italian shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and a month later, masses of rocks blocked the Monte Carlo railroad route and stopped train traffic for twenty-four hours. The scheme of a cursed place (*locus horridus*) formed and influenced the reception of the event, it modeled the reports and comments about the catastrophe in a specific manner. It was a matter subject to another rewriting in Niemojewski's long poem “W pociągu.”

It is time to move on to the way the press portrayed the catastrophe in the spring of 1886. I will divide it into three versions: French, English, and Polish. The inclusion of French and Polish versions seems obvious. Let the justification for the English one be the fact that a significant percentage of visitors to Monte Carlo and its casino came from the United Kingdom. They had a strong relationship with the French Riviera and left a permanent mark on the culture of this area. Suffice it to remind that the most elegant seaside boulevard of Nice is called Promenade des Anglais. The division of the versions that I indicate becomes clear in the commentaries about the event, much less so in articles and reports directly from the disaster site. While preparing the latter, it was common for the press in other countries to use French materials, which they shortened or just slightly retouched. The previously mentioned photographs played a significant part in portraying the catastrophe. They functioned under various titles and appeared in many papers.

The catastrophe near Monte Carlo occurred on March 10 at around 5.15 pm on the route to the Cabbé-Roquebrune station. An issue of *Le Figaro* from March 11, 1886, shows a telegram sent from Monte Carlo on the same day at 10 pm.²⁷⁶ The newspaper's correspondent, Charles Limouzin, provides there the latest information about the course of events. Readers receive very factual details including the information that the catastrophe occurred on a single-track line, between trains 483 from Nice and 502 from Menton. I will return to this

275 See Karol P., “W Monaco,” *Biesiada Literacka* 14/1886 (April 2), p. 213; reprint: *Gazeta Narodowa* 86/1886 (April 15).

276 See Ch. Limouzin, “Terrible accident de chemin de fer,” *Le Figaro* 70/1886 (March 11).

text later, because the Polish press used its large parts. At the end of the report, Limouzin asks about the cause of the collision and the guilt: „Who made the mistake? The station master of the Monte Carlo station or his colleague from Cabbé-Roquebrune?” This is an important question that people urgently ask soon after a tragedy. Furthermore, in this case, the political background elevates the importance of the questions. The stake of *Le Figaro's* question is: who bears the blame, we or they? The question does not include a supposition allowing to blame both sides. In this context, it is worth noting the title of the article, which is “Terrible accident de chemin de fer.” The French *accident* appears consequently throughout the whole narrative.

On the next day, March 12, the announced telegram from Monte Carlo (dated March 11) classifies the event differently and much more seriously, as the title speaks of “La catastrophe de Roquebrune.”²⁷⁷ Moreover, the text suggests a new possible location of the catastrophe. I cannot discern whether the title came from the Monte Carlo correspondent or the editors, but the fact is that the first text consequently locates the event in Monte Carlo.

The first article deals with Monegasques as witnesses. Next, the paragraph gives the precise location of the event to lie “between Cabbé-Roquebrune and Monte Carlo, two kilometers from the latter station.” This railroad route begins in Marseilles, and its distance is increases as it approaches the Italian border. This suggests that the narrative comes from a Frenchman who used “his” French city as a natural (or rather cultural!) system of reference. However, the article indicates that the trains collided two kilometers away from Monte Carlo, which contradicts such perspective. PLM's timetable states that the (tariff, not actual) distance between Monte Carlo and Cabbé-Roquebrune is three kilometers. According to a study published by *La Nature* and a map of the Principality of Monaco from 1878, which shows the distance from Nice, the tragedy occurred more than a kilometer away from Monte Carlo, so two kilometers before Cabbé-Roquebrune. The choice of the reference system may show that the correspondent intended – consciously or not – to set a distance and introduce a signal that it was “their” accident, not a French one, and that the blame will probably fall on the head of the station in Monte Carlo.

The later article, entitled “La catastrophe de Roquebrune,” radically changes this perspective. For the reader of *Le Figaro*, the catastrophe suddenly becomes “his,” or at least “more French” than it was the previous day. The station on the PLM route is called Cabbé-Roquebrune, located between the town of Roquebrune

277 See Limouzin, “La catastrophe de Roquebrune,” *Le Figaro* 71/1886 (March 12).

and Cabbé Cape to the south. I assume that the title of the report uses the name of the town and not the station due to an important semantic motivation. The city as a reference point raises the significance of the event than would a reference to the station. This is because the name of the station could limit the disaster to the railroad space and present it as deprived of serious consequences for the community that uses the railroad. In "La catastrophe de Roquebrune," we see the French perspective more clearly. We also recognize it in its Anglophobia, easily traceable in the narrative. The text contains a fragment about the crowds of onlookers who arrived at the scene of the disaster and surrounded the remains of the train from all sides. However, the correspondent distinguishes one nationality from the large crowd, namely, the English. The correspondent writes ironically about their binoculars for observation and cloths unsuitable for the rocky terrain of the location. The final part of the report includes a list of victims, with three fatalities: the driver of the 502 train, the chief conductor, and a "businessman from Ventimiglia."

Le Petit Parisien daily from March 13 defines the event differently than *Le Figaro*. In "Accident de chemin de fer" the event appears as only a "railroad accident." The justification for a cautious classification seems to come from the relatively small number of victims, as the subtitle reads, "Three dead and twenty-three injured." Interestingly, it was the first article to mention the third train: the one whose delay caused the traffic confusion and – after a series of dreadful mistakes of railroad officers – led to the tragedy. It is difficult to assess whether the reader understood what the correspondent from Nice means when he presents the possible cause of the catastrophe: "The collision of trains is thought to have occurred as a result of an incorrect signal given by the station master of the Cabbé-Roquebrune station. He ignored the fact that there was a 'doubling' [*avait été dédoublé*] of trains coming from Nice and allowed the train in the direction of Nice to run."²⁷⁸

The analysis presented in *La Nature* allows us to clarify this fragment. The reason for the mistake of the station worker at Cabbé-Roquebrune was not the "doubling" of trains, which could be understood as two trains following each other at a short distance. The mistake refers to two trains from Nice. According to the timetable, they were to run at an interval of several dozen minutes. In such

278 "Accident de chemin de fer," *Le Petit Parisien* 1886 (March 13). The categorization changes in the next reports entitled *La catastrophe de Monte Carlo*. See issues from March 17 and 19. The article *Responsabilité* dated May 27 also mentions a "catastrophe."

case, the first train 479 would have passed train 502 at Menton station, while the second train 483 would have passed train 502 at Cabbé-Roquebrune station.

Both above reports come from a newspaper correspondent who writes from Monte Carlo or Nice.²⁷⁹ I do not know how the two correspondents collected the information they sent to the headquarters. The narrative suggests that Charles Limouzin from *Le Figaro* referred to what he had seen, just like the anonymous collaborator from *Le Petit Parisien*, who writes about the large number of onlookers who came to the tragedy site. Both narratives combine what appeared on site and external information. A lot of details overlap, which guarantees that these facts were observed directly or acquired from reliable sources. The employees of the photographic company Giletta et Gilly from Nice arrived at the site of the tragedy probably around noon of March 11, which is when Ferdinand Neri took a series of photographs for documentation. In the photo in question, there are two men beside the shattered cars, probably involved in the clean-up. In the coverage from *La Nature*, the woodcutter retouched both of the figures so that the reader could feel as if he received a picture taken immediately after the disaster, in accordance with the image description.²⁸⁰ None of the two correspondents of the Parisian newspapers resort to such a mystification. They do not suggest that the catastrophe occurred in front of their eyes. Therefore, the reporter's narratives for Paris headquarters have the value of second-level messages, filtered and rewritten from the first-hand reports of their informants. However, the correspondent of *Le Figaro* has an advantage, because he was in Monte Carlo on the day of the disaster, or somewhere in the Principality of Monaco, while his colleague from *Le Petit Parisien* had to get there from Nice. In the first coverage from *Le Figaro*, there is a peculiar acoustic testimony. The article describes a bang similar to a cannonball show, which was to resound when the two trains collided. Limouzine did not see the collision, but he probably heard it. Therefore, he was a unique witness, who experienced the train crash in Monte Carlo with his ears.

279 There were also other Parisian dailies that had their own correspondents, like *Le Matin* with articles "Terrible accident" 1886 (March 11); "Collision" (March 12); *Le Gaulois* with "L'accident de Cabbé-Roquebrune" 1886, (March 13); and *Journal des Débats* with "L'accident de Monte Carlo" 1886 (March 12 and 14). *Le XIX Siècle* 1886 (March 12 and 14) and *Gil Blas* 1886 (March 13, 14, and 18) also reported on the catastrophe.

280 The photos accompanying the coverage from *La Nature* previously appeared in prints published by illustrated magazines. See "L'accident de Monte Carlo," *Le Monde Illustré* 1512/1886 (March 20); "La catastrophe de Monte Carlo," *L'Univers Illustré* 1618/1886 (March 27).

The article from *Le Temps*, "L'accident de Monte-Carlo," dated March 13, brings an unusual *de visu* report prepared by one of the its "collaborators," present on that terrible day at the Monte Carlo Station.²⁸¹ Numerous English reprints would later popularize this report. For now, I will comment on one of its significant aspects: the perspective. For I am curious, what and how did the witness exactly see and – moreover – where was he really looking from? The Monte Carlo station began its operations in December 1869 in the immediate vicinity of the sea, next to the eastern wing of the Casino, whose terraces – as specified by tourist guides – were exactly twenty meters above the rail level. Someone who would like to stand on the platform of the Monte Carlo station today should be prepared for a disappointment. The building was demolished over half a century ago. The same goes for the Monaco station. In turn, there is a station that operates both parts of the Principality called Monaco-Monte Carlo, located underground as part of a line that now runs entirely through a tunnel along the northern border of the Principality. The former Monte Carlo station used to be where Boulevard du Larvotto runs today from the east into a tunnel under the luxury Hotel Fairmont Monte Carlo. The old station was situated exactly under the current hotel car park. From the sidewalk at the entrance to the tunnel there still is a magnificent view of the eastern part of the Principality of Monaco and the neighboring French coastline. In good weather conditions, one can also see the Italian part. Those would like to see what *Le Temps* "collaborator" saw will be disappointed. The coastline along which the PLM line once ran toward Menton and Ventimiglia has undergone a radical transformation. It has moved quite a bit to the south, especially since the end of the nineteenth century. A comparison of the maps of the Principality of Monaco from 1878 – which I used so far – with a map from 1898²⁸² shows that the site of the catastrophe. . . moved away from the sea. In the 1970s, the changes continued, as the authorities decided to backfill a large portion of the sea, making place for the splendid Grimaldi Forum and the Monte Carlo Sporting Club. If one wants to see the remains of the cliff, from which the train cars fell into the sea, he/she must drive a kilometer to the east of Hotel Fairmont Monte Carlo, stand back to the luxury Hotel Le Méridien Beach

281 See "L'accident de Monte Carlo," *Le Temps* 1886, (March 13). The reprint of this article appeared in other newspapers. One of them was the daily *La Lanterne* that published "La catastrophe de Monte Carlo" 1886, (March 14). Even Swiss press reprinted the article, see "La catastrophe de Monte Carlo par un témoin oculaire," *L'Imperial* [La Chaux-de-Fonds] 1886 (March 14); "L'accident de Monte Carlo," *Le Confédéré* 1886 (March 20).

282 See *Principauté de Monaco*, Paris, 1898.

Plaza, and look from the height of Avenue Princesse Grace at the arterial road of Boulevard du Larvotto above. Boulevard du Larvotto follows the course of the old track, so the bright retaining wall is the one that is clearly visible in the three pictures taken by Ferdinand Neri. The train cars must have crashed into the sea exactly at the place from which we make our observations.

Why do I write about all this? Because the “eyewitness’s” account seems to contain a significant inconsistency. As we remember, the collision happened just over a kilometer from the Monte Carlo station. From there, the track crossed the bridge over the Anse du Portier bay, then it curved gently along the coast, which created an amphitheater. Therefore, the actual distance to Anse de Tenao, where the two trains collided, was one kilometer because one would look along the chord of the curve. Further, at a distance of about three kilometers, one could probably see the Cabbé-Roquebrune station and – even farther – the entrance to the St. Martin Tunnel. The eyewitness mentions three trains in his account, to be more precise: three clouds of smoke. One approached the St. Martin Tunnel, so it must have been the train 479, which passed by the train 502 in Cabbé-Roquebrune. The latter headed from Cabbé-Roquebrune station to Monte Carlo station. This other train was 502, which continued on its way after passing the train 479. The third train ran from Monte Carlo. This was train 483, which should have waited at the Monte Carlo station for crossing with the train 502, incoming from the opposite direction. The “collaborator” of *Le Temps* is convinced that the collision happened “right in front of him.” In the narration, there is a visual representation of the shock caused by the arrival of trains and the accompanying bang. Terrified women turned their heads away. The calm and cold blood of this “collaborator” intrigue me. The “collaborator” must have had an extraordinary sight, since he noticed from a kilometer away that the Nice train started to rapidly brake while the train from Menton did not. Immediately after the collision, a group of several dozen people ran along the track toward the place of the tragedy. The “collaborator” probably did not. His narration ends in a puzzling way: “In the casino, the emotions were very vivid, the game tables surrounded by players from all sides were immediately deserted. Many abandoned their games to help the wounded.”

Was the “collaborator” of *Le Temps* daily exactly where he says he was: at the platform of the Monte Carlo station? There was a crowd of several hundred people, which definitely did not improve visibility. An excellent observation point recommended by the guides was quite close on the casino terrace, situated twenty meters higher than the station.²⁸³ One could take the elevator from

283 French railroad guide praises the place: “From the large terrace at the back of the

the platform to get there, but it was closer. . . from the tables of the game. So maybe the "collaborator" of *Le Temps* observed the course of events during a game break in the casino? Many Poles wrote that the casino was a cursed place. Authors from other nations proposed similar evaluations. The press extensively wrote about the protests organized in European metropolises by the opponents of gambling, petitions sent to the authorities of the Principality of Monaco, and the pressure on the French government.²⁸⁴ Exactly at the same time when Monte Carlo became a place of railroad tragedy, the prolific Polish writer Józef Ignacy Kraszewski mocks at the gambling opponents in his correspondence:

Every week [in the press], there appear the same diatribes, bloody images, references to public conscience, etc. One might think that this thunderous cannon will eventually turn Monte Carlo into ashes, while in the meantime, the game quietly continues at the rich tables, and when a mosquito buzzes too loudly, the bank pays a few thousand francs to the author of a newly created daily and its latest issue contains only a huge announcement about the pleasures of the Monte Carlo paradise!²⁸⁵

Reporting about the disaster from the Casino terrace would be inappropriate. It would document that the railroad disaster was most visible from the place, which

casino, one can see the Ligurian coast as far as San Remo." L. Watrison, *La route de la Corniche ou la rivière de Gênes en chemin de fer. Nouvel itinéraire de Marseille à Nice, Monaco, Menton, Savone et Gênes*, [Nice] 1873, p. 43. A railroad guide from the beginning of the twentieth century, prepared for English-speaking tourists, *Chemins de fer P.L.M.*, under the artistic care of A. Romagnol, [Paris n.d.], p. 25, recommends the following: "Lean but over the balustrade above the gardens of the Casino and you will have under your eyes a glorious panorama unfolded along the azure coast from the hills of the Estérel to the lovely coast-line of Ventimiglia and Bordighera." On the location of the terraces twenty meters above the rail level and the wide panorama they offered, see also Ph. Casimir, *Guides des pays d'azur. Monaco, Monte Carlo et les environs*, Nice, 1903, pp. 209–210.

284 "A vigorous agitation against the casinos of Monaco and Monte Carlo began developing in England. Currently, in London, a committee prepares to make this an international issue. In Nice, Cannes, and Mentone, a number of auxiliary committees should be soon established to attract supporters of their propaganda among numerous guests from all over the world." *Gazeta Lwowska* 52/1881 (March 17). "So far, the attempts to abolish the Monaco gambling house – this cave that devours property and even lives of many unrestrained victims – were shattered by the resistance of the reigning Prince, who makes his living mostly thanks to this bank. République Française sees no other way to break the resistance but to annex Monaco." *Gazeta Warszawska* 74/1886 (April 3).

285 Kraszewski, *Listy z zakątka włoskiego*, p. 198.

stood behind many other tragedies. For a large part of the European public, the Casino was a “gambling cave,” a “den of sin.” The use of the Casino or its terraces would have to ostentatiously blend mercy with disgust. *Le Temps*' “collaborator” knows better and partly seems like the authors described by Kraszewski. At noon, the reporter writes about the detrimental influence of the casino, while in the evening, he plays at a roulette table.

The casino player may be a credible informant. However, I think that the indicated inappropriateness – of which the “collaborator” is apparently ashamed²⁸⁶ – adds to the *fin-de-siècle* climate and exposes the era in which the previously clear categories become blurred. When one reads the analyzed accounts today, it is hard to resist the impression that they are unbearably melodramatic, that their authors clearly want to aestheticize human misery, expose and adorn grimaces of pain. Another striking element is the theatricalization of a tragedy. Its most popular version is a crowd of spectators who come to the catastrophe site.²⁸⁷ However, there are also more aristocratic forms of the spectacle of death. In the foreground of the photograph described in *La Nature* as “Cleaning up the tracks. The view from Monte Carlo,” we can see the remains of the train wreck, while in the background, there is a group of a few workers clearly posing for the photograph with the crashed cars behind them. A popular illustrated magazine *L'Univers Illustré*²⁸⁸ published the staged photograph even earlier. In this grotesque mixture of aesthetic qualities, in this peculiar *mélange* of pose and authenticity, life and game, death and joy, I observe the cultural manifestations of the end of the century.

The English and American presses quickly reported on the Monte Carlo catastrophe, because it was an important place, often visited by many tourists from the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Understandably, French information dominated the first reports. Press agencies passed on the news,

286 The author of “L'accident de Monte Carlo,” *Journal des Débats* 1886 (March 12), approaches the event differently, because he writes about the moment before the collision: “Because of the curve visible from Monte Carlo's terrace, the driver and the fireman of the train from Nice did not see the train from Ventimiglia running at full speed.”

287 The article in the London daily “The Railroad Accident at Monte Carlo,” *Morning Post* 1886 (March 13), informs readers that, “Some estimates speak of even 20,000 people who went yesterday from Nice to Monte Carlo to visit the scene of the recent disaster. Considerable delays occur in the arrival and departure of all trains.”

288 The caption under the image of posing workers seems even more inappropriate than the one soon to appear as “The remains of two trains,” *La Nature*, 1618/1886, p. 209.

sometimes in the exact same form as they appeared in the French newspapers. The reports were quite laconic and not always precise in terms of the location. For a Parisian, it is clear that there are two different countries in the French south, but it is not so certain for an American or an Englishman.²⁸⁹ Of course, English language press changes the perspective and the units of measure. Kilometers and meters become miles, yards, and feet. However, the parameters that these units indicate are of greater importance. Therefore, there are versions that mention two miles between the collision site and Monte Carlo, but the prevailing version is that the accident occurred right next to the station. The tragedy site was supposed to be only two hundred yards away. *The Times* explains to its readers – and probably casino players – that the trains collided on a bridge over a tiny bay.²⁹⁰ It was probably the bridge over Anse du Portier Bay, right after Monte Carlo Station. A person on the casino terrace saw the bay with the bridge right below.

Although these differences may tell us a lot about the social group addressed by the English reports, I would not attach to them much importance. What seems more important is the characteristic tendency of these articles to extend the list of fatalities. The list changes over time, but sometimes even within the same article. For example, an extensive article from the afternoon newspaper *Manchester Evening News* published the day after the catastrophe, entitled “Terrible Railway Accident Near Monte Carlo. Loss of Life,” refers to three, four, six, thirty, and finally “twenty dead at the least.”²⁹¹ For the sake of justice, I will add that the article used information from various sources. In the issue from March 12, *London Standard* explains these and similar differences by arguing that – as the accident occurred in Monaco territory – there was little reliable information in the newspapers.²⁹² However, an inherent part of the lists was the information that there were probably no English victims.

289 The fragments of reports that mention that the crowded train No. 27 from Paris followed the crashed train No. 483 articulate the capital's viewpoint, see “La catastrophe de Monte Carlo,” *L'Univers Illustré* 1617/1886 (March 20), pp. 179–180.

290 See “The Monte Carlo Railroad Accident,” *The Times* 1886 (March 11).

291 See “Terrible Railway Accident Near Monte Carlo. Loss of Life,” *Manchester Evening News* 1886 (March 11). It seems that the number of dead raised proportionately to the distance between Monte Carlo and the place of publication. The Californian *Daily Alta California* informs that there were at least twenty dead. “Remarkable Railroad Accident. Cars Thrown from an Embankment into the Sea by a Collision” 1886 (March 12).

292 “Railway Disaster Near Monte Carlo. (From Our Correspondent),” *London Standard* 1886 (March 12).

In the English press, the pictures of the catastrophe appeared in a very prominent place – on the cover of the magazine. The *Illustrated London News* issue from March 20 opens with two images after Ferdinand Neri's photographs. We read below: "The Railway disaster in the Riviera; from photographs." The upper image shows a shattered train and posing workers. The same photograph was later used by *La Nature*. The caption reads: "Part of the wrecks of the two trains." The lower image is described as "Scene of the collision: Monte Carlo and Monaco in the distance," which shows the catastrophe site surrounded by a crowd of workers and officers.²⁹³ As I wrote above, the posing workers in the first picture may be surprising, but no less surprising is the shot used in the second image, indicated in the caption. The shot emphasizes the "picturesque" character of the scene and reveals a specific analogy between the background and foreground. In the background, there is the eye-pleasing nature and elegant buildings integrated into the seaside amphitheater, while in the foreground, there is an artificial and mildly rounded hill, formed from the tangled remains of crushed trains.

Obviously, problems with information source created a temptation to rewrite or simply translate French reports. Hence, the image of misfortune in the form presented by the "collaborator" and eyewitness of *Le Temps* became so popular in the United Kingdom.²⁹⁴ In this context, the revelations of *The Globe* are an interesting thread. Later on, other newspapers, mainly afternoon dailies, passed on the same news. The version of *The Globe's* correspondent is a classic counternarrative about the catastrophe, which undermines the credibility of reports presented as

293 See *The Illustrated London News* 1886 (March 20). On the same day, French illustrated magazines *Le Monde Illustré* and *L'Univers Illustré* published Neri's photographs. The cover of the latter shows a figure "Catastrophe near Monte Carlo." The print did not use photographic documentation. In the issue from March 20, the illustrated weekly *The Graphic* – a competitor of *The Illustrated London News* – presents a print captioned: "A fatal railroad crash near Monte Carlo" with an annotation, "from a sketch taken immediately after the accident."

294 See "The Monte Carlo Collision," *The Times* 1886 (March 13). Other journals that published reprints from *Le Temps* in abbreviated versions were: "The Railway Collision Near Monte Carlo," *London Daily News* 1886 (March 13), "The Monte Carlo Collision. Statement by an Eye-Witness," *Portsmouth Evening News* 1886 (March 13), "The Monte Carlo Collision. Thrilling Account of the Disaster," *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* 1886 (March 15), "The Railway Disaster at Monte Carlo. Three More Deaths. Account by Eye-Witness," *Aberdeen Evening Express* 1886 (March 15), "The Monte Carlo Collision. A Graphic Description," *Worcester Journal* 1886 (March 20).

an objective and impartial reconstruction of the fatal events from Monte Carlo. The reports translated from French newspapers suggest to the English reader that the author cares for France's and Monaco's reputation, while the narrative from *The Globe* takes no sides. The news are to come from "our" trustworthy man, who learned about all the grim secrets of the tragedy from his interlocutor. The headline from the version repeated by the *Derby Daily Telegraph* in the issue from March 23 reads: "The Monte Carlo Railway Disaster." A sensation-evoking subtitle complemented the picture: "Extraordinary Allegations." It is also important to notice the word usage in the articles. The word "disaster" appears as an event more serious than "accident" yet less serious than a "catastrophe." For an average English user, the etymology of the word "disaster" is completely blurred. The contents of the article quite clearly functionalized the term:

A correspondent of the "Globe," writing with reference to the Monte Carlo railway accident says: "Particular circumstances have enabled me to become possessed of facts relating to this horrible catastrophe which have been carefully kept out of sight in the French papers. The number of deaths has very greatly exceeded that which was made public. A French gentleman, a friend of mine, very adroitly questioned one of the lower officials, who, believing he was making a report to a superior in high authority, gave him a detailed and most awful account, my friend warning him not to repeat what he was saying to others. This man told him that he himself assisted in extricating seven corpses from one compartment alone of the carriages which fell over the parapet, and stated that the number of deaths was certainly not less than fifty. He added that the work was carried on with as much delay as possible during the day, but that at night several boats were brought round, in which the bodies, heavily weighted, were placed, and carried off far to sea. Who these poor creatures were will probably never be known; but people are beginning to ask for missing friends, and only to-day I heard strong anxiety expressed as to the fate of a young French lawyer, who had been to the Nice Carnival for his holiday, and had ever since been missing. What fearful suspense and anxiety must now be felt by surviving friends! In England this could not happen; and, if you think proper to make this statement public, you are at liberty to do so."²⁹⁵

As Marie-Hélène Huet explains, the English word "disaster" is a calque from the French "désastre," which entered French from Italian. It is a transformation of the expression "disastrate," which means the loss of the lucky star, so the term means

295 "The Monte Carlo Railway Disaster. Extraordinary Allegations," *Derby Daily Telegraph* 1886 (March 23). The articles that repeated the information were: "The Monte Carlo Accident. Extraordinary Allegations. Bodies Secretly Buried at Sea," *Aberdeen Evening Express* 1886 (March 23), "Monaco Railway Accident. Extraordinary Allegations," *Hartlepool Mail* 1886 (March 23), "Monte Carlo Railway Disaster. Extraordinary Allegations," *Tamworth Herald* 1886 (March 27).

misfortune and failure.²⁹⁶ In the narrative about the events on the French-Italian border, the English word returns to its prehistory and introduces to the composed image of the world an aura of pre-modern thinking about human fate as controlled by stars. It is a world where time apparently stopped or slowed down, transforming the tiny Principality of Monaco into an enclave, where life follows some primordial rules no longer known to the rest of Europe. The peninsula where Monaco is located used to be the home of sea robbers. It provided shelter for outlaws and the outcasts. In the nineteenth century, the tradition seems to be still alive, because there is a “gambling cave” in Monte Carlo that welcomes people whose gambling passion leads to social and biological degradation. In such world occurred the accident that could seriously threaten the reputation of the casino and decrease the number of guests who come in hope to return home as millionaires. As the correspondent of *The Globe* argues, this is why we will never know the true scale of the tragedy nor the number of lives lost in the catastrophe. There are no chances that the horrifying details will ever become public. From this imagery emerges a gloomy picture, in which ships loaded with human corpses sail out at night to sink the bodies in the depths of water. A proof? People like the one young French lawyer whose trace was lost! The lawyer came to Nice for a carnival and just disappeared in thin air. As the French friend of *The Globe's* correspondent says, such thing could not have happened in England. For the sake of the progressive part of Europe, one must give voice to the truth about Monte Carlo. . .

And what shape did the truth about the Monte Carlo disaster assume in Poland? I will try to give a brief overview of this matter. However, I must first underline that I am mostly interested in the cultural climate of the epoch that the European press not only registered but also intensively co-created. The “soft” descriptions of the Monte Carlo catastrophe are a source of knowledge about what happened, but they also invoke a certain reality themselves. As scholars of cultural studies argue, these descriptions add to the atmosphere of uncertainty, intensifying the feelings of anxiety and confusion, characteristic for all closing periods, declines, and ends of epochs. In the first sentence of his monograph, Shearer West writes: “Disasters, catastrophes and fears that world will come to an end are concerns which have governed human behaviour and have found their expression in art and literature for centuries.”²⁹⁷ So the nineteenth-century *fin de siècle* began at different times in different societies. It started earlier in the West,

296 See Huet, *The Culture of Disaster*, pp. 3–4.

297 S. West, *Fin de siècle. Art and Society in an Age of Uncertainty*, Woodstock, 1994, p. 1.

later in the East but – as it becomes apparent after reading the long poem “W pociągu” – *fin de siècle* began simultaneously in the West and East for Andrzej Niemojewski. It began with the railroad disaster that the Polish press extensively covered. At first, in the dailies.

I have already mentioned that the text “Monte Carlo: 1866–1886” directed the reception of the reports on this catastrophe. We may even call it a multi-text system composed not only of texts but also of increasingly frequently and boldly published graphics based on photographs. Although I have no proof of this, I believe that the early signs of this system appear in the first novel by Eliza Orzeszkowa. Above all, we should remember the wonderful feuilleton about the locomotive at the beginning of “Ostatnia miłość” (Last Love). In this text, Orzeszkowa proclaims the glory of railroad and enumerates its merits, including the fact that it allows us to “look from the foot of sky-high mountains at the enormous sea mirrors or listen to the bangs of Alpine debris falling into the abyss.”²⁹⁸ Orzeszkowa took her first exam in the poetics of literary realism in 1867, when her novella was published in installments in *Gazeta Polska*. To be precise, the quoted fragment comes from issue 143, dated June 28. At that time, the only place that corresponded to the spatial coordinates from the description was the French Nice. Orzeszkowa recommends the place to people hungry for . . . knowledge. However, when she writes “Ostatnia miłość,” the Principality of Monaco beside Nice radically changes its physiognomy and becomes a hole in the worldview map of positivism. Monaco becomes a place where the idea of benefits that arise from hard work and intellect dies, overwhelmed by the weight of fortunes that blind faith put into the hands of “idle lords of all countries” who regularly visit the Casino.²⁹⁹ What *Gazeta Lwowska* entitles “a scene from the capital of roulette”³⁰⁰ would later – in the 1870s and 1880s – become the basic model for organizing narratives about the Principality of Monaco and Monte Carlo, even in the case of a typical sightseeing visit. The anonymous author of a tourist report “Wzdłuż Rivieri” (Alongside the Riviera) complains:

So much has been said and written about Monaco and Monte Carlo that one may doubt if there is any stone, tree, or thing that has not been described a thousand times in all the possible languages with a pen guided by inspiration or money. / Is there anyone left who

298 E. Orzeszkowa, *Ostatnia miłość*, Warsaw, 1963 [1867], p. 7. Kazimierz Chruściński sees the first sign of Orzeszkowa's enchantment with Riviera in *Niziny*, see his “Lazurowe wybrzeże w literaturze polskiej XIX wieku,” in: *Miasto – kultura – literatura. Wiek XIX*, ed. J. Data, Gdańsk, 1993, p. 96.

299 Orzeszkowa, *Ostatnia miłość*.

300 “Scena ze stolicy rulety,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 6/1874 (January 9).

could hear the name of Monaco and not imagine the beautiful school [?], the casino, the glowing gambling halls, the green tables with the imperturbable dealers, and the fools who lose their money there? Monaco will become a truly delightful place if these vagrants, fashionable brigands, and elegant ladies of the underworld disappear from there. I have always considered it impossible that there were people in this world who might be lured to the green table by obvious crooks. Whenever I was in Monaco, the game never lured me, and I never put a single cent on the green cloth!³⁰¹

At the same time, at the beginning of 1884, *Biesiada Literacka* attacks in the column *Na ziemi i na gwiazdach* (On Earth and Among the Stars), whose author goes by the pseudonym of Iru: "What a terrible drama unveils on this stage in front of your eyes! You can follow it from the first to the fifth act. From the pop of champagne in the first act, through the exciting game in the following ones, to the suicide in the last act. Just read *Journal de Nice*: not a single week goes by without Monte Carlo witnessing a tragedy." Iru continues by rewriting from *Journal de Nice*: "Nice, February 13. Yesterday, after the loss of all equity in Monte Carlo and the forgery of the bill of exchange, Count Martini was found on the tracks near Menton. The letter he left testifies that he committed suicide under the train's wheels."³⁰²

At the beginning of 1886, the atmosphere around Monte Carlo became tense in the Polish press. *Biesiada Literacka* published a series of texts about "the capital of roulette," including the abovementioned Kraszewski's correspondence. Moreover, on the last page of the fourteenth issue dated April 2, there appeared an illustration entitled *Zgrany, a za chwilę samobójca* (Gambler, Soon a Suicide). The well-known building of Monte Carlo Casino, visible in the background, leaves no doubt where the tragedy will happen.³⁰³ Therefore, the tragedy on the tracks near Monte Carlo happened in a place used to shots, explosions, and deaths. Shots were fired at pigeons at the shooting range and when gambling victims took their own lives; they also took them with daggers, by jumping from windows, swallowing poison, drowning in the sea, or throwing themselves under trains. Even bombs exploded in the Casino, planted by opponents of gambling pleasures. The element that links all these situations was rapid and unnatural death among the evergreen "paradise" plants that never experiences winter. On March 12, 1886, the first echoes of another tragedy – a head-on collision of two trains – reached the spotlight of the Polish public.

301 "Wzdłuż Rivier," *Wędrowiec* 6/1884 (February 7), p. 65.

302 Iru, "Na ziemi i na gwiazdach," *Biesiada Literacka* 22/1884 (May 30), p. 346.

303 Another figure "Sala gry w Monte Carlo" published in the same issue suggested the same localization.

When on May 8, 1842, a train crashed near Versailles, the tragic information about the fifty-five passengers burned alive in closed cars reached Poland with the speed of the fastest messenger could travel. The publication moment of the news depended on the distance between Polish cities and Paris. Therefore, the first to hear about the events were the inhabitants of Poznań, then Warsaw, Cracow, and finally Lviv.³⁰⁴ However, the telegraph already worked well in 1886. News from Monte Carlo spread quickly around the world and reached Polish editors in Poznań, Warsaw, Cracow, and Lviv at the same time, probably as reports from March 11. Therefore, the news issues from the next day inform: "Paris, March 11. Two passenger trains collided between Mentone [sic!] and Monaco. About ten cars crushed, several people dead and many injured."³⁰⁵ "Two passenger trains collided yesterday between Paris and Monaco [sic!]. Ten cars smashed, many people killed, many wounded."³⁰⁶ "Rome, March 11. An accident near Menton. Two trains collided, four cars fell into the sea, and ten crashed. Significant number of dead and wounded."³⁰⁷ "Paris, March 11. Two passenger trains collided between Menton and Monaco. Many injured and killed. Ten cars crushed."³⁰⁸ "[Paris, March 11] Two passenger trains collided between Menton and Monaco, many killed and injured. Ten wagons crushed."³⁰⁹ "Railroad crash. On March 10, between Mentone [sic!] and Monaco, two passenger trains crashed. Many wounded and killed. Ten cars were crushed."³¹⁰ "Paris, March 11. There was a railroad crash between Mentone and Monaco. As a result, a significant number of travelers died or were injured. Ten cars were smashed and four fell into the sea."³¹¹

Some local newspapers, such as *Gazeta Toruńska*, *Kurier Warszawski* were late to inform about the event, but gave a more precise location and important details: "As telegrams inform, two trains collided between Monte Carlo and Roquebrune. Three people died and eleven were seriously injured. The names of the victims are not yet known."³¹²

304 I elaborate this matter elsewhere. See *Inna droga. Romantycy a kolej*, Warsaw, 2012, pp. 93–95.

305 *Dziennik Poznański* 58/1886 (March 12).

306 *Kurier Poznański* 58/1886 (March 12).

307 *Gazeta Warszawska* 56/1886 (March 12).

308 *Dziennik Polski* 58/1886 (March 12).

309 *Czas* 58/1886 (March 12).

310 *Kurier Lwowski* 71/1886 (March 12).

311 *Wiek* 56/1886 (March 12).

312 *Kurier Warszawski* 72b/1886 (March 13).

A few days later, newspapers complemented the picture with one more piece of information: "The head of the Roquebrune station, whose carelessness caused the big railroad accident between Monaco and Nice, drowned because of despair."³¹³ "The head of the Roquebrune station responsible for the disaster, disappeared."³¹⁴

The text about the disaster from *La Nature* that I called canonical, presents a different version of the events. It discusses the immediate arrest of an employee of Cabbé-Roquebrune station on the day of the disaster, as the employee was replacing the head of the station. On April 16, the court in Nice sentenced the employee to fifteen months in prison and ordered him to cover court costs.³¹⁵ I would not underestimate this difference between French and Polish narratives, because they confirm that the Monte Carlo catastrophe already had a solid interpretative framework ready for use by the Polish press before it actually happened. Let us remember that – within this framework – the fate of the people in Monte Carlo often ended in unnatural suicidal death. This proves that artificiality, degeneration, illness, madness, ferocity, and unrestraint rule in this "cursed place" and harm the world order.

When the information about the catastrophe reached Poland, there already was a ready-made interpretation pattern. Therefore, we may say that it was a predictable event, which had to happen, because there already was a press notification scheme. It went as follows: "Monte Carlo became a place of yet another tragedy. . ." The similarity of press reports makes us suspect that they had the same source. *Dziennik Poznański* openly calls the reports "Z biura Wolffa" (From Wolff's Office). However, the source could also have been the news in the foreign press. Cracow daily *Czas* refers to one of the foreign papers and writes that "no

313 *Kurier Warszawski* 79b/1886 (March 20).

314 *Czas* 61/1886 (March 16).

315 The case went on. On May 29, 1886, the higher court overturned the verdict and the court of cassation ruled that the reason for mistakes made by the worker of Cabbé-Roquebrune station was "force majeure" (fatigue and excess of duties). Therefore, the court found guilty the PLM company. See "Responsabilité," *Le Petit Parisien* 1886 (May 27); "La Compagnie PLM et la Catastrophe de Monte Carlo," *La Revue des Journaux* 1886 (May 30). The Court of the Principality of Monaco acted differently. It sentenced the station master of the Monte Carlo station for two months imprisonment and the chief conductor of the train No. 483 to a fifty francs fine. The court acquitted the railroad watchman. Moreover, it obliged the PLM company to introduce air brakes in all passenger trains. The train No. 502 crashed near Monte Carlo did not have such brakes. See Picard, *Traité des chemins de fer. Économie politique – commerce – finances – administration – droit – études comparées sur les chemins de fer étrangers*, p. 534.

Austrian citizen" was among the victims. The practice of rewriting – and also modifying – the French press reports is responsible for three extensive articles that appeared in Cracow and Lviv newspapers. These articles appeared at different moments in time, but all three have a common source: the previously analyzed Monte Carlo report published by *Le Figaro* the day after the catastrophe. This unmarked translation means one thing: a transfer of the French perspective to Poland. What strikes us when we look at all three accounts today is the excess of details that probably had little meaning for the Polish reader. We are still in the circle of messages with poetics torn among documentary, melodrama, and fictionalization. Such situation derives from today's standards and expectations that the press reports should be free from any literary aspirations. Moreover, today we do not trust journalists but catastrophe experts. When we seek truth about an event, we usually omit "media facts" and trust specialist reports, in which every word is irreplaceable. Should a word be replaced, it is only by exact numerical parameters. The relations that I discuss here paved the way for modern techniques of the transfer of information.

The magazine to publish the most extensive version of the translation from *Le Figaro* was *Gazeta Lwowska*, under the title "Straszna katastrofa" (Terrible Catastrophe); the main part of the report reads:

On March 10, people and guests visiting Monaco witnessed a terrible accident on the railroad between Monte Carlo and Mentone [sic!]. The train leaving Nice at 3.50 am and the train from Mentone [sic!] collided between Cabbé-Roquebrune and Monte Carlo station, two kilometers from the latter. Both ran at full speed, so the collision was terrible. The sound similar to a cannon shot carried well over a few kilometers. What the people living in the area saw on site is indescribable. The trains collided on a railroad curve just a few steps away from the edge of embankment. The damage was an unimaginable. The locomotives crashed into each other, the cars piled up, crushed each other with such a force that they smashed into smithereens. Three cars of the first, the second, and the third class fell over the barrier and into the sea from a height of seventy-five meters. They shattered into pieces. The cars that did not fall were just a mass of formless remains. The wheels, doors, and chains hang over the abyss, from which people rescued the wounded and retrieve the bodies of victims. Strangely enough, a four-year-old fell into the sea and was fine, except for a minor injury. Moreover, one of the adult travelers survived the fall into the abyss, with only one hand broken. Another thirteen-year-old boy who also fell broke both hands, yet the boy did not think about himself but desperately called out his father ... His poor father was already dead! Having heard the news about the accident, the bathing board immediately sent people for the rescue, joined by railroad officials, the Prince's guard, the military police, and the Monaco police. All of them zealously performed their duty, starting with Mr. Catusse, the prefect of the department, who was in Monaco at the time. Mr. Catusse did not hesitate to run and help the unlucky. Together with Mr. Chartran, the administrator of a bathing establishment, Mr.

Catusse went boldly into greatest danger. Mr. Catelain and Mr. Girardin, owners of a French hotel [should be Parisian; Hotel de Paris], offered shelter for the wounded in their hotel. Ten of the wounded were moved there immediately, but more transports arrive all the time.³¹⁶

Cracow daily *Czas* added a sentence that reported on the number of victims and introduced a new domestic perspective. "There are no Austrians among the victims." A fundamental perspective shift happened three weeks after the catastrophe, when the Polish newspapers could sort and properly prioritize the news that reached the country. At this point began a very interesting process of semiotization, which translated space valorized as a cursed place onto time. Moreover, this is also when a Polonizing approach to the catastrophe began to emerge. This is the same approach that developed fully in Niemojewski's long poem. Let us recall that the catastrophe illustrated by the last segment of the long poem "W pociągu" (On a Train), entitled "U celu" (At Our Destination) fundamentally differs from the one that we analyze in press reports. In Niemojewski's literary catastrophe, the main figure. . . is a Polish train. Its route begins in Warsaw, which means that Poles should be among the victims and the miraculously saved. The process of Polonizing the Monte Carlo tragedy began in the Polish press with two materials: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* and *Kłosa* published them almost at the same time.

Less than a month passed since the unlucky event, when *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* published an article entitled "Katastrofa kolejowa pod Monte Carlo" (Railroad Catastrophe Near Monte Carlo). *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* enriched the article with an illustration "Katastrofa pod Monte Carlo" (The Monte Carlo Catastrophe). The newspaper used a photo by Ferdinand Neri, previously published by other papers like *The Illustrated London News* that used it on the cover. Paul C. Fyfe analyzes the photo and argues that it conformed to the popular convention of "catastrophic picturesqueness" of the time. It manifests itself in how it presents the tragedy site. The crashed remains in the foreground form gentle hills and their ridge corresponds to the ridge of the hills surrounding Monte Carlo visible in the distance.³¹⁷ We may understand the first paragraph of the article as a direct commentary on this picture: "On March 11 [sic!], the lovely Riviera, perhaps the

316 "Straszna katastrofa," *Gazeta Lwowska* 60/1886 (March 15). Two other versions are: "Katastrofa pod Monte Carlo," *Kurier Lwowski* 77/1886 (March 18) and "Katastrofa pod Monte Carlo," *Czas* 64/1886 (March 19).

317 See P. C. Fyfe, "Illustrating the Accident. Railways and the Catastrophic Picturesque in 'The Illustrated London News,'" *Victorian Periodicals Review* 2013, pp. 80–81.

loveliest corner of Western Europe, witnessed a terrible catastrophe, in which eight people died and thirty-four were injured.”³¹⁸ There is an important addition in *post scriptum*: “Already after writing these words, on the basis of foreign articles, a happy message reached our office. Among the lucky survivors were Poles Mr. and Mrs. Horodyńscy from the Lublin Governorate.” A miraculous rescue is one of the most important motifs found in the reports from the Monte Carlo catastrophe. It is an exceptionally melodramatic motif but not the only one found in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, because we previously read: “The word has it that the head of the Roquebrune Station, guilty of giving a false signal, was imprisoned or committed suicide by throwing himself into the waves.” However, I believe that the motif of the miraculous survival is more Polish in its characteristics.

It is interesting that no other “miraculous” events reported by the French press made it into Polish reports. There is no mention about the pigeon shooting range owner, who did not manage to get on the train in time. And as we know, the train crashed one kilometer from the station.³¹⁹ One may say that Polish commentators are only interested in Polish miracles. To be precise, they are interested in the events that should confirm that Providence still watches over Poles, even in the remote and spoiled Monte Carlo. In this way, the railroad tragedy corresponds to the biblical punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, it seems to repeat God's plan of saving Lot's family, because not all Poles deserve punishment. Not all of them go to Monte Carlo to indulge in debauchery and break God's commandments. The Riviera described by *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* is full of other biblical connotations: it apparently is a paradise. There is one more interesting detail in the reports, which makes us return to an event that was to happen in front of hundreds of observers: “On the hill in Monaco and Monte Carlo stood hundreds of people, either waiting for the train or enjoying the beautiful air. All of them were passive spectators of a misfortune that they could not prevent with their shouts or screams.”

Let us remember that the best observation point that allowed for watching the Eastern part of the Principality of Monaco were terraces near the Casino. Is the lack of Casino in the narrative an attempt to adjust Monte Carlo to the morality of the rescued Poles? The analyzed report is incoherent and inconsequential.

318 “Katastrofa kolejowa pod Monte Carlo,” *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 170/1886 (April 3), p. 219.

319 “L'accident de Cabbé-Roquebrune,” *Le Gaulois*, 1886 (March 13). The daily used information from their own correspondent.

The author probably did not have a clear opinion on gambling and its dreadful consequences as there are no definite statements in the text.³²⁰

A person who has a definite and unambiguously negative opinion about Monte Carlo and gambling is Aniela Tripplinówna. In *Kłosy*, she published “Katastrofa kolejowa na drodze Monte Carlo przedstawiona w świetle rzeczywistym” (Honestly Presented Railroad Disaster on the Monte Carlo Line).³²¹ It is the most extensive Polish text used in this analysis. Already the anonymous author of *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* conducts the semiotization of the event's time. He emphasizes that the people waiting for the train enjoyed the “beautiful air” and the crash occurred in “the most beautiful sun.” The tragedy was part of a composition, in which the temporal background has a natural character and results from the changing seasons. The beautiful sun is a sign that spring is coming. However, Aniela Tripplinówna makes this order disappear. Culture and its order of time take the place of nature. Liturgical year becomes the main structuring factor. The Monte Carlo catastrophe happens on March 10, which in 1886 was Ash Wednesday – or as Tripplinówna writes – “the very Ash Wednesday.”³²² Such temporal localization becomes part of a broader temporal unit indicated by her article. Namely, the trains crashed a day after the end of the Nice Carnival, which is significant. Tripplinówna argues that the trains crashed because the station master of the Cabbé-Roquebrune station was still “intoxicated with the carnival” and “recklessly blessed the further journey of the Genoa train, even though he was well-informed that the Nice train was ten minutes late and that there is only one line on the rocky track of Cabbé-Roquebrune.”³²³ Why did he do that? Tripplinówna convinces that it was probably because the station master “wanted to be reunited with his friends in Monte Carlo as soon as possible.”³²⁴

The article in *Kłosy* has three main imagery sources. The first is the already mentioned “Monte Carlo: 1866–1886” representation scheme; the second is the Bible, while the third is Tripplinówna's knowledge and experience of the tragedy site and meetings with the wounded. The first source supplies the article's

320 The incoherence stems also from the fact that the author of the article in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* used “reports from foreign papers,” which definitely included the French *L'Univers Illustré* 1617/1886 and *Le Monde Illustré* 1512/1886.

321 See A. Tripplin, “Katastrofa kolejowa na drodze Monte Carlo przedstawiona w świetle rzeczywistym,” *Kłosy* 1083/1886 (April 1).

322 Only one French source mentions the Ash Wednesday: “La catastrophe de Monte Carlo,” *L'Univers Illustré* 1617/1886, p. 180.

323 Tripplin, “Katastrofa kolejowa,” p. 199.

324 Tripplin, “Katastrofa kolejowa,” p. 199.

introduction. However, not directly, because Triplinówna writes that – for a long time – she did not have any opinion on the dreadful consequences of Monte Carlo. She even thought that Europe could use this kind of sewer to gather all sorts of dirt. Therefore, Triplinówna draws an analogy between the Principality of Monaco and a sewage system. This way of thinking says a lot about the culture of that period, as in the second half of the nineteenth century European metropolises strongly invested in sewage and sanitary infrastructure. The weakness of this positive way of thinking and perceiving Monte Carlo as the sewer of Europe emerged when the two trains collided. It appeared that – in such tragic circumstances – the game in the Casino continued. The catastrophe lets Triplinówna make a unique discovery:

Only now am I aware of the deadly influence of that lifestyle on people, of the toxic liquids that it injects into people's hearts, of the progressing indifference that makes people go savage, of the moral lethargy, of the deadly freezing of all emotions, even decency. For the first time in my life, I believe that hypocrisy might be useful as, in this case, it would be justified to follow the popular belief and have the orgy of parties stop, even if only for a week. But no, life goes on, it gallops like wild horses. Just as it used to.³²⁵

The text “Monte Carlo: 1866–1886” is also a source of a different narrative thread, present in the English press and established in *The Globe* reports. According to it, the authorities wanted to hide the real extent of the tragedy. Triplinówna continues:

How many victims and dead were there really? How many dead will be taken from the villas and hospitals in Monaco and Roquebrune? Who would know? Which one of us will steal this secret away from the railroad authorities, doctors, and the Principality of Monaco? It has been decided not to raise alarm among the public, because in the third class there were lonely travelers from various corners of the world and – before anyone would think to inquire about them – the catastrophe would have been long forgotten. So be quiet! We will just say there were three dead and around thirty wounded.³²⁶

The associations with the revelations of *The Globe* are far closer. The article presents a perspective, which is very similar to the one in the English newspaper. In the original, the informer was a French friend, in the Polish version it is an Italian, who is a brother-in-law of a friend from Nice. The details of both accounts are worryingly similar:

I was there several hours after the catastrophe and I can swear that the Italian survivor – a brother-in-law of my friend from Nice and a man who spent the whole night helping

325 Triplin, “Katastrofa kolejowa,” p. 199.

326 Triplin, “Katastrofa kolejowa,” p. 199.

the victims – saw *eight bodies*. He counted them and carried in his arms. [...] Yet, the truth will always find a way to shine through the cracks. Because of these cracks, we know that – if there were forty dead – then there must have been at least a hundred sick, operated, and disabled.³²⁷

This similarity justifies the question what information did Tripplinówna obtain directly? What and when did Tripplinówna see at the tragedy site? I do not deny the possibility that she may have seen and heard what she writes about. However, it seems more probable to me that her perspective was shaped by her previous knowledge about the events; in other words, that experience and knowledge intertwined, modified, and deformed each other. As a result, when Tripplinówna wrote the article for *Kłosy*, she could not separate and sort among those elements. In Tripplinówna's text, there are fragments that we know from other reports, such as the one saying that the bang caused by the collision pulled the casino players away from the tables for a while. The distance from which the author looks may have caused and probably did cause her text to strongly follow other press coverages about Monte Carlo.

The main characters in Tripplinówna's texts are "the victims of that famous Nice carnival." They are those, who from then on would associate Ash Wednesday with pain and suffering. Previously, other catastrophes haunted the Mediterranean coast that make us understand them as biblical *Mane* and *Thekel*. Therefore, the catastrophe from March 10, 1886, probably stands for *Fares*.³²⁸ Tripplinówna's melodramatic surface of the narrative is immersed in a preaching tone. The heartbreaking and moving scenes are supposed to be lessons and set an example. "Katastrofa kolejowa na drodze Monte Carlo" perfectly fits into the climate of an advent retreat and sends a clear message. In the fragment on roulette, Tripplinówna writes, "let it fall into the depths of the sea;" while in the fragment directed to readers: convert!

The monograph *Ku otchłani* (Toward an Abyss) by Teresa Walas is a classic; both for those who want to learn about the first preparatory phase of literary Young Poland and those who wish to see pure structuralism in historical and literary action. The book will be highly satisfying for both groups of readers. The book is an example of magnificent planning, absolute coherence, and flawless style. It is a masterpiece that evokes not only admiration but also professional jealousy. I feel this jealousy each time I read the book and make myself sure that I hold in my hands a splendid achievement of literary scholarship, which

327 Tripplin, "Katastrofa kolejowa," p. 199.

328 Tripplin, "Katastrofa kolejowa," p. 202.

makes me keep silent or at least avoid the subject of Polish decadence in my own writing. I have contemplated many times where does the magnificence of *Ku otchłani* come from, but honest admiration does not agree with attempts at a review. Therefore, I restrain myself to a very brief and highly imprecise summary. The book investigates Polish literature of the late nineteenth century in the context of changes in the positivist worldview, consistently understood as a complex and heterogeneous text that may be presented as a map of judgments. Walas perceives the transformation of this text and the emergence of the decadent worldview as changes in textual topography: cracks and shifts of its elements, and the decomposition of the whole. This dynamics results from a mechanism that Walas borrows from Russian formalists. She writes that “a worldview wears out due to sheer extension in time” and that the truths known for a long time “tire and discourage us;” a view most often expressed by those who were too young to have formed these truths.³²⁹ Walas associates the decay of the Polish positivist worldview with one more premise, namely the confrontation of this worldview with reality, the examination of its philosophical subtleties in light of a normal day, the falsification of its optimistic perspective through individual experience, which very often destroyed the optimism. From this “barbaric” confrontation, from juxtaposing historiosophical generalizations with historical facts, there slowly emerged a text that opposed Polish positivism: first naturalism, and then decadence.³³⁰ Both movements preserved connections to the original text of the positivist worldview. This is why Walas speaks of their palimpsestic structure, in which new decadent writings give rise to fragments that were supposed to make place for the new.

I cannot add anything to the presented characteristics of literary transformations without succumbing to the unhealthy temptation to go down the decadent path. Hence, I pick a more affordable strategy. I want to show how this “barbaric” confrontation could have looked like in a particular artistic project, how the decadent image undermined the positivist framework. Moreover, I want to investigate the process of scrutinizing the general judgment about united humanity boldly heading into the future on a railroad, whose sense and value were to be tested by catastrophes that often happened on real roads. I introduced railroad disasters into my deliberations, because they undoubtedly are the type of events that vividly demonstrate the positivist debt of decadent texts. The railroad is a

329 See T. Walas, *Ku otchłani (dekadentyzm w literaturze polskiej 1890–1905)*, Cracow, 1986, p. 39.

330 See Walas, *Ku otchłani*, p. 40.

symbol of the nineteenth century; it was already such a symbol for those who were the first to experience the comfort of modern travel. Like no other element of technology, the locomotive found home in culture and became a guarantee of civilizational transformations; it allowed us to check how the abstract progress that characterized the whole epoch translates into the comfort and speed of real transportation.

Niemojewski's long poem "W pociągu" (On a Train) first appeared in his debut collection. The text presents a collision of two trains. One of them departs from Warsaw and at a unique moment: the whole city parties, probably because of the carnival's end, and the following Ash Wednesday. I will neither interpret "W pociągu" nor look into its allegorical nature, as the chapter would have to become a whole book. I focused here only on three verses, and I tried to make them as clear as possible. Anyone who would like to undertake further interpretative work would have to bear in mind that the train is completely fictional, the catastrophe is real, and the Warsaw-Monte Carlo route of the train is somewhere in between. In 1883, the first train of Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits between Paris and Constantinople ran on through European tracks. After the launch of Orient Express, the company introduced the "Nice-Rome Express," which passed through Nice and Rome but started in Paris and ended in Brindisi. The company planned two further lines: the "Nord Express" that would connect Paris and St. Petersburg via Warsaw and Berlin, and "Sud Express" from Paris to Lisbon. Articles from *Wędrowiec* informed extensively about these plans and, at that time, young Niemojewski worked for the paper.³³¹ It is possible that this project affected the poet's imagination, but there was also another message that reached the young socialist, namely that only the rich will be able to afford to board the train. Luxury trains will not be for people "who cannot pay twenty-five or thirty franks for a bottle of an ordinary French wine."³³² Niemojewski separated the world presented in "W pociągu" vertically: at the top appear luxury trains with expansive wines and, at the bottom, there is "a crowd of servants" – "it seeks treasures in underground worlds."³³³ Digging for treasures leaves an

331 See S., "Pociągami błyskawicznym na Wschód," *Wędrowiec* 9–10/1889. See also Laplaiche, "L'Orient Express," *La Nature* 575/1884. Poland had to wait for the partial implementation of these plans until 1898, when the first "Northern Express" ran from St. Petersburg through Warsaw and Vienna to Cannes.

332 "Pociągami błyskawicznym. . .," *Wędrowiec* 10/1889, p. 115.

333 Niemojewski, "W pociągu," p. 69. Niemojewski's poem is not the only proof of literary productivity of the catastrophe from March 10, 1886. In the documentation that Zola collected for *The Monomaniac* were clippings from French newspapers with reports

empty grave that one day will embrace the falling trains of the rich. According to Triplinówna, the end comes from above, according to Niemojewski from the social bottom.

* * *

Over a year after the Monte Carlo catastrophe, an earthquake hit the area. The earth quaked on. . . Ash Wednesday. Nice and Genoa suffered the most, while the Principality of Monaco was the least affected.³³⁴ Two years after the railroad crash, *Prawda* newspaper published a humoresque "Gracz z Monte Carlo" (Monte Carlo Gambler) by Ernest Eckstein. The protagonist is a Pole, who came to Menton or San Remo "each year at the end of the season," and before his every departure "visited the well-known palace of the Foreigner's Club." The protagonist perceives gambling as just another activity of the modern world, which poses a new risk, "produced" and embraced with full awareness of possible benefits:

You must admit that if I go from Vienna to the Mediterranean Sea every year, then I gamble with my health or even life, solely for the sake of a small win: the expected relief and entertainment. The train that I take may fall off the rails and, as statistics proves, there is always one unlucky event when there is a certain number of passengers. [...] "Each undertaking," he said, "is more or less a risky bet on *the red*; every merchant personally looking after his business, every ship breaking the ocean waves, every actor entering the stage – they all summon the unpredictable goddess of luck. All the instances that one needs to consider are even more complicated than the game at a table. Yet, whom can these instances stop from opening textile magazines, sending out ships

and comments on the crash. They influenced a few scenes in the book but, most importantly, they were a strong stimulus to write the novel. See M. Kanes, *Zola's "La Bête Humaine." A study in Literary Creation*, Berkeley, 1962, pp. 12–14. Kanes incorrectly dates the event for March 11, 1886.

- 334 "The circumstances were [...] puzzling: last year, the Monte Carlo railroad disaster happened on Ash Wednesday. Today, on the very same day happened the Nice disaster. What simple mind will not allow to be persuaded that it was God who punished people for carnival profanities? Even in the preachers we should suspect no ill will; they conclude on the basis of given facts, and they may believe in their own conclusions. However, there is this fatalism that the Church does not thrive on lush fields, abundant vineyards, and sun, but from plagues, hungers, and fires, which cast fear, bend people's knees. . . and rip a prayer from the chest of a fanatical Arab: *Allahu Akbar!* Isn't it frightening? We shout: curse the cereal that grew on the bloody ground. . . and the cereal stands proudly in the sun with their golden heads and disregard the bodies on which they grow safely, peacefully, and happily." Egrot, "Z Zachodu," *Prawda* 10/1887 (March 5), p. 117.

filled with wool into the sea, or staging plays? [...] Tell me, wouldn't it be better for those people to play *trente et quarante* with one twentieth of their capital?"³³⁵

Exactly one hundred years after the Monte Carlo tragedy, Ulrich Beck published a book that elevated this "manufactured" and consciously undertaken risk to the rank of the indicator of the modern industrialized society.³³⁶ When the first readers had Beck's book in their hands, the news about the explosion in the fourth reactor of the Chernobyl power plant shocked the whole Europe.

335 Eckstein, "Gracz z Monte Carlo," trans. L. B., *Prawda* 31/1888 (August 4).

336 See U. Beck, *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*, Frankfurt am Main, 1986.

Annex

Eliza Orzeszkowa

The Last Love. A Novel [a fragment]

The railroad – what a lovely word. A magic expression that encompasses the nineteenth-century care for material prosperity and intellectual progress. Spaces disappear, nations scattered over all corners of the Earth connect with a knot of mutual learning and common goals; people who push for prosperity send the fruits of their minds to the edges of the world with the speed of a lightning bolt, and numerous travelers hungry for diverse knowledge can quickly stand among the walls of magnificent cities and look from the foot of sky-high mountains at the enormous sea mirrors or listen to the bangs of Alpine debris falling into the abyss

All this is made possible by this black iron comet, with thick long tail of smoke winding in gray far behind it. This comet with its iron body and steam spirit that our simple folk first called a *Satanic* power, and we call the force and factor of civilization – it is the locomotive. Wise men and young people eager for life and play; workers, businessman, naturalists, and economists; humanitarians who always hurry and have no time; the lazy lords of all countries with hands in their pockets and a blasé face who look for ways to occupy their careless existence; nervous ladies in desperate need for healing waters and serious mothers who want their sons to grow morally and intellectually in the vicinity of all the wisest and most beautiful fruits of the earth – they all sing in a choir in honor of the distinguished lady, whose strong spirit quickly drives the iron body, who sharply whistles to the people: “Come to me, and I will take you through space to distant miracles; I will take you to the sources of light, wisdom, work, and joy; I will change an hour into a moment, an impassable distance into a small one – and for this, give me just. . . some coal and water to make my spirits grow strong!”

And they all gather quickly at the call, and pay the tribute to the queen of the nineteenth century. There may be only one lost poet in the crowd, who sighs at the memory of the time blessed for ethereal souls, when no locomotives whistles. . . only virgin forests burred and pipes played; the time when instead of travelling, studying nature and society, girls pastured sheep on green home fields, and boys weaved wreaths for the heads of the girls. Oh! . . . How beautiful it used to be. . . But the prosaic souls of today are deaf to the sighs of late imitators of Arcadian shepherds, so they prefer to travel from one place to another embraced by steam,

to pursue knowledge and wealth rather than milk cows and weave garlands “from roses, lilies, and thyme.”

After all, neither Buckle, who cherishes the inventions of the human mind above all else, nor Stuart Mill, the profound researcher of the sources of prosperity, nor any of the English businessmen, who follow the motto “time is money,” so lively comprehend all the work the iron railroad does for humanity or so eagerly awaits their development – as the poor man who wanders through the lands that the locomotive has not yet reached. When an axis breaks in the mud, and the quickest journey stops; when the wheels turn slowly on dry land, and the poor horses walk heavily with eyes staring at the ground, until fatigue squeezes froth out of their mouths – then the lungs of the hiker push out a sigh of boredom and impatience, and his lips whisper a plea to industry: “O come, locomotive!”

The steam whistle has been known to the Thames, the Seine, the Elbe, and even the Vistula River. The citizens of these blissful lands have been cutting through space with the speed of a bird already when the lands at the beautiful embankments of the Neman River still sighed for the miracle called locomotive.³³⁷ In the summer heat, on the wide roads of the embankment, heavy coaches hitched with many horses dragged on through the sand, their wheels creaked and moaned like the souls of the damned in hell. And when rainy autumn came, the carriages and coaches stuck in the wet ground, horses fell in deep puddles, and the traveler was often trapped in the middle of the muddy road with no other way than to call for oxen to drag him out of the great pit.

Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841–1910) – writer, novelist.

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337 The town where the action of *The Last Love* happens bears resemblance to Druskienniki. The Warsaw-Petersburg railroad came close to the town in 1862. Trains arrived at the Porzecze station, and a direct connection to Druskienniki was constructed only in 1934.

Andrzej Niemojewski**“On a Train”***Farewell*

The bell rings already. . . Ah, goodbye Warsaw!
 Last tear shines at the eyelid.
 I must fly to fight life, though I feel melancholic and sentimental
 I must fly, oh, fly, merry Warsaw!
 The man-bird has spread his wings.

Our steed whistled with its nares, it pants fogs,
 Smoke belched out the chimney in gray,
 Over there a crowd hurries toward us – abandon hope!
 The century-train waits not, it will laugh at the latecomers. . .
 We depart – be well Warsaw!

The iron Bucephalus snorts with sparks and flies,
 The world dances around us lively.
 Winds blow, carriages like rows of centuries
 Follow the dragon that pounds and flies
 Always onward, oh merry Warsaw!

Oh fly iron dragon! Wheels boom on rails,
 A wreath of sparks entwines us like blood,
 Smoke-veil with winds waves at the front,
 Oh onward! Oh onward! The underground thunder calls –
 Fly with us merry Warsaw!

The Station

We stop. . . Smoke belches and rolls below
 Like from Cains' bloody offering.
 Did the train fell of the rails? Did a wheel broke?
 Does a signal ring that a jam is near?
 Fly dragon? What holds you in place?! . .

Fly dragon, boom with your chest: rejoice! Rejoice!
 Hah, what is it? A clamor? Steam whizzes?
 You splashed feet with blood and bashfully stop –
 You dragon trampled with wheels on a body
 Of an unfortunate crushed victim. . .

People come running from everywhere and roar like a storm,
 Hurling ominous curses.
 Hah dragon, your deaf! Smoke from lungs emerges,
 You scoff at the victims! A blood rose glows on your chest –
 Onward, onward, onward! . . .

Like an iron genius in a crown of clouds
 And a red peeper on the forehead
 You fly, you glow, and your wings blow into distance –
 And whomever your bosom meets will be overthrown,
 Overthrown and thrown under the wheels.

Like a demon thirsty of blood, thirsty of tears, thirsty always
 On wings of whirling steam you run –
 Like an arrow shot from an iron bowstring
 You run forward on a stormy road in a whizz
 And brutally sweep victims.

A Tourist

Among boom and whizz she leans by the window
 A very young tourist stops,
 She leans her slender arms against the pane –
 Pensiveness on her face, a sigh in the bosom
 And eyes – a pair of depths, a double paradise!

“Oh, lady, gray fog covers the horizon,
 Fleeting thought begins the play of dreams.
 Let’s chat! The run brings people closer. . .
 Do you travel far? Do you come from afar?
 Where’s your land, family, and fellow countrymen?

Pray tell why do you run through the world from one end to another
 Through life’s illusory morning?
 Where is your mother? Does her burning tear
 Does not ruffle the caresses of maiden fantasies?
 But first – do you have a lover. . .?”

Among boom and whizz in a rushing carriage
 Wild laughter knocks on panes.
 A figure from fog in front of me, her face burns purple,
 Passion fires from eyebrows, pulsates in her bosom,
 And eyes – these two black suns!

Among boom and whizz thunder wheels below us,
 The world fades in foggy distance. . .
 A fiery breath blew close in my face already,
 Among boom and whizz a hand grasps my hand,
 And a craze of speech burns her lips:

“Give me your arm! . . . You ask where is my mother, countrymen?
 You ask what goal shines at the end of the way?
 Oh poet! . . . Fly with me, let us fly away like birds!
 Bread with salt on a platter await us in my villa
 And pleasure will decorate the threshold for us. . .

In my villa hiss foamy cups,
 Trees play secret music,
 Bindweed entwined slender columns –
 On flower down under the shadow of a curtain
 Dream-demon waves at the heat with his wings. . .

Every day a crowd of servants weaves me new dresses,
 A faithful crowd in smoke and sweat,
 Every day it braids me garlands of flowers,
 Every day it seeks treasures in underground worlds
 Among smoke, among the thudding of hammers. . .

Give me your hand! We will fall asleep in the hour of rapture
 Careless to the riddle of tomorrow. . .
 Where is my country? My country is where the current of gold flows –
 Family? I have only enemies in my family –
 And mother? I killed my mother. . .

Because my mother is Past and it already lies in a coffin
 And my foot presses on the lid!
 I don't care about tomorrow! One believes only in "today"
 On the wings of genius, in iron clothes –
 Fly with me – for I am Europe!. . ."

The Triumphant Run

How the clouds lazily drag on the sky,
 How the stars glow dark today,
 How loud do we fly! – Fog obscures the eye again
 And I sigh from the depths of my breast:
 "Europe, you golden maiden of winds!"

My sigh is taken by a group of gales
 Over deaf Masurian land.
 And when the train pulls the nomad on rails
 He writes a chorus to the thundering song of the wheels:
 "Europe, you golden maiden of winds!"

From the game of gales, from the thunder of wheels rages the strophe-Tytania
 And she flies away through the funnel.
 The iron snake-train disperses the border patrols,
 This is a winged monument for the equality of nations,
 It wrapped up the breast of the world with a band.

A proud run, gigantic, a borderless, edgeless run
 Deafens us with its blizzard,
 But let us look through the window of a carriage

And maybe we see specters in an ominous row
That blow at us in our insane run.

We pass by a line of cottages in a poor village,
Before the train disappears on its wheels,
Through hole-ridden roofs patched with wicker
Wind blows and mixed voices flow into the night:
“What have you given us, Europe!”

We enter a dark wood, wake up the dreamy forest,
And from the shadows with the pupil of a lantern
Rises folk-specter begging for hope,
It blocks our way and howls in turn:
“Europe, you awful deluding maiden!”

Oh Europe, the century put triumph on your head,
An era of conquerors, power, and gold. . .
Hah, let humanity drown in the dark night –
And you fly away with the army of conquerors in the carriage
Let the folk hurl its curses in vain.

At the Destination

When the train-hurricane blew through the iron road,
Grimly blowing heat through the funnel,
Suddenly the pipe signaled with hostility,
The guard grew pale, jumped and moved back with fear,
Dust fell and wrapped us in a cloud.

A terrible thunder roared, fires blew
As if the world broke with a thud.
A dragon flew into a dragon, they checked their strengths
And in clutches fell down still smoking
Through muzzles with sparks and thunder.

Among bangs and grating as if from a hells' funnel
A column of fires and firebrands erupts.
Smoke blew, a choir of groans begins around us. . .
This is the end of the triumph! . . . I looked. . . a ruin!
A dead body smoking with charred remains! . . .

The two dragons in deadly embrace were panting,
Smashed, crushed two dragons.
Oh you proud giants! No longer will you fall to frenzy,
Your steel wings ceased cutting through gales,
You proud prophets of culture! . . .

Day and night with curses and pains did thousands
Forged your giant bulks,

They welcomed sun and blessed the sun
When lifting their hammers without end, without end –
And now you just sleep in the smoke of ruins?! . . .

Hey dragons! Your dance with the world
Lasted a whole century around the globe.
After so many achievements, so many sacrifices,
You proud monsters stop at the destination,
At the destination of your pilgrimage to grave.

With you the small group that caught your neck,
Dreaming the triumph of the iron culture,
To chase their greedy visions around the world,
It now crumbles, falls into death's slumber,
The slumber of horror, slumber of subdued nature. . .

But the world keeps on living in the distance, it roars and chases
After the specter of the centuries to come.
What of it that a small group fell into an abyss?!
The world-train thunders onward with a wreath of stars on its head –
Until one day it will fall out of its tracks.

Andrzej Niemojewski (1864–1921) – publicist, poet, novelist, writer.

First printed in: A. Niemojewski, *Poezje*, Cracow, 1891, pp. 65–74.

Chapter Four Insane Run. . . Melodrama as a Railroad Genre

*He understood that no dam would be able to stop the
insane run. . .*

– Gustaw Daniłowski, “Pociąg” (A Train), *Głos*, 20-21/1898.

1. “Dramat w tunelu” (A Tragedy in the Tunnel; 1889)

In 1889, one hundred years after the outbreak of the French Revolution, news from Paris electrified Europe and the whole West. At the beginning of May, the French opened with splendor the Exposition Universelle, an event organized regularly since 1851. A month after the opening ceremony, the admiration for modernity that boomed from the pages of French articles – even if for a brief moment – succumbed to fear: news spread around Europe about a great flood that devastated several towns in Pennsylvania, leveled Johnstown, and killed a few thousand people. Shortly after, newspapers reported a train crash near the Irish city of Armagh, with extremely tragic consequences: the detached part of the train with students on a school trip rolled down the hill and hit another passenger train. There were mostly children in the cars, so they constituted the majority of the victims.³³⁸ Exposition Universelle of 1889 and both catastrophes have more in common than just time. All of them resemble the turbulent history of modernization, even though each of them does it in a different way. The Exposition presented the good sides of this process. It demonstrated magnificent machines that reliably serve people. The catastrophe in Pennsylvania and the crash in the Northern Ireland cast doubt on this reliability. Magnificent Paris showed the bright face of modernity, while small Johnstown and Armagh – its

338 The information about both catastrophes reached Poland almost simultaneously. This is visible, for instance, in the issue of *Gazeta Lwowska* 139/1889 (June 19), which shared further details of the event in “Katastrofa w Pensylwanii” right next to a note about the Armagh catastrophe, “Katastrofa pod Armagh.” Many researchers commented on the drama of Johnstown, and I use two books: M. Gow, *Johnstown Flood. The Day the Dam Burst*, New York, 2003; D. Leathers, *The Johnstown Flood 1889*, Hockessin, 2007. In *The Runaway Train. Armagh 1889*, Newton Abbot, 1971, J. R. L. Currie presents the course of the Armagh catastrophe events.

dark reverse. Most of the texts from the 1889 issues of *Wędrowiec* discussed what may be admired in Paris, which means that the most articles reported on a 300-meters-tall steel Eiffel tower and spectacular electric lighting. However, in August, the readers of *Wędrowiec* encountered a text that did not fit into the picture of Parisian admiration. I speak of the novella “Dramat w tunelu.”³³⁹

“Dramat w tunelu” transfers the reader to the moment, when the power of technology and engineering genius celebrate its first triumph. The story is trivial. Two young men want to marry a beautiful girl. One of them causes the death of the other and – when he stands in front of the beloved girl – he finds out that she had already madly fallen in love with the dead opponent. The drama of the engaged girl overlaps with the drama of the rejected man who decides to kill himself. It is easy to guess that this is a scheme of folk tales about two brothers divided by the love for the same woman. Moreover, it is also an echo of a story about competition, in which, at certain point, the strong desire to succeed makes one of the sides commit a crime. Strongly rooted in folk tradition, “Dramat w tunelu” is a novella about modernity, which brings to life meanings absent in folklore. In this case, the backdrop for the clash of human desires are machines. The world in the novella is a part of the same world that lured the visitors of Champ de Mars or the Eiffel Tower. What we can call modern is first of all the rail tunnel. It is not just a tunnel but a several-kilometer-long excavation through the Alps under the Mont Cenis massif, executed by an army of workers, who used the most modern technology. The teams excavating the tunnel simultaneously from the French and Italian side reached each other on Christmas of 1870. The novella in *Wędrowiec* is about the intense work of teams just before the Christmas. Another modern element are the two male protagonists. They are workers, who operate a “rock-punching machine” from the Italian side. One of them is Italian. His name is Pietro Bamba. The other, Wilhelm Brüner, is an Austrian army deserter, who “fled from the regiment during the war in 1859 and hoped to hide safely among the construction workers” The only person who knows about it is Bamba. The action of the novella takes place in Europe that enters modernity. Therefore, Europe becomes unified, rejects locality, breaks traditional social structures, and – thanks to the developing rail and telegraph system – forms an “imagined community” supervised by increasingly efficient control mechanisms. At the crucial moment in his efforts to be with the girlfriend, Bamba decides for a denunciation. The measure of modernity shows in

339 See L. F. [Lucjan Falkiewicz?], “Dramat w tunelu. Nowela,” *Wędrowiec* 33/1889 (August 4 [16]), pp. 387–388. All quotes below come from this edition.

the ease with which Bamba's denunciation reaches the relevant authorities and with which "order to arrest [Wilhelm]" comes from Vienna to the small Italian village of Bardonecchia, lost somewhere in the Alps, where the two rivals live. Finally, the third modern element is the suicidal death of Pietro, rejected by the girl. This death could look quite ordinary: a desperate boy could hang himself, throw himself from a cliff, or drown himself in a mountain river. . . . However, Pietro's death is as modern as it is cruel. When the young man learns of his defeat in love, he decides to stand in front of the machine that drills the rock: "Blood gushed everywhere. . . . Steel crushed bones, tore flesh and muscles, and drilled the man. . . . His body vibrated in convulsions. The blades kept going forward, hitting with infinite force, nailing the man to the granite, like a butterfly with a pin to the wall." The presented world that reveals its modernity to the reader holds only one character that remains faithful to the premodern era. She is a beautiful and passive peasant (*contadina*) Margerita, who personifies social order that had to fall apart to make space for the new one.

The novella from *Wędrowiec* is a melodrama. The simple and tested story scheme operates with extreme emotions to foreground a world of not only people and their great passions – but also machines. The latter assume a double role: that of a devoted ally and a soulless tool for killing. Melodrama requires such a combination; a mixture of hot desires and cool precise machines. The subtitle declares "Dramat w tunelu" to be a novella, but it is not difficult to imagine it as a play. The novella is concise, has one main thread, and clearly exposes its climax and finale: Brüner's arrest and Bamba's tragic suicide in the tunnel. The staging of this work would not exceed the technical capabilities of late nineteenth-century theater. Moreover, such a play could perfectly underline its capabilities: especially the scene in which the monstrous blade of the "machine" cuts Bamba into pieces.³⁴⁰ In such case, the melodramatic character of the play would mean a machine-ness on both the thematic level (construction of the Alpine tunnel) and the artistic means used to present on stage the "(melo) drama." A film would offer even greater adaptation possibilities. Trick scenes so willingly used by the first producers would allow them to show Bambo's death in a very suggestive manner. The melodramatic character of the novella from

340 The melodrama willingly used scenes that make the spectator feel terrified. In Joseph Arthur's play *Blue Jeans*, the scene when the villain was about to cut off the protagonist's head with a buzz-saw evokes exactly such emotions. Scenes of this kind could sometimes undermine the realism of the performance: the viewers' fear transferred from a fictional character to the real actor. See Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity. Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*, New York, 2001, pp. 183–185.

Wędrowiec becomes most apparent when one looks at it from the perspective of all that the cinematograph brought into the art from the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. It was a very sophisticated machine, which allowed one to produce previously unattainable visual effects.³⁴¹

As researchers of melodrama underline, the genre was a product of rapid cultural changes provoked by the French Revolution.³⁴² The Revolution contributed to the popularity of plays that depict sharp contrasts, sudden plot twists, and bloodcurdling events. It convinced the audience that nothing is impossible in the chaos of the Revolution. The newborn genre presented a “disenchanted” world and the disintegration of social ties, which for ages had been regulated by religion. In melodrama, the order based on kinship is lost. Children separate from their parents. They do it usually of their own free will, but most often they are under someone’s pressure. Moreover, brothers and sisters become mortal enemies, often unknowingly. Social changes overlap with political changes, because people marginalized by the traditional order – like workers and women – demand

341 Leopold Mirecki, “Za kulisami teatru kinematograficznego,” *Biesiada Literacka* 42/1912, p. 306, unveils the details behind the early productions and explained the creation process of impressive shots: “The way to depict a thief’s fancy escape and the pursuit is as follows. In a suitably decorated studio, the actor dressed as a thief commits robbery. This is where one part of the photo shoot ends. The second part takes place in the street. From the window of the first or higher floors they throw down a mannequin. This is supposed to be the thief jumping out of the window. The mannequin falls to the ground and this is where the second part of the photo shoot ends. Now, the actor lies down in the place of the mannequin and rushes through the streets chased by a crowd. These three parts form a continuous scene in a cinematographic production.” Another trick is to replace real people and machines with specially prepared models: “People reproduce railroad and automobile catastrophes, air wars, and similar by means of miniature models of people, trains, or planes that move automatically among appropriate decorations.” The anonymous author of the short text “Film a rzeczywistość” (Film and Reality), *Kurier Lwowski* 198/1914, divides films into “counterfeit” films and such that show “real events, despite their impossible character.” Sometimes, a trick only makes it easier to shoot a scene: “For example, a man jumps from a bridge to the roof of a train. In this case, only the speed of the carriages could be accelerated on the film, by appropriate use of the camera. The actor really has to jump which requires dexterity and consciousness of the mind, even though the train goes slowly. Moreover, the actor partly risks that he will become disabled.”

342 From here on, I refer to the part of Nicholas Daly’s books; see chapter “Sensation, Drama, the Railway, and Modernity,” in Daly’s *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860–2000*, Cambridge, 2004. See also Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity. Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*, chapter “Meanings of Melodrama.”

more power. The distinct feature of the new world is the reorganization of the notions of time and space. There is less time, so it becomes an exchangeable value, a commodity, while previously unimportant virtues like punctuality and attention to details gain in significance. Distances shorten due to the rapidly developing rail and telegraph network connecting Europe and America in the 1860s, while the Western world transforms into a single socioeconomic mechanism. According to the popular idea, the railroad turns the whole of France into a suburb of Paris.

The modernity of the melodrama is present above all in its urban character, in the setting of action in the reality of great European metropolitan areas. If modern France becomes a suburb of Paris, it follows that Paris's character spreads to all railroad lines that lead to the capital, with all the consequences. Trains distribute Paris to the most distant locations. The construction of a railroad line, especially the construction of a several-kilometer-long Alpine tunnel, means the export of the metropolitan spirit. Apparently, the pavements in Paris, London, Berlin, Warsaw, and New York become the stage for sharp contrasts of modernity. On the pavements, affluence and extreme poverty live next to each other. Moreover, a new entity appears on that stage – the unpredictable crowd. Furthermore, the metropolitan character indicates a contrast of a different kind. The modern order supported by institutions of increased (panoptic) control functions alongside nontransparency, mystery, and misdemeanor. Beside chic streets and bright squares, pretty buildings and well-maintained parks, the city retains its dark side: sewage and water supply networks, underground warehouses and – last but not least – railroads.

Nicolas Daly traces the connections between melodrama and modernity even further. Daly puts forward a thesis about the “railroad” character of this genre.³⁴³ There are a few reasons for this statement. First, the railroad station building is the quintessence of a big city. This limited space outlines the basic features of a modern metropolis with exceptional clarity. The seemingly homogeneous metropolitan community separates here into classes that use different waiting rooms, different restaurants, and different cars. Moreover, the station building is a place of close encounters of people and machines; sometimes dangerously close. At the station building it becomes evident that the modern (capitalistic) economy requires the continuous circulation of raw materials and goods, and the

343 See Daly, *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860–2000*, pp. 21–25, who does not call melodrama a railroad genre. However, he speaks of the big popularity of “railway rescue plays.”

increased mobility of people. The railroad serves the melodrama as a means that enables the audience to reach theaters. This intimate relationship between art and technology became even closer when underground rail networks enriched large cities of the western world like London, Paris, Berlin, and New York. Locomotives often appeared onstage as the most famous nineteenth-century machines. The railroad allowed for an important melodramatic motif of the “last-moment rescue.”

The “last-moment rescue” motif may be regarded as an extract of melodrama, a manifestation of artistic efforts that sought to evoke strong emotions in spectators or readers: fuel their fears, make them cry, and – finally – offer relief. In the 1868–1869 theatrical season, the play *After Dark: A Drama of London Life* enjoyed great popularity at the Princess’s Theatre in London. The culminating point of the play was the rescue from inevitable death of the protagonist tied to the London underground railroad tracks by criminals. Time plays an extremely important role in this scene. It turns out that there is a basement in the vicinity of the railroad tracks, where the villains managed to lock Old Tom. Through a small opening, Old Tom sees a motionless figure lying on the tracks and recognizes that it is his companion from the army, Captain Gordon Chumley. The approaching train whistles in the distance. Old Tom begins a desperate battle to break down the wall and enlarge the hole enough to get out of the cell and save his old companion. The train is getting closer, the wall resists. . . . At the last moment, Old Tom gets out of the trap, pulls the captain off the tracks, and seconds later the heavy train rushes past them at full speed.³⁴⁴

344 See Daly, *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860–2000*, pp. 22–25. The mentioned scene belongs to the repertoire of classic melodramatic tricks. However, it went down in history for a different reason. In December 1868, a few months after the premiere of *After Dark*, New York court ruled on the case Augustin Daly versus Dion Boucicault. Augustin Daly was an American playwright, director, and theater critic, and Dion Boucicault was an English writer and the author of the play. Augustin Daly’s lawsuit referred to the theft of the “railroad scene,” which was supposed to come from the third act of the play *Under the Gaslight* staged in New York in 1867. In this “railroad scene,” the young heroine asks the railroadman to lock her up in a wooden storage facility at the station in order to safely wait for the morning train. At some point, the girl notices villains who tie the body of a man to the tracks. After the bandits leave, she begins the dramatic race against time. In the distance, we hear the train’s whistle. The efforts of the woman who seeks to get out are futile. . . . At the last moment, the woman uses an axe, runs out of the storage and releases the poor fellow, who is a one-handed civil-war veteran. Seconds later, the train comes in. The court upheld the position of the prosecutors and found that the copyright law had been violated – not by copying

According to Nicholas Daly, “last-moment rescue” reflects the fears of the English audience caused by modern technology, which constantly presses on the substance of the everyday life. To a large extent, railroad disasters fueled these fears, because they were the most vivid proof that modernity has a dark side and – besides undeniable benefits – it may also lead to the suffering of the innocent. One of the most tragic railroad accidents occurred near Abergele, on August 20, 1868. Detached from the rest of the freight train, cars rolled down the track and were hit by an express train. Because of the crash and the heat from the firebox, the paraffin oil transported in the freight wagons started to burn. The front part of the machine immediately went up in flames. The doors closed from the outside annulled any chances of rescue. More than thirty passengers died in the fire.³⁴⁵ The audiences of English melodramas that watched the scenes of miraculous rescue from the approaching train had a vivid memory of how dangerous and unpredictable modern technology may be, and how fatally a journey may end even if nothing foreshadows a miserable end.

What was the extraliterary context of the Polish novella “Dramat w tunelu?” First, when we reconstruct the knowledge of its readers, we should recall the catastrophe in Pennsylvania, about which *Wędrowiec* informed extensively in material enriched with graphics and a map. The catastrophe seemed to have been only caused the forces of nature. However, modern technology increased the size of the tragedy. Therefore, we should speak of a technological catastrophe, in which the whim of nature acted only as a trigger. The heavy rain at the end of May 1889 caused the water in rivers to swell and consequently break the primitive dam that heightened the river level several kilometers away from Johnstown. The huge flowing masses of water encountered a railroad bridge that formed a

the words but by using a construction based on the same event sequence. This was a precedent that heralded a new, twentieth-century way of thinking about intellectual property which emerged in conjunction with the development of cinema. See A. Daly, *Under the Gaslight. A Totally Original Drama or Life and Love in These Times, in Five Acts*, New York [1867], pp. 42–43; “Daly v. Palmer et al. Case no. 3552, Circuit Court, S.D., New York.” Available at: YesWeScan: The Federal Cases.

345 See Daly, *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860–2000*, pp. 22–23. I present the circumstances of the Abergele mishap after L. T. C. Rolt, *Red for Danger. A History of Railway Accidents and Railway Safety Precautions*, London, 1966, pp. 181–184. The practice of closing the compartment doors from the outside by the conductors increased the size of the disaster near Versailles from May 8, 1842. The accident near Włochy on July 13, 1900, which left injured the famous Polish writer Władysław Stanisław Reymont, reminded Poland of the disastrous consequences that this practice may have.

new dam – along with remains of buildings and branches of trees – which rapidly increased the river level even further. Johnstown sank in a flash:

Those who tried to save their lives and climbed to the top of the colossal barricade could eventually only envy the dead their fate. The raging element surrounded the brief survivors and they felt that there is no hope for them. . . . The injured and wounded moaned in pain. Other ran around the barricade like madmen making superhuman yet futile efforts to get on the bridge. Women and children desperately called for help that no one could give them. . . . Then, for an unexplained reason, a fire broke out on the barricade, which only worsened the tragedy.³⁴⁶

An illustration “Zalew i pożar w Johnstown” (Flood and Fire in Johnstown) completes this part of the dramatic report.³⁴⁷ The news of the tragedy in Johnstown reached Pittsburgh by telegraph. However, the “young miss”³⁴⁸ operator did not manage to send the last telegram: “Water flooded the house and the entire telegraph station. The office hours of the young operator, who did not leave the post for even a minute, ended the very same moment as her life.”³⁴⁹ It is only when the telegram from a station below Johnstown reaches Pittsburgh that its inhabitants find out about the tragedy. The operator sends the terrible news: “A terrible disaster must have happened somewhere up the river. The water brings hundreds of corpses and some still alive.”³⁵⁰ Pittsburgh sends help. There is no one to be saved in Johnstown as the rescue teams confront the terrifying situation: “On June 5, the barricade under the railroad bridge was still on

346 “Katastrofa w Pensylwanii,” *Wędrowiec* 28/1889, p. 330; “Katastrofa w Stanach Zjednoczonych,” *Gazeta Toruńska* 146/1889 (June 28), p. 2.

347 The graphics published first in *Harper’s Weekly* was very popular. *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* published the same graphics on 341/1889 (July 13) with a note “Wylew wód” (Water run). The whole section “Katastrofa w Johnstownie (Stany Zjednoczone)” consisted of four pictures.

348 In the version of the events presented by *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 341/1889, p. 31, the telegraph operator is an older lady, who “has served for over twenty-five years as an operator in Johnstown.”

349 “Katastrofa w Pensylwanii,” *Wędrowiec* 28/1889, p. 330.

350 “Katastrofa w Pensylwanii,” p. 330. Huge masses of flowing water caused the railroad disaster. In the illustration’s explanation, one of the graphics in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 341/1889, pp. 21–31 shows “Pociąg na drodze żelaznej, zaskoczony przez powódź” (Train on Tracks Trapped by a Flood). In the explanation to the illustrations, we read: “Two trains crashed on the Pennsylvania line, some of the passengers barely survived, most drowned in the currents of foamy waters.” An article from *Wędrowiec* illustrates this episode with an illustration titled “Przejście pociągu w chwili zalewu” (Train’s Passage At the Time of a Flooding).

fire.”³⁵¹ *Gazeta Warszawska* added a social context to the catastrophe in one of its publications. The point is that the artificial lake with the poorly maintained dam, which did not withstand the pressure of water, was the property of “rich citizens of the city of Pittsburgh.” All of them belonged to a fishing and hunting club. The lake was located at a height of around 200–300 feet above the town. Death took its biggest toll on nearby poor Johnstown, with victims being mostly the workers of the local steel factory.³⁵² It can be said that inequality found its geographical expression in Johnstown: the tragedy was aggravated by the neglect of the richest and affected the poorest.³⁵³

In the middle of June 1889, the catastrophe of an Irish train carrying children moved the whole Europe. Polish dailies and magazines reported on the event with poignant illustrations accompanying articles. The image published in *Kłosy* drew readers’ attention to the most painful aspect of the Irish hecatomb. The inscription at the top identifies what one observes: “A catastrophe on the railroad near Armagh in Ireland.” However, another inscription under the illustration suggests an interpretation: “The slope of the embankment where most of the children corpses were found.”³⁵⁴ This means that the event near Armagh was not just a catastrophe but a new “Massacre of the Innocents.” The victims of technological imperfection were children, while the commentary under the illustration underlines exactly this dimension of the catastrophe. If we forget for a moment that we speak of a real event, “the slope of the embankment where most of the children corpses were found” starts sounding like a classic melodrama. We hear the same melodramatic tone, when we suspend our historical knowledge and read the following fragment from a press report:

The last carriages were crushed with passengers inside. Seventy-three people lost their lives, mostly children. Twelve more died later due to injuries. Moreover, 130 people were injured. Some of them so badly that one can doubt in their recovery. Along the track, there are corpses of children, their gloves, umbrellas, straw hats, and dresses. The despair of the arriving parents was indescribable.³⁵⁵

351 “Katastrofa w Pensylwanii,” *Wędrowiec* 28/1889, p. 331.

352 See “Katastrofa w Pensylwanii,” *Gazeta Warszawska*, 146/1889.

353 The flood affected also the rich: “One of the Johnstown millionaires thanked God, for he managed to save his family and his own life, even though all that he had left was the shirt he wore.” “Katastrofa w Pensylwanii,” *Wędrowiec* 28/1889, p. 331.

354 “Katastrofa kolejowa pod miastem Armagh w Irlandii,” *Kłosy* 1253/1889 (July 4 [June 22]), p. 4.

355 “Katastrofa kolejowa pod Armagh,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 160/1889 (July 16); “Katastrofa kolejowa pod Armagh,” *Dziennik Polski* 203/1889 (July 24).

Reports of the flood in Pennsylvania brought to mind comparisons with the Book of Genesis. The Irish tragedy made its way into the public opinion as a new version of the “Massacre of the Innocents.” This is also why we may speak of the similarity between the devices used in the accounts of real tragic events from Johnstown and Armagh and the story of a fictitious suicide in a tunnel in the Polish novella.³⁵⁶

The novella “Dramat w tunelu” has yet another context important. It is the tripartite article “Wielkie tunele Alp” (Great Alpine Tunnels)³⁵⁷ printed in *Wędrowiec*. The newspaper published the article next to reports about the Parisian exhibition. One cannot resist the impression that this was an attempt to exhibit this nontransferable achievement that deserved to have a place in Champ de Mars.³⁵⁸ The Alpine tunnel materialized the engineering genius of the nineteenth century. In this sense, it seems a twin brother of the Crystal Palace, London’s pride during the first World Exhibition and a symbol of the architectural aspirations of the time. The Crystal Palace and the Alpine tunnel are different in many respects. However, the essential here is the feature they share: both buildings overcome the deficiencies of the natural world. The glass palace combines safety of a closed space with the benefit of sunlight. The Alpine tunnel connects what nature separated. The reader of *Wędrowiec* knew well what the value of a great railroad tunnel is when he read the melodramatic story about the tragic end of friendship and love.

2. “Pociąg” (Train; 1897)

How did the Polish writer Daniłowski create his novella “Pociąg?” The question is not new. I repeat it deliberately to return to the question raised by Stanisław Cywiński in 1938, and to recall the dispute that arose around the subject. Cywiński accused Daniłowski of the non-original character of “Pociąg.” Leon

356 Matthew Beaumont, “Introduction,” in: *The Railway of Modernity. Time, Space and The Machine Ensemble*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 35–36, offers the idea that the English press reports about railroad disasters have a melodramatic character. Beaumont connects it to the ongoing secularization of biblical fears that happened through the secular modernization project.

357 See L. Simonin, “Wielkie tunele Alp,” *Wędrowiec* 25–27/1889.

358 In 1906, when Milan hosted the World Exhibition, a realistic model presented the newly constructed Simplon Tunnel. See the chapter “A Kiss in the Tunnel: Three Heterotopies of Modernity” in this book.

Kruczkowski defended the already deceased Daniłowski.³⁵⁹ I will be interested in the circumstances of the novella’s creation. However, I will address only the matters that the participants of the discussion did not take into consideration. I will begin with a banal issue, very conspicuous when one looks at the dispute from today’s perspective. “Pociąg” conquered readers’ hearts twice. First, as literature and – thirty years later – as the script basis for *Bunt krwi i żelaza* (The Rebellion of Blood and Iron). In the spring of 1927, critics described the film as “a great triumph of Polish cinematography.”³⁶⁰ Unfortunately, we cannot verify these rave reviews honestly today as all the copies of the film are lost. We may only try to reconstruct it on the basis of a few preserved photographs and comments of the film’s creators and reviewers, published in dailies and specialist magazines.³⁶¹ Neither Cywiński nor Kruczkowski considered the later script-incarnation of “Pociąg,” although both of them had a chance to see and assess *Bunt krwi i żelaza* for themselves in theaters. The author of the script was the film’s director Leon Trystan. The novella “Pociąg” is almost the same age as is cinematography. Therefore, there is no question of the influence of “moving images” on the story. The links between the literary work and the film message are obvious, but one has to look for them in the area of received solutions, which both Daniłowski and the first filmmakers encountered, and which constituted a well-established tradition at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. This tradition was melodrama with the plot twist of “last-moment rescue.”

Before I try to face the question of how Daniłowski created “Pociąg,” I will ask about something more basic and seemingly simpler: when did he create

359 See S. Cywiński, “Jak powstał ‘Pociąg’ Daniłowskiego?,” *Kultura* 1/1938 [Poznań]; L. Kruczkowski, “Jasne, panie profesorze!,” *Albo-Albo* 3/1938.

360 See “Wielki tryumf polskiej kinematografii. Jak realizowałem *Bunt krwi i żelaza* podług nowel Daniłowskiego? W rozmowie z reżyserem p. Leonem Trystanem,” *Łódzkie Echo Wieczorne* 101/1927. The basis for the film were two novellas: “Ostatnie dzieło” and “Pociąg.” The silent film premiered on March 17, 1927. See an advert in *Warszawianka* 75/1927, (March 17).

361 See also the column “Film. Daniłowski na ekranie,” *A, B, C* 83/1926 about the purchase of the rights to the film *Ostatnie dzieło* and *Pociąg* by Daniłowski; “Wielki tryumf kinematografii; Włodzimierz Ordyński i Wanda Zawiszanka” [photograph from the film], *Światfilm* 8/1927, p. 3. Under the photograph, we read that after its premiere in Warsaw, the Trystan’s film “generated lots of interest and rave reviews;” [column] “Z ekranu. *Bunt krwi i żelaza* i *Kochanka Szamoty* (Kino-teatr Warszawa),” *Nowy Dziennik* 103/1927; J. Kurek, [column] “Kino,” *Zwrotnica* 12/1927, p. 266. According to the reviewer, “only the railroad episode in the film is convincing;” M. G. [M. Godlewski], “Z mojej kariery” [interview with G. Daniłowski], *Famulus* 4/1927.

the novella? In the culture of print, to set a date that indicates the presentation of the work to the public one usually needs to determine the date of the first print. In many cases, the creators of bibliographic compendiums succor literary historians. The former note the time and place of the first publication in a work index of the author as it is often part of a bibliographic entry. The bibliography of Polish literature *Nowy Korbut* is priceless for Daniłowski's researchers and others, but it offers an unusual note in the case of "Pociąg." In the list of contents of Daniłowski's debut volume *Nego*, published in 1899, we read that "Pociąg" was published twice before: in *Głos* 20–21/1898 and in the book *Prawda. Książka zbiorowa dla uczczenia dwudziestopięciolecia działalności Aleksandra Świętochowskiego 1870–1895*, Lviv 1899.³⁶² Therefore, if we assume that the two earlier publications of "Pociąg" preceded the one in *Nego*, then we should ask: in what order? If all publications of the novella were identical, an attempt to establish their order would be a manifestation of unproductive pedantry. The entry in *Nowy Korbut* merits trust just like the whole bibliography. However, there are many indications that contemporary Daniłowski studies place similar trust in the bibliography, since none of them reflects on the fact that three subsequent editions of "Pociąg" in *Głos*, *Prawda*, and *Nego* offer significantly different variants of the novella.³⁶³

Some differences appear at first sight, while other require closer reading, which then leads to a rather surprising conclusion. There are more similarities between the versions from *Głos* (1898) and *Nego* (1899) than between those from *Prawda* (1899) and *Nego*. The apparent differences between the versions concern, on the one hand, the metatextual elements, while on the other hand, the fragmentation of the text. In "Pociąg" from *Prawda*, under the text of the novella appears the name of the city Kharkiv, where Daniłowski probably wrote the work. This addition is not included in the magazine version and in the reprint in *Nego*. "Pociąg" in *Głos* has a dedication: "To Mr. Aleksander Świętochowski as a token of my deep respect." However, it appears in a rather unusual place, as it opens "Dokończenie"

362 See entry "Daniłowski Gustaw," in: *Bibliografia literatury polskiej "Nowy Korbut"*, Vol. 13, Warsaw, 1970, p. 401.

363 The author of the most elaborate study of "Pociąg" and the author of a monograph on Daniłowski, Grażyna Legutko, does not take this fact into consideration. See Grażyna Legutko, "Oblicza sensacji. Przypadek nowelistyki Daniłowskiego: fikcja literacka, adaptacja filmowa, plagiat," in: *Sensacja w dwudziestolecu międzywojennym (prasa, literatura, radio, film)*, eds. K. Stępnik, M. Gabryś, Lublin, 2011; G. Legutko, *Niespokojny płomień. Życie i twórczość Gustawa Daniłowskiego*, Kielce, 2011, pp. 104–105.

(The Epilog) printed in issue 21. The previous issue contains the beginning of the novella. In the edition published in *Prawda*, there is no dedication, but it may be assumed that the formula “to Aleksander Świętochowski – Polish writers” that specifies the occasional and dedicatory character of the entire collection plays the same role. In the version from *Nego*, there is no indication of the occasional character of “Pociąg.” As far as the differences in fragmentation are concerned, the version from *Nego* largely copies the paragraph layout of the novella from the magazine edition and later fixed in successive reprints. In the text published in *Prawda*, the paragraphs are larger and more spacious. This is especially visible in the dialogues, which later became very short one- or two-sentence paragraphs. Someone may ask, so what? Is there any point in fighting for what was first? Yes, there is, because – as I said before – the issue of differences is not limited to the above details. Moreover, I do not think that these are just insignificant details. The fact that the oldest version from *Głos* (1898) is more similar to the youngest version from *Nego* (1899) than to the second one from *Prawda* (1899) provokes me to formulate a hypothesis that the order expressed in dates does not correspond to the stages of work on the novella. The first printed version of the novella from the May issues of *Głos* (1898) does not necessarily precede the version from *Prawda* (1899) that the bibliographies note as later. To put it simply, it is worth considering whether the version of “Pociąg” from the collective volume dedicated to Świętochowski was not ready for publication well before the spring of 1898, when Daniłowski submitted his novella to the editorial office of *Głos*.

I do not have any absolute proof to support my thesis, but I am inclined to believe that – chronologically – the first version of “Pociąg” reached its readers as the second one. I do not exclude the possibility that it reached them even as the third one.³⁶⁴ I do not know the date of submitting the volume *Prawda* for publication, but I think that Daniłowski had the text ready already in 1898, because he submitted it to *Głos* editorial office in the spring of the same year. It may be possible that Daniłowski was ready to publish even earlier – in 1897 or 1896 – which was when he studied at the Institute of Technology in Kharkiv. Aleksander Świętochowski’s jubilee was in 1895. The main part of the ceremony was the meeting of the jubilarian with the representatives of artistic circles and a delegation of young people that happened on December 29, 1895 in the Warsaw

364 Mislead by the print dates, Grażyna Legutko writes: “Pociąg” was first published in *Głos* 20–21/1898, then in the debut collection *Nego*, Warsaw, 1899, and finally in *Prawda. Księga zbiorowa dla uczczenia dwudziestopięciolecia działalności Aleksandra Świętochowskiego*, Lviv, 1899.” See *Oblicza sensacji*, p. 303, footnote 1.

headquarters of *Prawda*. We do not know what the stage of works on the publication honoring the jubilant was at the time of the meeting. The author of a monograph about Świętochowski mentions this publication only on the occasion of jubilee celebrations that happened in February 1896 in Vienna.³⁶⁵ However, it is clear from the press reports that the initial draft had to be ready earlier, since people discussed the planned volume already during a meeting in Warsaw.³⁶⁶ I can imagine the simplest possible situation: there appeared delays because some contributors did not meet the deadlines. Among the eighty-five authors whose works celebrated the anniversary of the dignified jubilee, there were great writers like Konopnicka, Orzeszkowa, Prus, Przerwa-Tetmajer, who certainly had their calendars fully booked. There were also young and very young writers, who probably prepared their materials on time. Hence, I suspect that Daniłowski's novella was ready on time. He submitted "Pociąg" in time, which might have been in 1895 or 1896.

The publication of *Prawda* had a considerable delay, but I think it was almost ready in the spring of 1898, when still waiting for the publication in the jubilee collection, Daniłowski decided to publish "Pociąg" in two episodes in *Głos*.³⁶⁷ In *Prawda*, the novella had an occasional character. It was a gift for Świętochowski, an expression of respect that the young writer had for the "Apostle of Truth." Daniłowski expresses this respect in the dedication that appears in *Głos*, although only before "Dokończenie" (The Epilog). This peculiar solution could

365 See M. Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski. Biografia*, Vol. 1, Warszawa, 1987, pp. 455–459.

366 In a note "Jubileusz p. Al. Świętochowskiego," *Gazeta Lwowska* 2/1896, we read: "Regardless of this fact [at a ceremony in Warsaw, the organizers awarded Świętochowski with a silver wreath, occasional speeches, and an album with fragments of his works], Świętochowski's friends will publish a collection of works and establish a Świętochowski scholarship fund to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of his work." We find only laconic information about the same event in "Jubileusz," *Kurier Lwowski* 3/1898: "This [twenty-fifth] anniversary will be commemorated with a joint publication." We find a few more details in "Jubileusz A. Świętochowskiego," *Dziennik Poznański* 2/1896: "To mark the anniversary, it has been decided to establish A. Świętochowski scholarship fund and publish a jubilee book with philosophical and sociological essays. The profit from the book sale will support the fund."

367 One of the sources on which I base my suspicion is *Bibliografia pism Aleksandra Świętochowskiego* (Bibliography of Aleksander Świętochowski's Works). Although the bibliography opens the book published on the twenty-fifth anniversary, it encompasses the output of three decades "until 1897." S. Demby, "Bibliografia pism Aleksandra Świętochowskiego. (1867–1897)," in: *Prawda*, p. ix.

have simply resulted from Daniłowski’s absentmindedness. Maybe Daniłowski wanted to dedicate the novella to Świętochowski but forgot about it and – at the last moment – added the appropriate words to the second installment. The other reason could have been editorial disorder. Maybe Daniłowski prepared the dedication beforehand, someone forgot about it, and after the publication of the first installment, Daniłowski reminded the editorial team to publish it with “Dokończenie.” One thing seems certain: apart from regular readers, Daniłowski cared to address his work to a distinguished person. It was supposed to be a gift that would show Daniłowski’s courtesy. The publication of the novella in *Prawda*, still unpublished in 1898, would regulate these obligations toward Świętochowski. If *Prawda* had been published before May 1898, Daniłowski would not feel obliged to express his admiration for Świętochowski in *Głos* when publishing or, actually, reprinting “Pociąg.” It would have been superfluous to repeat the dedication. However, in May 1898, this courtesy ritual planned for *Prawda* had not yet been performed. Perhaps Daniłowski hoped until the very end that the long overdue *Prawda* would precede the publication of “Pociąg” in *Głos*. Maybe, when Daniłowski realized that there is no chance that *Prawda* predates *Głos*, he decided to show the courtesy toward Świętochowski on his own. It might have been too late to publish the dedication with the first installment so the only thing Daniłowski could do was to add a few kind words at the beginning of “Dokończenie.” *Prawda* appeared a few months after the publication in *Głos*. However, *Prawda* included outdated information: Daniłowski already moved from Kharkiv to Warsaw.

I assume a cautious hypothesis that “Pociąg” in the version that reached the readers in *Prawda* (1899) was prepared much earlier, let us say in 1897. What would the creative process look like if we considered the version from *Prawda* to be the first one? What would then be the direction of changes introduced to the text? Generally speaking, we would witness a gradual withdrawal from melodrama. At this point, we should apply text linguistics and conduct an analysis of what Daniłowski changed and how he did it when preparing “Pociąg” for further reprints in *Głos* from 1898, *Nego* from 1899, along with reissues in 1904, the collection *Dwa głosy* from 1903, *A to się pali tylko serce moje* from 1921, and the collection *Pociąg* from 1927.³⁶⁸ In all these editions, “Pociąg” remains a melodrama.

368 To facilitate the tracking of the location of the editions of “Pociąg,” I adopt the following marking: P – *Prawda*; G – *Głos*; N – *Nego* (both editions are the same); D – *Dwa głosy*; A – *A to się pali tylko serce moje*; *Pociąg* – a version from the collection *Pociąg*, which was the last one published in Daniłowski’s lifetime.

However, with time, the clear melodramatic tone gradually quietens. The plot's pattern of the novella follows the classic "last-moment rescue" motif. The action is set at a beautifully arranged station in Ryszwil, where people wait for a train with children returning from a long May weekend. On the train, there are children of rich families who live in the part of the city with the train station. The station is a terminus situated on a high bank of a river that separates the rich and poor part of Ryszwil. The track ends almost at the edge of the cliff. At some point, the railroad staff begins showing signs of anxiety that rise with every minute. Telegrams allow the reader to recreate the dramatic situation. The train rushes without staff, someone found intertwined bodies of the driver and engine fireman next to the track, there is no guard as he jumped out of the train. The insane run of the train is a harbinger of the worst possible scenario: the balustrade at the end of the track will fail to stop the train, which will inevitably fall into the river. One figure in modest clothes steps out of the terrified crowd and goes to a small bridge over the tracks. When the insane train runs under the bridge, the man jumps. Moments later, the train enters slowly at the platform filled with paralyzed crowd. When the steam disperses, we see the man in modest clothes in front of the locomotive.

Such an event scheme holds many elements of undoubtedly non-literary origin. The catastrophe that looms over the fictional train is a free combination of several real catastrophes that people must have still remembered when Daniłowski wrote the novella. At the end of December 1879, the world heard of a tragedy that had never happened before: a strong storm swept away the bridge with the passing evening train not far away from Dundee. All the passengers and the staff died in the waters of the Scottish river Tay. In Daniłowski, we find the fear of drowning: "with almost mathematical certainty that the alabaster railing will not hold the train, and that it had to fall into the abyss and sink in the river" (*Pociąg* 19). Moreover, a train without staff that brings children back from a long May weekend is a literary transformation of the events from June 1889 near Armagh. One detail here is very significant: the doors closed from the outside extended the list of victims of the Irish catastrophe. In the catastrophe near Versailles in 1842, Abergale in 1868, and Armagh in 1889, the car's doors remained closed like in Daniłowski's fictional train. When fear gripped more and more people inside the train, "at the end of the wagon, a small group of people tried in vain to open tightly closed doors" (*Pociąg* 16). The catastrophe at terminus went down in the history of culture because of the terrible accident in October 1895 in Paris. Not without significance were the photographs and illustrations that depicted the locomotive resting on cobblestones, which popularized the event. Only one woman died in the accident. It was not so much

the extent of the tragedy that captured the imagination but the spectacular and frequently reprinted photographs.³⁶⁹

When the man in modest clothes is already on the bridge, he feels in the approaching train “the blind power of the unleashed element.” In a second, he realizes that “no dam would be able to stop” this element. The scene is verbally modeled to resemble the tone of reports about the Johnstown catastrophe. This means that Daniłowski uses in the novella the same melodramatic devices as authors, who wrote about the catastrophe in Pennsylvania. There is no point in investigating whether the Johnstown telegraphist was a young twenty-five-year-old girl or had already worked for twenty-five years, which would mean she was not so young. What mattered for the message was her heroism, when she tried to act on her own with the use of modern technology against the consequences of the element of water. “Pociąg” contains even more borrowings from melodramatic narratives about the Johnstown Flood. Therefore, it seems that it would make more sense to speak of a common melodramatic register that the authors use at the end of the nineteenth century, regardless whether the text was supposed to recreate a real cataclysm or just a fictional one, with an addition of some authentic details.

The train without staff in Daniłowski’s work, which lies at the core of the argument of unoriginality, may be associated with a scene that neither the attacking Cywiński nor the defending Kruczkowski ever considered. I mean the ending of Zola’s *Monomaniac*, in which a train with drunk French soldiers rushes toward inevitable death.³⁷⁰ After a fight between the driver and the fireman that ended

369 At the end of 1896, the press reports on a fortunate end of an accident that could have had terrible consequences in “Pociąg bez maszynisty,” *Dziennik Krakowski* 295/1896: “Znojmo reports that, on the line between stations, one of the safety valves of the locomotive boiler broke, the blasting steam burned the engine driver and threw him out of the locomotive onto the tracks. The unfortunate man was enough self-possessed to shout at the conductor to quickly stop the train. The latter made a super-human effort and managed to bring the train safely to the station. The bravery and the presence of mind of the two men saved 500 people who intend to reward their saviors.” Several years later, a similar event occurred, as described in “Koleje,” *Zorza* 2/1914: “The train from Mława to Warsaw ran without stopping on Nasielsk station. It turns out that the engine driver fell asleep. One of the conductors managed to walk on the roof of the train and reach the locomotive. The conductor woke up the driver and the train returned to Nasielsk. The investigation showed that the driver worked for twenty-six hours and fell asleep due to complete exhaustion.”

370 Daniłowski may have known Zola’s novel in Polish translation, see Zola, *Człowiek-zwierzę. Romans przez. . .*, Warsaw, 1890, or from one of the five Russian translations that appeared between 1890–1895. See *Emil Zola. Bibliograficzeskij ukazatel russkich*

with their death under the train's wheels, the locomotive becomes a blind bullet, entailing the tragic strike – an irreversible finale. Zola's work is extremely important, because "Pociąg" replenishes the reader's spirit with a vision of a miraculous salvation. Zola's insane run must end in a massacre. There is no way to take control over the locomotive. According to the melodramatic poetics in Daniłowski's work, the salvation comes at the last minute. The shape of the key scene with the insane train run with children is a clear reference to the reader's knowledge of Zola's work. Stanisław Cywiński, who wrote that "Pociąg" "is an independent work neither in the idea nor in the writing quality," indicates as the source of borrowings the story "Pojezd idyot!" (The Locomotive is coming!) published in the St. Petersburg cultural weekly *Niwa*.³⁷¹ However, the comparison of the insane train from "Pojezd idyot!" and Daniłowski's novella shows a significant and important difference. Instead of carelessness resulting from the inexperience and young age of the fireman, Daniłowski writes about mysterious unrecognized desires. In his story, the train rushes because the driver and fireman fell out of the locomotive. The second telegram that reached Ryszwil informs: "The engine driver and the fireman found dead five kilometers before the third station. They were entangled in one ball." (*Pociąg* 5). Let us remember that the drunk fireman Pecqueux in *The Monomaniac* attacks the driver Jakub Lantier out of jealousy for a woman. The fight ends tragically as both men fall out of the locomotive. Later, we read:

There were a couple of terrible shrieks, which mingled one with the other and were lost. The two men falling together, cast under the wheels by the counter shock, were cut to pieces clasping one another in that frightful embrace—they, who so long had lived as brothers. They were found without heads, and without feet, two bleeding trunks, still hugging as if to choke each other.³⁷²

I recall the similarities between "Pociąg" and *The Monomaniac* not only to weaken Cywiński's plagiarism accusation. Most of all, I want to stress that "Pociąg" clearly employs obvious melodramatic tricks. Daniłowski resorted to solutions that would intensify the emotions in the scene of the "miraculous" rescue.³⁷³

pierewodow i kriticzeskoj literatury na russkom jazykie 1865–1974, Moscow, 1975, p. 32

371 See Cywiński, "Jak powstał „Pociąg” Daniłowskiego?"; Miers, "Pojezd idyot!"; *Niwa* 9/1893.

372 Zola, *The Monomaniac*, trans. E. Vizetelly, London, 1901, p. 408.

373 We have to juxtapose the melodramatic wonder with the miraculous rescue understood as divine intervention. An example of such miracle may be the accident from

In the quoted fragment from Zola, we find all the features of a melodrama from the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. We experience a complete set of fiery desires: Pecqueux’s love for his girlfriend Filomena beside Lantier’s vicious love for her, the jealousy of the fireman for his woman, and the strong friendship between the driver and the fireman. Moreover, there are unexpected twists and turns of action like the fight between the two friends and the moment they fall out of the locomotive. There are bloodcurdling images of dissected human bodies. There is the modern and soulless machine and people driven by the atavistic reflex of male jealousy of a partner. None of these melodramatic elements is present in the story recalled by Cywiński. Most importantly, these elements are absent at the crucial moment when the train frees itself from human control. The start of the locomotive in the Russian story is just a result of carelessness. The author does not mention any desires behind the tragedy looming over the train. Moreover, there is a secret in Daniłowski’s novella: someone found the dead engineer and smoker in position of bodies that lets us assume the men were fighting. However, we do not know what caused the argument, what made them clash in a deadly fight. Admittedly, we find love in the story from *Niwa*. Yet, the feeling of engineer Franz, who later saved the train, for Agnes, a young teacher who travels with her children, does not play any role in the scene the locomotive’s liberation from human control, which is a springboard for further events.

In “Pociąg,” Daniłowski clearly aimed for the poetics of melodrama. What testifies to this fact is not only the transformation of the scene from *The Monomaniac* but also all the changes made to the novella, when the writer decided to retouch the original melodrama. There are three most significant changes. Two of them are simple deletions. This is the scene when the modestly dressed man is already on the bridge and waits for the approaching train. In the version submitted to *Prawda* we read:

October 29 (17), 1888. The train on Kursk-Kharkiv-Azov line went off the rails near Borki station, forty kilometers from Kharkiv. Twenty-one people died, but there was a providential act, because all of the tsar family members were saved. In his “Manifesto,” tsar Alexander III writes: “Unsurpassed judgments of Providence gave us the miracle of God’s grace. Where there was no hope of saving man, God gave us a miraculous way to keep alive Me, the Empress, the Successor of the throne, and all Our children. May the prayers of all Our faithful subjects combine with Our thanksgiving prayers to God for saving Us.” See *Kraj* 44/1888, *Gazeta Warszawska* 297/188. When Daniłowski began writing “Pociąg” in Kharkiv, he must have known about this miraculous story. The anniversary publications in Russia could have reminded him about it.

As the train approached, an increasingly powerful storm of mixed feelings broke in the chest of the waiting man. Thoughts lit up in his brain as quick as lightnings. / "All this rushes straight ahead," he whispered, "with no control, to annihilate the town of Ryszwil. The relentless necessity bodes their death. I am from the lower coast, from which they carelessly separated themselves with the river currents and the balustrade of marble and gold. And now historical Nemesis brings her anger in revenge. . . I may not move, I may remain motionless – dead as a doornail – she will announce the death sentence herself; this terrifying and blind goddess. Blind!" / This thought filled his soul with irritation and pain. / Suddenly, he felt as if he had become a slave. . . / He understood that no dam would be able to stop the insane run or change the track of the train; only a conscious force could get on the train to defeat the blind gods (P 112).

In the *Głos* version, the first sentence underwent only minor changes. Instead of "increasingly powerful" we have "bigger," and instead of "mixed," we have "changed;" see G 486. Both changes remained in the next two versions (see N 141; D 367; A 155; *Pociąg* 17). The most fundamental change is the deletion of two fragments from the next versions. One of them is a long part in the protagonist's contemplation. It begins with "the relentless necessity" and ends with "become a slave." The other one is the part from the last quoted paragraph: "or change the track of the train."

The second deletion refers to the scene, in which the helpless crowd gathers on the station's platform to anxiously await the train arrival. In the version from *Prawda*, we read:

At times, a stream of questions appeared: Why was the river deepened? Why was there no bridge to the opposite side?! But it soon went quiet, because everyone found the answer at the bottom of their heart and fell silent, full of dreadful guilt. Until now, they thought there were no limits for them, so the despair of their powerlessness was even stronger. They were writhing around the platform like mad, cursing the city authorities, themselves, everyone, and everything. / Each time after such a paroxysm of rage the exhausted crowd calmed down for a moment, and these moments were utterly tragic. (P 113)

In *Głos*, the first paragraph ends after the question, "Why was there no bridge to the opposite side?!" (G 487). Right after follows the second quoted paragraph. Although with minor corrections in layout, this variant of the text will remain in further editions (see N 144; D 375; A 157–158; *Pociąg* 20–21).

The third of these substantive changes was no deletion. It concerns the most important compositional part of the novel: the ending. The version from *Prawda* has the following form:

Meanwhile, the train was coming under the arcades. / A new terrible storm of cries threw the crowd on the ground so that the platform looked like a field mowed in one

fell swoop. The atmosphere became eerie, only the Ryszwil bells were raging and the furious locomotive growling while the rails rang with sadness. A terrifying whistle cut through the air. All the Ryszwil bells suddenly fell silent. Calmed by the wise hand of an unexpected engine driver, the train stopped at once. And when the clouds dispersed, in the bloody glow of locomotive headlights stood the man. His gray sweatshirt stretched on his chest, his temple veins swelled, and flames covered his face. His fiery Jupiter eyes looked at the opposite, low side of the river, where golden glimmer glowed over the horizon as if the sun was coming back, and from the night's silence flew over the quiet wave a trembling bell-like voice of singing sparrows – loud and clearly calling everyone: “Arise, everyone!...” (P 114)

The version from *Głos* is different:

Meanwhile, the train was coming under the arcades. / A new terrible storm of cries threw the crowd on the ground so that the platform looked like a field mowed in one fell swoop. The atmosphere became eerie, only the Ryszwil bells were raging and the furious locomotive growling, covering the lying people with clouds of smoke. / A terrifying whistle cut through the air. / All the Ryszwil bells suddenly fell silent. / Calmed by the wise hand of an unexpected engine driver, the train stopped at once. / And when the clouds dispersed, in the bloody glow of locomotive headlights stood the man. / His gray jacket stretched on his chest, his temple veins swelled, and flames covered his face. He still held some crushed pieces in his hand.

The version printed in *Nego* varies from the above with a few further details. Instead of “lying” there is “stroke down,” and instead of “stood the man” there is “appeared the man” (see N 146). The volume *Nego* appeared in 1899, reprinted in 1904. The edition of “Pociąg” published in *Dwa głosy* in 1903 appeared between the first print and the reprint of *Nego*. The last paragraph from the version of *Nego* becomes the third paragraph counting from the end, and the finale looks as follows:

His gray jacket stretched on his chest, his temple veins swelled, and flames covered his face. He still held in his hand some crushed pieces of the alabaster balustrade whose debris created the pass through the river. / His fiery Jupiter eyes looked at the opposite low side of the river, where golden glimmer glowed over the horizon as if the sun was coming back, and from the night's silence flew over the quiet wave a trembling bell-like voice of singing sparrows – loud and clearly calling everyone: “Arise, everyone!...” (D 381–382).

Daniłowski used the same ending in the collection *A to się pali tylko serce moje* (see A 159). In the version from the collection *Pociąg*, he made two changes: added the words “at the opposite low side of the river” to the last sentence of the first paragraph, and deleted the next sentence-paragraph: “His fiery Jupiter eyes looked at the opposite low side of the river.”

What do the changes presented here have in common? First of all, they attempt to overcome literality combined with melodrama poetics from *Prawda* edition. The rescue linked with the main character's actions is somehow more realistic in this version. The protagonist jumps from a bridge onto the locomotive, gets inside and takes control of the train. Let us remember that, in this version, the train in Ryszyl is "calmed by the wise hand of an unexpected engine driver" and it "stopped at once." When steam disperses, the people on the platform see the man in the glow of headlights. We find the same course of events in the story from *Niwa*, in which the protagonist-engineer jumps from a bridge on the tender, enters the cab of the locomotive, and stops the train at the last moment.³⁷⁴ Both these desperate jumps perfectly increased the story's attractiveness by presenting the main character – Franz and the man in the grey jacket – as modest and uniquely courageous man. "Pociąg" needs modesty and courage, because the train carries the young generation of rich and burnt-out people. It transports children closed in the carriages by the older generation. This fact only deepens the children's sense of helplessness. In the version from *Prawda*, the protagonist perfectly fits the melodramatic pattern: he is a young modest man of infinite bravery with secret powers.

The protagonist who appears in all the versions beginning with *Prawda* is no longer a melodramatic character. He ceases to be a human being and becomes personified abstraction, without any claims for psychological probability. However, let us note that a jump from a bridge does not necessarily mean a jump on the locomotive but rather – right in front of a rushing machine. Moreover, in the finale of the *Głos* version, when steam disperses and the hero appears in front of the locomotive, the reader is not sure whether the hand of this "unexpected engine driver" was the one that stopped the locomotive. In the new finale, the hand is still important, but it is no longer a human hand. Now, before the eyes of the terrified crowd and in the light of locomotive headlights stands a mighty man, an ancient hero that "he still held in his hand some crushed pieces of the alabaster balustrade, which debris opened the pass through the rive." In the *Dwa głosy* version, there is a sentence that strengthens this superhuman nature of the protagonist: "His fiery Jupiter eyes looked at the opposite low side of the river." The final sequence in this "Jupiter" version could be depicted in a scene where a new hero jumps in front of the locomotive and stops the train with the strength of his muscles. Only such a hero could crush with a single hand the alabaster

374 After stopping the locomotive, wounded Franz has to go to the hospital but quickly recovers with Agnes' help.

railing at the end of the track in Ryszwil. As we know, the river was wide. So to make a bridge from the alabaster balustrade, someone would need to crush – and someone like this would need to surpass the limits of the human world.

The emphasis of the protagonist’s superhuman features in the volume *Dwa głasy* is a surprise. Not only because a year later appeared a reprint of the collection *Nego*, in which, there obviously was no mention about Jupiter eyes, but also because *Dwa głasy* illustrations – by outshining Konstanty Górski – accompanied the verbal texture of “Pociąg.” The illustration on page 377 refers to the analyzed final scene. In the distance, we see a locomotive that runs at the viewer; the axis of the track is on the left-hand side. This way, on the right, we see the high platform with a decorative roof above. There are various people on the platform whose poses express fear. Most of them look at the locomotive with three headlights. The illustration on page 369 refers to the moment before the daring jump from the bridge. On its right side, we see a slim man reaching with his eyes and body toward the locomotive that approaches the bridge. Two details in this description are surprising. The first one is the number of headlights in the locomotive. Page 369 shows two, while page 377 – three.³⁷⁵ The second puzzle is the view of the locomotive that approaches the station. In the *Prawda* version, we see the moment just before the train stops, when none of the people waiting knows that the hand of “unexpected engine driver” will stop the train. In the version that Daniłowski finally selected for *Dwa głasy*, the hero had to be in front of the locomotive after the jump to stop it with the strength of his muscles. In the last moment, we see the hero in front of the locomotive, holding a railing, which – as a strongman – he managed to crush with one hand. In the illustration on page 377, in front of the locomotive, we should see a demigod fighting the machine, but he is not there. . . Clearly, the melodrama in “Pociąg” did not surrender without fight.

The point of the changes to the last scene – which move the whole novella into the sphere of fantasy – becomes even more apparent when we consider the two large deletions. The poetics of a melodrama justified all the deletions to “Pociąg.” The changes to the novella formed it into a parable about the power of the proletariat and made some fragments redundant. It was this parable poetics that irritated Cywiński. In the first deleted fragment, there is a sentence: “I am from the lower coast, from which the rich carelessly separated themselves with the

375 There are two headlights in Daniłowski’s story: “Indeed, there appeared as if two fiery flecks in the distance that slowly grew. Soon one could recognize that these are the headlights of the incoming train” (*Pociąg* 13–14).

river currents and the balustrade of marble and gold.” This is how the protagonist as the underestimated poor man introduces himself before he surprises everyone with his courage and wit in the critical moment. The fragment with the sentence that characterizes the mindless reactions of the rich people of Ryszwil is a pure melodramatic hyperbole: “They were writhing around the platform like mad, cursing the city authorities, themselves, everyone, and everything.” In the parable about the power of the proletariat, which Cywiński reads as “the apotheosis of the Polish Socialist Party,” Daniłowski had to limit the melodramatic components. However, he still wanted to keep some of them, because they still increased the attractiveness of the message, which – in order to convince – had to remain appealing.

When we read the story from the Russian *Niwa* and Daniłowski’s “Pociąg,” it is difficult to resist the impression that the Polish novella is far superior to the story about Franz and Agnes. It is artistically incomparable. Cywiński could share his prosecutorial judgments, mainly because he almost exclusively focused on the plot scheme and did not consider that the same scheme could reach the reader in various ways. I will now stop to discuss a compositional device that made Cywiński completely helpless. To put it simply, it is the constantly changing perspective. The novella begins with scenes at the Ryszwil Station, but the reader follows two parallel sequences of events: a lazy gathering of crowds on the platform and the hectic behavior of the station staff caused by the telegrams about a driverless train rushing in Ryszwil direction. The sequences coincide when the station chief decides to read the contents of the last telegram to the people waiting at the station. A moment later, a modest man separates from the crowd, goes to the bridge over the tracks, and freezes waiting for the train to pass. At this point, the story splits again into two threads: one of them tells us what the man standing on the bridge sees and feels; the other takes the reader to the cars, where an unexplained fear overwhelms the children inside. The same way of presenting the narrative appears in the film. The pioneer of “parallel editing” or “crosscutting” was the American director David Wark Griffith. One of the first films that employed this technique was the melodramatic story *The Lonedale Operator*, about the feeling of affection between a young telegraphist and an engine driver.

In an interview after the premiere of *Bunt krwi i żelaza*, its director Leon Trystan is to “tell [the interviewer] that he believes the perfect director is Griffith.”³⁷⁶ Did this admiration for Griffith made Trystan use “parallel editing”

376 “Wielki tryumf polskiej kinematografii,” p. 6.

in the adaptation of Daniłowski’s work? As I wrote above, we know very little about *Bunt krwi i żelaza*. There are no copies preserved, and the reconstruction of the way the camera worked in the film seems impossible. The director said little about the railroad scene based on “Pociąg:” “For now, I will not share how I made Ordyński’ jump from a viaduct on a rushing train, and the scene, in which the driver and the fireman fall out of the locomotive. We put most of our work into a twelve-meter trick [the length of the tape] – the switchboard of the five operators, the vibrating letters – on which we worked for five hours.”

From this fragment we learn a bit about the relation between the script and the novella. Trystan clearly leaned toward the melodramatic version from *Prawda*, in which Daniłowski’s hero from “Pociąg” uses the skills of an engine driver. *Bunt krwi i żelaza* was undoubtedly a melodrama, described in the press as a “wonderful” and “erotic drama.” When filming “Pociąg,” Trystan used the devices offered by early cinematographic art. Moreover, Trystan exploited the unique possibilities of the new medium and, thus, freed himself from the mindless copying of the story onto the screen. In “Pociąg,” there are no switchboard operators nor any vibrating letters. And how did Trystan approach the change of viewpoints, which he could perfectly render with parallel editing? We will probably never find out. However, the following idea seems plausible: while looking for a material for the script, Leon Trystan prioritized film-like works with fast-paced engaging action that would simultaneously allow him to express his fascination with Griffith’s productions. We may consider the presence of parallel editing in *Bunt krwi i żelaza* only within this hypothesis. Did Cywiński and Kruczkowski see *Bunt krwi i żelaza*? If they did, then they probably already forgot about the film, because none of them notices film contexts in “Pociąg.” They did not notice that the device of last-moment rescue links both the literary (theatrical) and film version of “Pociąg” with melodrama.³⁷⁷

377 Literary criticism struggled with “Pociąg’s” genre. For a *Dziennik Poznański* reviewer of Daniłowski’s debut collection *Nego*, M. Kwiryn [W. Raszewski], “Szkice z Warszawy,” *Dziennik Poznański* 294/1899, “Pociąg” is “an image full of horror.” Władysław Bukowiński, “Literatura polska,” *Prawda* 8/1900, p. 91, describes this work as “a plastic allegory with an inexplicable force.” Whereas Zygmunt Sarnecki, “Kronika literacka,” *Wiek ilustrowany*, 130/1900, p. 7, calls it a “beautiful, warm, and symbolic image.” In a review of *Dwa głosy*, Henryk Galle, “Wrażenia literackie,” *Gazeta Polska*, 195/1903, writes that it is an “allegoric work.” In an article, “Nowe książki,” *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 21/1904, we read that “Pociąg” is an “allegory on a social-altruistic backdrop.” Another reviewer writes in “Literatura i sztuka,” *Przegląd Polityczny, Społeczny i Literacki* 168/1903, that “the plot in “Pociąg” sounds as if it originated in an anecdote or a note in a chronicle, which does not resemble Daniłowski’s regular plots, and it

3. “Zuch dziewczyna” (A Brave Girl; 1911)

The plot of Griffith's *The Lonedale Operator* heads toward the finale that the viewer easily recognized as the melodramatic last-moment rescue. The film must have been very popular since its director decided to make what we would call today a *remake*, which entered the theaters as *The Girl and Her Trust*. The story told in *The Lonedale Operator* is uncomplicated, but parallel editing applied at the end enhances its attractiveness. The main protagonists are a young couple: she is the daughter of the Lonedale telegraph operator, and he – the engine driver. The young people feel sympathy for each other. One time, the boy drives away in a locomotive, while she must take over the duties of her sick father. During this unexpected duty, she collects money for local payouts. A pair of hobos traveled on the same train. When they see the cargo – and that there is only a young girl at the station – they decide to rob her. The girl closes herself in the telegraph room and – when the hobos try to force the door – tries using the telegraph to contact the station of her boyfriend. The sleeping telegraphist receives the alarming telegram at the very last moment. The young engine driver begins his insane run back home. From that moment on, the film's narrative uses parallel editing to develop three simultaneous threads. Therefore, we see on the screen the increasingly anxious girl, the hobos trying to break the door, and the locomotive rushing to the rescue. The rescue comes at the last moment: the bandits get inside, but the clever girl threatens them with a fake revolver. Thanks to the darkness, she may pretend that a wrench is a gun. The close-up on the girl's weapon relieves the tension of the final sequences with an element of comedy.

Griffith's film from 1911 follows the narrative tradition created by the colonization of the western frontier of the Northern American continent. The railroad played key role in this process. The construction of a line that links the coasts of both oceans was an important state-building factor. The completion of the railroad arranged on May 10, 1869, in Promontory, Utah, opened to the United States the West with its land and magnitude of natural resources. In 1849, California discovered its large gold deposits. The American rail was directly involved in the colonization process and shaped cultural messages absent in Europe. Railroad was the root of what we may refer to as *railroad folklore* that consisted of anonymous and usually unwritten songs, ballads, and tales. Their authors were usually people connected in some way with the railroad, so their works often referred

especially reminds Poe's work.” All these descriptions refer to the versions in which Daniłowski restrains the melodrama element.

to the railroad life.³⁷⁸ A body of works with Casey Jones as the main protagonist earned a prominent place in the American railroad folklore. Casey Jones died when his locomotive hit the back of a standing freight train. The catastrophe happened on April 30, 1900. Because of the terrible weather, the engine driver of Cannonball Express, Jones noticed the wagons of the standing freight train only at the very last moment. He warned his assistant, who managed to jump of the train. However, he himself unsuccessfully attempted to stop his locomotive until the very end.

The figure of the heroic American engine driver perpetuated by numerous ballads and legends contrasts with a different character present in railroad folklore tales: the American hobo. The word *hobo* is part of the American English with no equivalent in British English or any other European language. It refers to a reality in which the way to survive was to illegally ride on the roof of a train car, in a freight wagon, or in the caboose. As a railroad tramp, a hobo was usually a petty thief, who tried to avoid identification and apprehension on his endless journey. The hobo and the heroic American engine driver are two primary figures in the American railroad folklore, which have very distinct personalities. But we encounter other figures as well. Most often, stories include a brave telegraphist, a courageous porter, a worker laying tracks in a deserted place, and finally – a woman. She is usually a wife or a daughter of a railroad worker, who assumes the male role at a critical moment.

This male role of a woman allows Griffith to construct action in his film. The young girl is not a railroad worker, yet she is constantly at the station. On the one hand, we can justify her helping her father as a child's feelings for the parent. We do not know anything about her mother. On the other hand, the situation results from the fact that the action takes place in a remote place. The name of the Lonedale station underlines this aspect. Such place probably does not abound in attractive free time activities. The character played by Blanche Sweet is a well-behaved daughter and an attractive young girl that slowly discovers mature feelings for a man. Griffith's world definitely has male shapes. Apart from the young girl, there are railroad workers, track workers, and a couple of hobos. The work of

378 See F. P. Donovan Jr., *The Railroad in Literature. A Brief Survey of Railroad Fiction, Poetry, Songs, Biography, Essays, Travel and Drama in the English Language, Particularly Emphasizing its Place in American Literature*, Boston, 1940, chapter “Songs;” F. H. Hubbard, *Railroad Avenue. Great Stories and Legends of American Railroad*, New York, 1945; *A Treasury of Railroad Folklore. The Stories, Tall Tales, Traditions, Ballads and Songs of the American Railroad Man*, eds. B. A. Botkin, A. F. Harlow, New York, 1953; W. Erbsen, *Singing Rails. Railroadin' Songs, Jokes and Stories*, Asheville, 1997.

a telegraphist is not difficult, but it requires some knowledge and skills. In the reports about the Johnstown Flood, we come across a woman in the telegraph office that remains at her post until the very last minute. On nineteenth-century American railroad stations, people could also come across women, but as we know, the person responsible for operating the telegraph in Lonedale is a man – the station agent.

Griffith uses the melodramatic device of last-moment-rescue twice. First in a scene, when the dramatic telegraph sent from Lonedale cannot be received. This is because the telegraph operator is asleep at the station with the young engine driver. The former only wakes up, when the girl loses hope that anyone will read her message on time. Griffith employs the second last-moment-rescue device in the scene of the insane run of the locomotive. The operator receives the message, the help is on its way, but we still do not know if it will reach Lonedale before the hobos force the weak door and make the girl give them the money. Griffith's film reaches climax when the hobos break into the room and the girl stops them with a tool that resembles a gun. However, the mystification will not uphold for long. At any moment, the hobos may realize that the girl is defenseless. This is when the rescue arrives. The hobos do not hurt the girl and they will probably suffer punishment. Good and youth prevail.

On September 1, 1911, the Cracow cinema Edison Circus resumed its operation in the old location on ulica Starowiślna. It inaugurated the “autumn season” with an attractive program. For a week, people could see advertisements in *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* about a few productions presented in the following manner:

From September 1 to 7, interesting images from *Wesele sultana z Pahang* [Wedding of the Pahang Sultan] will slide in front of the eyes of the audience. Their backdrop will be magnificent landscapes of the Malaysian Islands. The drama *Naczelnik stacji* [The Stationmaster] will show the railroad life and there will be the equally interesting biblical drama *Saul i Dawid*. The extremely amusing *Maciuś zgubił igłę* [Little Matthew Lost a Needle] and *Uparta samobójczyni* [The Persistent Suicide] will make the humorous part of the program while the current and unsurpassed *Żurnal Pathego* [Pathe's Journal] will present the most important news of the week. The main attraction of the program will be the impressive photograph *Straż pożarna w Krakowie* [Cracow Fire Force] commemorating the Saint Florian Day, the patron saint of the firemen.³⁷⁹

A few days later, the Cracow daily informed about the success of the program: “Among all the beautiful and fascinating cinematographic images,

379 “Z Cyrku Edison,” *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* 199/1911.

the most popular [sic!] s *Straż pożarna w Krakowie* and the magnificent drama *Naczelnik stacji* revolving around the life of American railroad workers.”³⁸⁰ Griffith’s production *The Lonedale Operator* is from Spring 1911. The same year, in Autumn, a “drama revolving around the life of American railroad workers” moved the audiences of the Cracow Edison Circus. Is it the same film? Different titles are by no means an argument. Already much earlier it was common for the creators of theater melodrama to change titles and adapt them according to the place where they put on the play. In the late 1850s, Dion Boucicault performed in New York *The Poor of New York*. Later, he changed the title accordingly to *The Poor of Leeds*, *The Poor of Manchester*, *The Streets of Islington*, and finally – to *The Streets of London*.³⁸¹ Cinema owners adopted this practice of adjusting the title, sometimes also the screenplay, to the location. They looked for attractive word formulas that could stir viewer’s imagination. The title of Griffith’s film strongly refers to the American reality. Lonedale is a fictional name that underlines the remote character of a remote place. A place that would be difficult to find in Europe or Poland. The *Operator* is a worker who operates a machine, an apparatus or a telephone exchange. This is where the “O” as a number of the exchange office operated by telegraphists comes from. *Operator* is also the “manager.”

What could be the title of Griffith’s film in Polish? It did not retain the original version. In this case, it would have been *Operator z Lonedale*. The English word “operator” neutralizes the gender of the worker, which in Polish is either “operator” (male) or “operatorka” (female). The original formula contains a surprise, because the first scenes of the film clearly show that to operate the telegraph is the duty of the station agent, in that case the father. The formula “operatorka z Lonedale,” meaning a female operator from Lonedale, or “telegrafistka z Lonedale,” a female telegraphist, would reveal the secret even before the screening. If we keep the secret, the viewer may ask himself who will be the operator, will the girl be able to reach out for help in time? *Naczelnik stacji* (Station Agent) does reveal the male gender of that person. In Polish, the female counterpart is “naczelniczka stacji.” Yet, it still may have been the reasonable counterpart for *The Lonedale Operator*. I can imagine that – when the heads of the Cracow “light theater” looked for the title – they decided to focus viewer attention on the male responsible for operating the telegraph. As the film shows, when the “station agent” gets sick, a young and inexperienced daughter replaces him and – unexpectedly for the characters in the film and the viewers – she becomes the agent. Did the Cracow

380 “Z Cyrku Edison,” *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* 202/1911.

381 See N. Daly, *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860–2000*, p. 18.

Edison Circus show in the first weeks after its comeback Griffith's film? Is the "magnificent drama *Naczelnik stacji* revolving around the life of American railroad worker" in fact *The Lonedale Operator*? I can also imagine that Griffith's film appearing in Cracow under a different title: "Zuch dziewczyna" (A Brave Girl). This phrase appears in *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*. However, in this case, this is not a film title but a title of "images from life of American railroad workers" printed soon after the last screening of *Naczelnik stacji* in the Edison Circus.³⁸² Is "Zuch dziewczyna" a summary of the film that just had its last screening in the Edison Circus? Or is it a true story of the Rocky Mountains as the subheading suggests? Or maybe it is a melodramatic story without any interest in truth? The plots of *The Lonedale Operator* and "Zuch dziewczyna" are strikingly similar. . . .

"Zuch dziewczyna" has four parts. The title of the first part "Na odludziu" (In a Remote Place) is an obvious allusion to Griffith's *The Lonedale Operator*. This exposition shows many aspects similar to *The Lonedale Operator*. We learn that the story happened in the Rocky Mountains, where runs the Two Oceans line. One of the stations on the line is West End Station, which lies "far from human settlements." In the introduction, we meet the station agent Old Wilson and his only daughter Little Mary. We read that "When Little Mary – as he lovingly called her – did all her duties on the farm, she would usually run down and spend hours at the telegraph, following the quickly moving telegrams, which were for her enough for all the company and fun." The third figure completes this couple – James. He is "a backup engine driver assigned to the West End station a year ago." The second chapter "Idylla miłosna" (A Love Idyll) is about the young Mary and James who start to have "secret and unaware" feelings for each other. The dramatic event at the station was necessary for their feelings "to erupt with an exuberant force and reveal to all – even to them – that they love each other to death, and that they are everything for each other." The title of the next part heralds the dramatic event: "Straszna noc" (A Terrible Night).

We do not know what the audience in the Cracow Edison Circus looked like in the first week of September 1911. There is no data available that would allow us to assess how big part of the audience comprised young women. Upon its release, Griffith's *The Lonedale Operator* had a clear target group: young ladies. The gender peculiarity of the melodrama becomes clear already in the precinema period. A perfect example may be the character of Laura from Augustin Daly's *Under the Gaslight*. A young twenty-year-old woman saves a Civil War veteran.

382 See "Zuch dziewczyna. (Obrazek z życia amerykańskich kolejarzy)," *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, 205/1911. All quotes from this version.

The saved man responds with a political reflection: “And these are the women who ain’t to have a vote!”³⁸³ The melodrama depicts a world, in which the old order falls apart; also the one that witnesses the formation of new gender relations that challenges the traditional social roles. Ben Singer indicates that the main characters of melodramas are usually men.³⁸⁴ A young girl appears in this male environment. She can easily deal with the tasks that the patriarchal society does not assign to her. According to Singer, the absence of mother is significant.³⁸⁵ The heroines are characterized as daughters, friends, and wives. A father, boyfriend, or husband – rarely a mother – is an important figure in their life. At first on stage, then both on stage and in films, melodrama placed women elsewhere than home, in front of tasks usually perceived as male. We see the masculinized woman as a reporter, a telegraphist, an engine driver.³⁸⁶ We can see how she jumps onto a running train, liberates the victim tied to the tracks in the last minute, reaches for a gun, and uses it skillfully.³⁸⁷ The melodrama researchers perceive this masculinization as a kind of social utopia portrayed at the time, when the suffragettes of America and Europe raised their voices in the battle for equal rights, access to politics, and equal education possibilities. The melodramatic way of depicting gender relations must have been mostly attractive for young women, because it fulfilled their expectations, dreams, and challenging life plans. A film with a heroine who deals with a situation thanks to male character features had also a compensational function. During the screening, the film

383 A. Daly, *Under the Gaslight. A Totally Original Drama or Life and Love in These Times, in Five Acts*, p. 43.

384 See B. Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity. Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*, p. 231.

385 See Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, p. 231.

386 The main character in the story is a young girl who lives in a miners camp in the mountains, see B. L. Dunkinson, “A Locomotive Engineeress,” *Popular Monthly*, June 1888. The engineeress enjoys male activities. She willingly spends time working on the locomotive whenever the assistant needs replacement. On the day of the event, the engine driver and the engineeress stop the train on a steep ascent. A catastrophe lurks around the corner. The driver decides to get off the locomotive and throw some sand onto the rails. Now, the girl has to run the locomotive herself. When the train arrives at the station, the happy miners are surprised to see a girl as the driver.

387 See B. Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity. Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*, photographs 8.4–8.7.

allowed the women in the audience to enjoy independence, sexual freedom, and the right to pick their partner.³⁸⁸

Just like the heroine from *The Lonedale Operator*, Little Mary from the Polish text “Zuch dziewczyna” is an incarnation of a New Woman. We know nothing about her mother. Her family relationships end on her love of father. The girl is brave and very fit. We find out that she is not afraid to climb rocks. However, the real test for her is the “terrible night,” when she replaces her sick father. The girl has to take care of the station and collect the money “for one of the owners of a nearby sawmill.” The horror atmosphere intensifies, when three figures lurking behind a window appear. In the part “Na ratunek” (To the Rescue), we see Mary bid farewell to her girlish fragility and delicacy. She barricades herself in the telegraph office, sends a telegram for help, and prepares for “the final yet hopeless defense.” When the telegram reaches James, he begins the insane run to the rescue: “The insane drive, full of fear, seemed to have lasted for centuries. Finally, West End Station lights flashed in the distance! . . . After one more minute, the machine stopped at the station.”

The end of the film is a classic happy ending. Little Mary jumps into James arms, “and he, forgetting everything, lifted up “his girl” and smothered her with kisses. . . .” I need to come back to the questions I asked before: Is *Naczelnik stacji* played in Edison Circus *The Lonedale Operator*? Is “Zuch dziewczyna” a summary of Griffith’s film shown as *Naczelnik stacji*? More significant than the question itself are general observations. First, both literary and cinematic melodrama used the same repertoire of tricks. Second, the railroad offered a great backdrop for scenes that could evoke strong and mixed emotions in viewers and readers. Third, melodrama brings a revolution in the understanding of copyrights. The traditional approach that took into consideration only wording became insufficient in the times of commercialization, when the allure of a scene or even the whole plot tempts one to use its attraction power repeatedly. Witold Ostrowski characterizes the genre from the reception side: “copying the themes and the overall value of the melodrama”³⁸⁹ results from setting popularity.

At the beginning of September 1911, when the viewers of Cracow could see the American *Naczelnik stacji* in the Edison Circus, the first Polish film adaptation of literature was ready. Marian Tatarkiewicz finished his work on *Dzieje*

388 See Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity. Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*, p. 233.

389 W. Ostrowski, “Melodrama,” in: *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, eds. G. Gazda, S. Tynecka-Makowska, Kraków, 2006, p. 403.

Grzechu (The Story of Sin) by Stefan Żeromski. The actors from the Warsaw Variety Theater played the main roles. The film did not impress audiences. The press wrote that *Dzieje grzechu* makes a “poor impression” on screen.³⁹⁰ This spectacular failure served as an opportunity to ask about the direction in which “cinematographic spectacles” should go and how the relation between cinema and literature should develop. Moreover, the artistic failure posed the question what guided the filmmakers in their choice of material for the screenplay? What attracted the filmmakers was the sensation understood as a marketable commodity:

Here we are, living in the **era of sensation**. There is a demand for strong irritation, so there must be a growing supply of articles with calculated high sales, which do not disappoint but generate quick and easy profit. Apart from its artistic value, Żeromski's work is a sensational novel. A cinematographer will convey neither its beautiful language and style nor the essence of its moral issue, which is the axis of the work. However, film will strongly emphasize the **sensational aspects** of *Dzieje grzechu*, which will satisfy the audience's hunger for thrill.³⁹¹

A Warsaw correspondent of *Gazeta Lwowska* accused the film of flattery to the poor taste. He rhetorically asks: “Our audience is so hungry for a sensation. And what else apart from sensation and pornography is really in such a reproduction of the novel?”³⁹² Today, it is impossible to verify both opinions. The film version of *Dzieje grzechu* is lost. Therefore, we do not know if the film conveyed the scene, in which the protagonist Ewa Pobratyńska – who travels by herself at night – meets her oppressor Pochroń. If the scene appeared, how did it look like? It seems that the high dose of sensation in this scene made it difficult for the filmmakers to avoid it. Since sensation was the best-selling commodity in “cinematographic performances,” the modern *Dzieje grzechu* had an advantage over works like *Pan Tadeusz* or *Nad Niemnem*. Leon Trystan decided to film Daniłowski's story “Pociąg” – though the script based on two novellas – which was supposed to guarantee the viewers a high dose of thrill.

Postscript: “Szaleństwo drugiego pilota” (The Madness of the Copilot; 2015)

I want to present one more story. A flight from Barcelona to Düsseldorf.³⁹³ An experienced captain and the copilot, who is in his twenties, sit in the cockpit. In

390 “*Dzieje grzechu* w kinematografie,” *Nowa Reforma* 393/1911, afternoon issue.

391 “Literatura w kinematografie,” *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* 197/1911. Bold in original.

392 “Z Warszawy,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 208/1911.

393 Quoted fragments come from a text by M. Brzeziński, “Szaleństwo drugiego pilota,” *Angora* 14/2015. Further on, I also use other texts regarding the catastrophe in the

the aviation world, the latter is “just a child.” Among the passengers are sixteen students and their two teachers. When the plane reaches the cruising altitude, captain leaves the cabin and soon tries to come back. The door is closed from the inside: “According to the international regulation, since 9/11, the pilot cabins have to be like a safe. No one can get in without the code. For obvious reasons, each airline jealously protects their code. Captain types in the code. To no avail.” Tension grows: “The captain with six thousand hours of air experience feels that the machine starts going down. He starts banging his fists on the door. He takes an axe and tries to break the door. No reaction. Control towers from Marseille and Aix-en-Provence unsuccessfully try to reach the pilot. The captain knows that he has little time to force the door.” The flight recorder let the investigators to recreate the last minutes of the flight from the perspective of the copilot: “The copilot knew what he was doing. From twelve thousand meters, he slowly went down to two thousand as if he were preparing to land. With 700 kilometers per hour he hit a rocky wall. The plane shattered into pieces.” The analysis of the flight recorder data and a home research soon reveal the cause of the tragedy. The second pilot crashed the plane on purpose, probably because of a heartbreak and professional burnout.

It is hard to resist the impression that there is nothing in the story of the young pilot’s madness that the melodramatic plots from over hundred years ago did not try. We have two male heroes, just like in “Dramat w tunelu,” *The Monomaniac*, and “Pociąg;” we have a heartbreak that precedes the suicide in “Dramat w tunelu” and becomes the reason for the tragic locomotive fight in *The Monomaniac* and “Pociąg.” Moreover, it is a “technologized” death just like the one by the drilling machine in the Alps and the one by a rushing crewless train. The story includes adult problems and children as victims. Finally, we witness the door scene. Forcing them is the last rescue chance, like in *Under the Gaslight* and *After Dark*. The flight recorder and control tower – modern equivalents of the telegraph – saved the dramaturgy of the last minutes of the tragic flight. Probably very soon, someone will make a film adaptation about this story. The last minutes of the film may be presented with parallel editing. The camera may interchangeably show the plane descent, captain’s efforts to force the door, and the calm face of the copilot in the cabin. Years back, Peter

Alps from March 24, 2015: A. Nefzger, U. Ebbinghaus, “Kim był Andreas Lubitz?”; (LS), “Haltern w żałobie” *Angora* 14/2015.

Brook wrote that the French Revolution spoke to its participants with the language of a melodrama.³⁹⁴ Today, we should remember this thesis and reinforce it significantly: postmodern everyday life uses the language of melodrama even more often.

394 See P. Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination. Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*, New Haven, 1976, pp. 14–20; after: N. Daly, *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860–2000*, p. 14.

Annex

L. F. [Lucjan Falkiewicz?]³⁹⁵

“A tragedy in a tunnel” [a novella]

I visited the excavation site on one side of the great Alpine tunnel.³⁹⁶

Every day, for the last ten years, one or two thousand people stepped into this murky abyss. Along with them their passions, feelings, desires, their whole world of storms blazing through human heart and brain.

There is no way to avoid gloomy tragedies that get even darker as no sunlight reaches the depths. However, man’s soul is the same everywhere. . .

So, when we reached the surface and sat down with one of the supervisors for a glass of wine in a small inn in the village of Monta, two kilometers from the entrance to the tunnel from the Italian side, the first question that came to my mind was: do these undergrounds, which human power is digging in the heart of the rock, have any legends, any more or less true stories. . . ?

My companion just nodded in response.

“There are some,” he replied.

At that moment my attention was drawn to an interesting view.

First, I should explain that the inn, on whose veranda we were sitting, was an ordinary place where people working on the tunnel construction gathered. This was the place where most of them ate dinner. When service cars brought them from the underground of the tunnel, they came here in groups to forget the hardships of the day, enjoying polenta³⁹⁷ and red wine. . .

At that moment, we were surrounded by loud voices.

395 Among those, who used the L. F. initials, was the Lviv writer and educator, Lucjan Falkiewicz. He lived and worked at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. The attention of the narrator of the story, who seems to resemble the author, is aroused when he learns about the “fiancée of an Austrian” in an Italian village at the end of an Alpine tunnel. His interest in this case, together with his very warm attitude toward the unfortunate Austrian, may indicate the author’s Galician origin.

396 The time and location of the events correspond to the construction of the Mont Cenis Tunnel in the Western Alps. The over thirteen-kilometer-long tunnel was excavated between 1857 and 1870. It connected the Italian and French railroads.

397 Polenta is an Italian folk dish made of cornmeal. Usually served with meat and vegetables.

All the tables were immediately occupied by workers. They were almost exclusively men. The figures of women were seen only here and there. The two of us were sitting at a side, in a green gazebo hidden among ivy, seeing everyone, but without being seen by most of the others.

At that moment, a woman appeared in the garden. She was still a young girl but her face made a poor impression. She was pale, miserable, dressed in rags. She approached each of the tables occupied by the miners one by one and stopped, saying nothing. It was rare for her not to be offered a piece of bread, fruit, or an old papal baiocco,³⁹⁸ the only coin that circulated at the time among the common folk in the area of Piedmont.

Most seemed used to her so much that her behavior garnered no attention. She kept on going, just as indifferent to everything as the guests and with no expression on her face.

This situation made a deep impression on me. I could not help but ask my companion:

– Who is this girl?

– She is insane. . . she does no harm to anyone and arouses common pity. . . She comes from the village of Bardonecchia³⁹⁹ and her name is Margarita. But they call her “the Austrian’s fiancée.”

These last words intensified my curiosity.

– And why is that? – I kept asking.

– There is this whole story that everyone knows here. . . Oh, and you just asked whether our tunnel does not have its legends, its dramatic stories. . . Here is one of them. If you want, I can tell you about it.

I did not give the man a chance to repeat his offer

I asked for another bottle of wine from Donia,⁴⁰⁰ and my companion lit a beautiful meerschaum pipe. . . His story went as follows.

“Margerita wasn’t always the poor lunatic she is today. A few years ago she was still admired as the most beautiful *contadina*⁴⁰¹ in the whole Bardonecchia area. She was the happiest and liveliest dancer on the local balls and country parties, which take place every Sunday afternoon. This brought her misfortune. . .

398 Baiocco was an Italian monetary unit, during the Italian unification in 1861–1870 gradually replaced by lira.

399 Bardonecchia is a town in the northwest of Italy, in the Piedmont region, at the southern end of the Mont Cenis Tunnel.

400 Donia is the wine produced from Barbera grapes cultivated also in Piedmont, Italy.

401 Contadina – countrywoman.

You saw this morning that the dangerous blades of any rock-punching machine are operated by two people, one directs the hits of sharp steel points and the other wets the machine and the holes made in the rock. We had two excellent workers on one of these machines, a Piedmontese and an Austrian.

The Italian's name was Pietro Bemba. He was a young man, strong and tireless, who like most of his compatriots, was sometimes very passionate in his anger and desire. As for the other man, he was a calm boy but not very sociable. As a worker, he was very diligent. However, he reluctantly socialized with others and it was difficult to learn his name. . . It was only at the insistence of the foreman – who demanded papers from him to control them – that he signed up as Wilhelm Brüner.

Bemba and Brüner, working at one machine, not leaving each other all day long, came to a certain confidentiality. Slowly, the Italian started to draw his companion in various walks and games. . .

One Sunday, they saw Margarita, and they both fell in love with her. . .

From that moment on, a hidden hatred began between them. Each of them asked her to marry him. Margarita hesitated and did not know what to do.

This hesitation was decided by Bemba himself, to his disadvantage.

One Sunday after dances, the slightly drunk Bemba took the girl aside and said brutally.

“Remember, don't you dare picking the Austrian or else I will kill him. . .”

Those words outraged the beautiful peasant. Bemba awakened her rebellious spirit.

“Well, I am going to be his. . .” she said. “If you want to kill him, kill me too, because I will never be yours!”

The blade of Bemba's threat was now aimed at Brüner. The girl agreed to Brüner's proposal, and eight days later, the office of the canton hang an announcement about the forthcoming marriage of Wilhelm Brüner and Margarita Franchi. . .

The wedding was supposed to happen in three weeks.

This is required by the Piedmont's law. The day was about to come, and all the preparations were already in place when, two or three days before the awaited day, there was a fatal accident.

Four Bersaglieri⁴⁰² and two gendarmes arrived at the temporary railroad station leading to the tunnel. The Bersaglieri guarded the entrance to the tunnel and the gendarmes went deep inside. People with tar torches walked in front of them.

402 Bersaglieri – soldiers of Italian light infantry, trained to conduct operations in difficult mountain terrain.

In half an hour they arrived at the machine, where the two rivals worked.

They asked one of them if he was Wilhel Brüner. The answer was yes. Then they took out the order to arrest him, coming from the military authorities in Vienna.

Soon, the matter became clear. Brüner was a deserter from the Austrian army. He fled from the regiment during the war in 1859 and hoped to hide safely among the construction workers. Luck or other circumstances detected his whereabouts. Desertion during war is usually punished with death. . . . Therefore, the order to arrest the “Austrian” amounted to a capital punishment.

The poor boy did not even resist. On his way out, he only threw a look full of despair and remorse at Bemba. It seemed as if Brüner’s eyes penetrated Bemba to the very core. . . . Anyway, his pale confused face with convulsively outlined features screamed that the Piedmontese is not a complete innocent to the imprisonment of his rival. . . .

Two month passed.

There was no news about the “Austrian.” Margarita didn’t come to Sunday dances now, and Pietro walked around like a madman with a crazy look in his eyes.

Finally, he just couldn’t stand it. . . . One time, under the influence of his conscience, he went to the village of Bardonecchia to find some things out.

Margerita lived there with her old mother in a miserable hut with a small vegetable garden. The women cultivated them and then sold in the neighboring town. This was how they made their living.

When Bamba entered the house, he was immediately struck by the sight of a girl in a mourning dress. . . .

Her eyesight was motionless, she seemed completely indifferent to everything that was happening around her. . . . He spoke to her, she said nothing. Then the old mother brought a letter from the old wardrobe and, showing it to the young man, said:

“It’s a letter from the dying man. . . . Poor Brüner wrote it before going to the square, where he was executed. . . . In the letter, he says goodbye to his fiancée and sends her a lock of hair!”

Indeed, the letter was found in the pocket of the shot man when they picked him up on the execution square. It was covered in blood and there was a lock of blonde hair inside!”

Pietro Bemba stood with his eyes wide open, not knowing what to do. Blood went to his head. Sweat broke out on his temple.

At this moment, the unhappy girl, as if regaining consciousness for a short time, raised and walked toward him with an outstretched hand.

Margarita shouted:

“Begone! Begone, you killer!”

Pietro ran out with his head hanging.

Indeed, it was him who used the old confessions of his rival to denounce him, in this way pulling him out of his bride’s arms. . . Did he know that the arrest will mean death to his old friend? This remained between him and God. . .

Nevertheless, Pietro wandered aimlessly through the whole next night. Workers coming home late saw him running around rocks and hills as if he were possessed. . .

In the morning, he came to work but he was as pale as the marble statues of Campo Santo in Pisa⁴⁰³ and did not realize what he was doing. We looked at him with concern and pity. . .

Then a thing happened that I won’t forget, even if I lived a hundred years!

The worker who replaced Brüner was not very experienced. He was not well acquainted with the machine and he could not prevent the desperate actions of Pietro. . .

We don’t even know exactly how it happened.

The Piedmontese approached the operating machine and placed himself between the frightening blades and the rocky wall. . . A split second! The powerful blades hit his body instead of the rock, and bored the chest of the man instead of the rocks. . .

The terrible cry of pain called us all, as the unhappy man could not keep it in despite his strong will. We saw a terrible scene!

Blood gushed everywhere. . . Steel crushed bones, tore flesh and muscles, and drilled the man. . . His body vibrated in convulsions. The blades kept going forward, hitting with infinite force, nailing the man to the granite, like a butterfly with a pin to the wall. . .

When we stopped the machine covered in blood, it was too late. . . The blades were full of irregular remains of the human body!. . . It’s easy to imagine what an impression this surprising and horrible suicide made on us. . .

Yes, even in one hundred years, I will still remember it. . .”

My companion hung his head. The pipe fell out of his hand.

“You wanted legends from the tunnel,” he said. “There you have it. . . I’m sorry it’s so sad.”

403 Campo Santo – fourteenth century cemetery in the center of Pisa, Italy. Most of the gravestones and tombstone sculptures are located under the arcades surrounding the rectangular grass courtyard.

First printed in: L.Z. [Lucjan Falkiewicz?], “Dramat w tunelu. Nowela,” *Wędrowiec* 33/1889, pp. 387–388.

Gustaw Daniłowski

“A Train”

The city of Ryszwil grew with a tremendous pace.

The youth listened with some disbelief when the elderly claimed that they remembered perfectly well how the sun fell on straw roofs of the cottages in the same place. Among them used to be only a few factory chimneys, and one could count on his fingers the tin roofs growing between the thatched ones like a rare canyon flower between the yellow flax fields.

Today, the flax has already fallen prey to the dodder.⁴⁰⁴ Huge buildings spread out on the high banks, and low houses and huts disappeared or moved down – far across the river. On the same cliff where the forest used to grow, at the expense of millions, the city of Ryszwil constructed a dazzling railway station that was its pride. Now, in place of trees grow alabaster columns holding a crystal vault covered with abundant frescoes and gold. From time to time, a breathless train would come under the marble arcades and stop at the end of the track – almost at the very edge of the cliff – so that the visitors would have to walk just a few steps to find themselves next to the stationmaster who was just leaning on the balustrade and looking into open space.

The view was indeed beautiful.

The marble slabs of terraces piling up above the water glittered with pink in sunshine. Two hundred feet below the balustrade, the river twisted shimmering with a cascade of colors, from dirty gold to bloody purple. Right next to it stood the tall buildings of Ryszwil, with endless fumes above them. On the opposite flat shore, low houses were squeezed like black dots on a ladybug, behind one saw a forest, while this day’s sun was dying above. The stationmaster divided his attention between looking and thinking about various things, and also about the fact that the bridge and the track extension would not only spoil the view, but they would be completely unnecessary, because the people of the lower coast make it on time to work. After a while, he looked at his watch because he was expecting another train. It was a special train that the children of the first-class boarding house took before dawn to travel a few stations away from town for a short May trip.

404 Dodder – a parasitic climbing plant that wraps around a host plant.

“The sun’s setting! It should soon be here,” he thought, and then he started walking on the mosaic pavement towards the office. Halfway down the road, he saw a telegraphist who running without his cap straight toward him, carrying a paper in his hand.

“Where is it from?”

“From the third station before Ryszwil” stammered the breathless telegraphist with an extremely confused and pale face.

The stationmaster read it, at first unable to understand what was going on. The telegram read like this:

“To the stationmaster – Ryszwil! The special train with the children did not stop at the station. It passed in spite of our signals. The reason is so far unknown. We’ll let you know in case of any news.”

“When did we receive it?”

“Five minutes ago.”

“It must be a sham,” whispered the stationmaster and then, strongly disturbed, he walked quickly toward the station.

“So, what further news?” he asked, entering the office.

“I am just receiving them,” answered one of the clerks bent over a thin piece of paper. He read it haltingly:

“To the stationmaster – Ryszwil! The engine driver and the fireman found dead five kilometers before the third station. They were entangled in one ball. All signs of a fight. The conductor jumped out. He is unable to give any explanations. He has crushed his legs, faints every now and then. The special train rushes straight ahead with no control. The second station is notified” – he finished with a faint voice.

There was a moment of long silence. Finally, someone whispered:

“What will happen now?!”

“What will happen now?!” everyone repeated like an echo.

“Nothing!” burst out the clear-headed stationmaster. “The line is free. The boiler is in good condition, it will not break. Gentlemen, get on with your work. Not a word to anyone! Do not disturb the people. I’m going to get the warden. Meanwhile, telegraph the master to the second and the first station for further news!” The stationmaster said to one of the telegraphers.

“Yes?” The operator said leaning over the telegraph. Meanwhile, the station was becoming noisier. The distinguished of Ryszwil gathered to welcome their children. Shiny carriages of various kind and type slowly entered the huge asphalt yard. Spacious landaus were pulled by serious percherons. Fiacres with thoroughbreds, brakes, and britzkas made their way onto the square. Then there were nags with short hair, treading and ringing cheerfully with bells that dragged

low bizarrely-shaped traps.⁴⁰⁵ The crack of whips and the screams of cart-drivers mixed with the whirring of wheels and the snorting of horses. Elegantly dressed men jumped out first in front of the porch and helped finely dressed women to get off the carriages.

Soon, the previously empty platform was crowded. Its mosaic floor seemed to have turned into a delirious moving meadow full of colorful flowers. From clouds of snow-white muslin abundantly flowered roses in various colors, blue centauries, yellow strawflowers, dark striped and dotted flowers, flowers with mixed colors like garden pansy. There were also plenty of expensive jewels, from tearful pearls, flickering diamonds to purple corals and bloody rubies. These bright glasses held delicious busts, naked shoulders, beautifully outlined necks, shapely heads surrounded by waves of various shades of hair, under which proud foreheads shone and eyes sparkled no less than diamonds.

Above all this, there hovered mixed scents of perfumes and a stream of electric light poured from above, which increased the splendor of attire, simultaneously intensifying the white matt of the various faces with delicate features, usually beautiful, sometimes thoughtless, and sometimes, especially in the case of men, shriveled and strangely tired.

While the multicolored crowd was talking, laughing, exchanging bows and hugs, telegraphs clicked tirelessly in the office and narrow strips of paper were coming out of them, full of bad news, which spread fear and anxiety among the clerks. The impatient gazes continuously turned to the big closed doors, waiting for an order from higher authority.

“At last!” a few voices whispered.

The door opened and the operators saw the long-awaited warden, and behind him the stationmaster.

“Well, what is it?!” the first one said tersely.

“It’s bad, sir” one of the clerks replied, handing him the paper.

“I’m not asking “how,” the warden snarled angrily and started reading in half-voice: “The special train went past our second station with all its momentum. We did not see any passengers. They probably do not know about anything. The locomotive seems to be alright. The whole line was notified. We await your news.”

“What are they laughing at?” The warden hissed through his teeth, impatiently observing at the platform, from where the muffled echo of a laughter

405 Fiacre – a form of hackney coach; nag – old and weak horse; trap – light and small carriage.

came. Then, having sat down, he put his head against his hands and sat for a while in silence.

Officials observed his cloudy face like a rainbow, waiting what would he say?

“Paper!” the warden commanded shortly.

Seconds later, he had a whole pile of paper in front of him. He took one piece, stopped to think, and then wrote quickly: “To the stationmaster of the first station. Pay urgent attention to the locomotive of the special train and let us know, judging by the smoke and steam, how far can the train go, how fast is it going, more or less, and whether it is slowing down.”

“Send it quickly!” he turned to one of the clerks. The clerk grabbed the card eagerly, while the others were listening to the clicking keys to grasp the contents of the message.

“Do you have a plan?” the stationmaster asked the warden.

“And you?!” the warden answered in an irritated tone.

“Me? No!”

“So let’s wait patiently” whispered the warden and nervously pulled his shaggy beard.

There was a long moment of tiring silence, so that one could hear the rattle of the still arriving carriages or the half-finished sentences and exclamations of the crowd moving on the platform. Suddenly the bell rang. Everyone rose quickly from their seats. The warden ran to the telegraph, leaned over a piece of paper and the whole office looked from behind his back.

“It passed our station” the warden read haltingly. “We couldn’t see anyone in the car windows, they are all asleep, and suspect no danger. Unfortunately, there is plenty of steam and fuel in the locomotive. The train needed only about two minutes for the last kilometer, and it loses no speed.”

“What do we do? Advise!” the stationmaster finally spoke with a changed voice.

“Run a second train against it” someone whispered shyly.

“Who will drive it?” a voice from the corner answered.

“Make an embankment!” somebody threw it in from the side.

“Or maybe build a bridge across the river?!” mocked the stationmaster. “This is a practical advice, too!”

It became quiet again. Faces assumed an expression of helpless despondency, eyes looked imploringly at the warden. He remained silent; his face was gray, his mouth grinned. Finally, he tapped his forehead several times and moaned in a tone full of resignation:

“There’s nothing we can do, nothing! Come on, gentlemen, we have to tell them everything.”

Having said that, the warden took the telegram in his trembling hand and walked out heavily; behind him dragged all the clerks in a long line.

The sudden arrival of these sad characters caused a commotion on the platform.

“What happened? What kind of funeral procession is this?” remarks flew in the air.

And they squeezed through the crowd in silence, their heads hanging low. They walked slowly as if trying to delay the decisive moment of revealing their secret.

Finally, the balustrade stopped the parade. The warden, feeling that it was impossible to go any further, turned around, looked in the distracted faces of the fancy crowd, became even more pale, and began to speak in a worried voice:

“Dear citizens of Ryszwill! We received a telegram, of which I feel obliged to inform everyone.”

“It’s something bad! . . .” someone said from one side.

“Some kind of crash, surely!” numerous voices were heard.

“Quiet!” someone else ordered.

“Yes! Quiet!” others ordered as well.

Everyone became silent, and the warden started reading the short sentences, shooting them like bullets that pierced the hearts of the listeners, each of them bigger and heavier, carrying more and more horror. “and it loses no speed. . .” finished the warden.

As his eyes raised, he could think that there was a bunch of dead people in front of him, dressed in bright shrouds; all faces were so pale, lips white, and eyes blurred like matt glass. The last row did not know what was going on yet, but they felt that something extraordinary and terrible had occurred.

“What happened?. . . Say it now!” A storm of nervous questions broke up, which turned into dead silence and stupor as the back rows heard the answer.

Finally, the numb crowd came to their senses for a moment.

All the eyes looked into the pale face of the warden, demanding from him some explanation, consolation, or rescue. And he, having felt the pupils of the crowd pointed at him, turned around and looked at the river. Thousands of eyes followed his gaze – and deep fear gripped everyone.

The ribbon writhing at the foot of the cliff was a clear response. They looked silently at the river, with their eyes wide open, covered with cold sweat, unable to take their eyes away from the shining wave, which sinisterly roared and crashed against the marble slabs of the terrace. After a while, frozen hearts started beating rapidly, like birds beat their wings in a cage, and then a few short sobs broke off, which turned into a general quiet moan.

This first voice of sorrow in the silent crowd aroused a man from deep reflection. The man stood out from the exquisite crowd not only because of his simple gray sweatshirt. His face was also darker, almost brown, as if it were hot from the sun or dark from smoke. His features were also sharper, less delicate, but full of energy and will; all this – with his impressive athletic posture – gave him a distinct appealing charm of strong natural beauty among the overrefined faces. The man stepped out from the crowd at once and confidently started walking along the rails, leaving Ryszwil behind.

Almost two kilometers from the station, over the tracks, there was a pedestrian bridge under which trains passed. In this place, the man got off the tracks, and quickly climbed onto the embankment and then on the bridge. The sun was gone and left only some pink on the edges of white clouds; the lilac background of the sky outlined the dark silhouettes of telegraph poles and distant trees.

In front of him, there was a yellow canvas of the railway track and two rails shining with silver. Soon, the last glow of the evening light went out. Trees, poles, and rails dispersed in the night. This brief dead moment came when the day passed away and the night had not yet awoken. It was gray and very quiet. After a while, a sleepy wind began blowing and carried the scent of fields and meadows – then it fainted in the valley. The azure sky was now dark blue, and a summer night quietly emerged with the lights of vivid stars. The man took off his hat, unzipped the sweatshirt on his chest and greedily drank the cool fresh air. From time to time, he looked behind and saw a pale trail of electric light behind him, and then he stared again into the dark distance and listened carefully.

“I guess the time has come,” he whispered, and his nostrils began twitching. Indeed, two fire spots flickered in the distance and slowly began growing. Soon, one could recognize two big headlights of the approaching train. Finally, the night showed the funnel and the cloud of smoke mixed with sparks. The huge locomotive emerged from the shadows breathing heavily and rolling on the rails like a giant monster. In its regular roar, one could feel the blind power of the unleashed element and the merciless indifference of the soulless machine. Behind the locomotive, the enslaved cars rolled obediently. The first car carried teachers. There was dead silence inside, only interrupted by the rustle of teachers’ breaths, who lied down on benches in heavy sleep, without dreams or phantasms. The indifference of the dead and the exhaustion of the tired were visible on their withered faces. In the pale light, they made an impression of clogged statues, which the wind threw down from pedestals and swept off of their feet. Despite the stuffy air, some people covered their faces as if they were ashamed of something or afraid of the light. They did not know for sure where they were going

or what awaited them at the end of their journey? Anyway, for them, death only meant not waking up.

In the next cars, there were children – boys and girls – arranged according to the age, of all ages and heights. The older ones were mostly asleep, tired after the long weekend, but they were not as calm as their teachers. The children's breaths were faster and less regular. Some of them grabbed the rails of benches as if they wanted to wake themselves up but, after a while, their weak hands fell down and a sigh came from their breasts as if to complain that they were so weak! Other faces showed a stigma of an unspeakable longing. Some eyes were half-open, and there was an expression of extraordinary horror and unknown sorrow in them. Big tears dripped from under some eyelids. Apparently, a tiring nightmare lied on the chests of many, as they kept on twitching nervously and catching air with their pale lips.

It seemed that others had wonderful and delightful dreams, because they stretched out their thin hands in a dreamy movement, and a smile appeared on their thirsty lips, which showed melancholy, rather than joy. Everybody was united by some sad feelings and unconscious anxiety, which seemed to circulate in the midst of the sleeping crowd. The younger children couldn't fall asleep because of this, but they joined in pairs or small groups and talked quietly. A boy sitting on the ground with his head resting on a girl's knees repeatedly asked her – "Leave me alone!" – and his lips were trembling from a muffled cry.

She finally put her little hands on his forehead asking, "Is it fine now?"

"It's fine," he replied with a delighted expression on his face.

"Why?" she asked, bending over him.

"Because I am not thinking about anything!" he whispered, put his arm around her neck, and closed his eyes. In the other corner, also next to a window, there was a child with an unusually delicate and sad face, who said to others, pointing at the flying sparks: "They ignite to die out."

"And what will be left of them?" whispered someone from the side.

"Smoke!" he replied, and a cold shudder ran through his body.

Some other boy sat in silence. He was so thin and had so much suffering in his face that one of the girls gave him a cookie, as she thought that he was hungry. He pushed her away, smiling bitterly.

"I don't want to eat, but I have a terrible hunger and emptiness here!" he pointed to his chest.

At the end of the carriage, a small group of people tried in vain to open tightly closed doors. Sweat broke out on their temples and a huge effort appeared in their eyes. When one of them slipped and fell down, the rest of them sat around him and complained: "We are so weak!" they quietly started crying.

Meanwhile, the candles in the lanterns were dying out, and as the darkness grew, the crying and secret anxiety intensified. The scared children cuddled up and sobbed. The tireless rumble of wheels deafened the weeping, while the relentless locomotive, having covered the whole train with a plume of smoke, kept moving onward, carrying those sleepy and crying cars to death and perdition.

As the train approached, an increasingly powerful storm of mixed feelings broke in the chest of the waiting man. Thoughts lit up in his brain as quickly as lightnings.

“All this rushes straight ahead,” he whispered, “with no control, to annihilate the town of Ryszwil. The relentless necessity bodes their death. I am from the lower coast, from which they carelessly separated themselves with the river currents and the balustrade of marble and gold. And now historical Nemesis brings her anger in revenge. . . I may not move, I may remain motionless – dead as a doornail – she will announce the death sentence herself; this terrifying and blind goddess. Blind!”

This thought filled his soul with irritation and pain.

Suddenly, he felt as if he had become a slave. . .

He understood that no dam would be able to stop the insane run or change the track of the train; only a conscious force could get on the train to defeat the blind gods. He burnt with a zeal and grew with this inner fire; he felt as if his head reached the clouds and that the stars hang just above his head. . . The red moon just rolled out from behind the forest, lighting the darkness of the night. In this fantastic light, the man on the bridge looked like a phantom. He had a pale face and lightnings in his eyes.

It was clear from his leaning posture, quickly moving chest, and eyes glued to the approaching train’s headlight that these two hostile powers will in a moment fight to death.

In a few seconds, the locomotive was only a few fathoms away from the bridge; its giant headlights flooded the wooden construction with a bloody glow and even brighter flame flashed on the face of the man on the bridge.

He quickly approached the opposite edge and wound up, preparing for a mad jump. . .

At this moment, the funnel puffed a new cloud that covered everything. . .

Meanwhile, Ryszwil was going through hard times, tiring as a sleepless night. The horrible news spread all over the city with lightning speed, making people moan, cry, fear, and fall in despair. That evening there was not a single person in Ryszwil who would remain peaceful, because everyone had a part of own blood, bones, and heart on the train in the form of their offspring. Therefore, despite the deep night, no one in the city was asleep. Those who found no place on

the railway station or on the square stood on the balconies, which became like clumps full of flowers. The difference was that the faces of those flowers were no less tired and painful than the caryatids that carry the balconies. At times, this tiring wait for the dangerous catastrophe, this tense uncertainty about what would happen, accompanied by a feeling that it will be something terrible, drove the crowd crazy.

“Let it finally happen!” Such though trembled in all brains at the time, yet nobody dared to say it aloud. Despite that one could predict with almost mathematical certainty that the alabaster railing will not hold the train, and that it had to fall into the abyss and sink in the river, some comfort and unjustified hope squeezed through despair, anxiety, and fear. The people of Ryszwil could not comprehend that the same force that provided them with grain from far-away fields, crystal from the mountains, or corals and pearls from the depths of the oceans would turn against them and kill their offspring. And when they heard the news, the sight of the track ending just at the edge of a cliff, and the roar of the waves crashing on white marble dispersed all doubt – they still clung on to the most bizarre means to remove the vision of defeat.

All the city dignitaries and the fire brigade were called to the platform, soldiers were deployed along the track. With their hair loose and mad eyes, women took off the jewels from their hands and necks and threw them into the river, as if they wanted to beg for her help – or maybe they were ashamed to be so well-dressed on the day their children were to die? At times, a stream of questions appeared: Why was the river deepened? Why was there no bridge to the opposite side?! But it soon went quiet, because everyone found the answer at the bottom of their heart and fell silent, full of dreadful guilt. Until now, they thought there were no limits for them, so the despair of their powerlessness was even stronger. They were writhing around the platform like mad, cursing the city authorities, themselves, everyone, and everything.

Each time after such a paroxysm of rage the exhausted crowd calmed down for a moment, and these moments were utterly tragic. There was dead silence on the platform. On some cheeks appeared brick-red blushes, lower jaws were moving like in a fever. Other faces were pale like canvas, while big and silent tears were rolling down from motionless eyes. Electric lamps spread blue streams of light on the tired heads, the crystal vault sparkled with all the splendor of gilding and frescoes, while at stable intervals bells rang for alarm among the sobbing. It was at one of those moments, as difficult as dying, that an old man with great-grandchildren on the train knelt down and made signs of the cross on his shaking head. At the same moment, someone shouted with a penetrating voice: “It’s coming! . . .” and he fell to his knees. “It’s coming! . . .” a terrible scream

came out from a thousand breasts and a huge cry emerged from the crowd and pulled everyone to the ground.

“Our Father, who art in heaven,” moaned the shaking old man.

“Our Father, who art in heaven,” repeated all the sobbing lips while tearful eyes rose up but, instead of heaven, they saw the paintings and the gold on the crystal vault. The old man became even more morose, his hands began to tremble even more and, sobbing like a child, he continued to pray:

“Hallowed be thy Name. . .” repeated the crowd after him. “Thy kingdom come. . .” the crowd said more quietly. “Thy will be done, on earth. . .” the crowd whispered and suddenly fell silent, for they all felt that they had never before longed for either the Name or the Kingdom, or God’s will on earth; so they did not dare to blaspheme, for in the distance shone ever more clearly the sinister eyes of the approaching train.

“And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive. . .” the old man stumbled, suddenly grabbed his head, fell on the stone floor, and moaned: “Forgive us the lie!”

The crowd cried out of madness that it could not even pray. Meanwhile, the train was coming under the arcades.

A new terrible storm of cries threw the crowd on the ground so that the platform looked like a field mowed in one fell swoop. The atmosphere became eerie, only the Ryszvil bells were raging and the furious locomotive growling while the rails rang with sadness. A terrifying whistle cut through the air. All the Ryszvil bells suddenly fell silent. Calmed by the wise hand of an unexpected engine driver, the train stopped at once. And when the clouds dispersed, in the bloody glow of locomotive headlights stood the man. His gray sweatshirt stretched on his chest, his temple veins swelled, and flames covered his face. His fiery Jupiter eyes looked at the opposite low side of the river, where golden glimmer glowed over the horizon as if the sun was coming back, and from the night’s silence flew over the quiet wave a trembling bell-like voice of singing sparrows – loud and clearly calling everyone: “Arise, everyone! . . .”

Kharkiv

Gustaw Daniłowski (1871–1927) – novelist, poet, publicist.

First printed in: G. Daniłowski, “Pociąg,” in: *Prawda. Księga zbiorowa dla uczczenia dwudziestopięciolecia działalności Aleksandra Świętochowskiego*, Lviv, 1899, pp. 106–114.

“A brave girl”

(An Impression from the Life of American Railroads)

In the Middle of Nowhere

Old Wilson, the head of the West End Station on the Two Oceans line,⁴⁰⁶ felt unwell for the last few days. He was not overworked, because a small station in the Rocky Mountains, far from human settlements, where travelers arrived only by accident, was not very busy. There were only two trains a day and they only passed by, there were some official telegrams and that was all there was to be done. Anyway, he could also ask for help his only child, the nicest girl in the world. When Little Mary – as he lovingly called her – did all her duties on the farm, she would usually run down and spend hours at the telegraph, following the quickly moving telegrams, which were for her enough for all the company and fun.

And yet, Little Mary didn't spend the whole day at the station without purpose. She had an important, very important reasons that she hid at the bottom of her virgin heart.

This “important reason” was James, a backup engine driver, assigned to the West End station a year ago.

He left twice a week, changing his friend up to S[an] Francisco, and later he was free as a bird to spend all his free time with Little Mary, never having enough of her company and beautiful face.

A Love Idyll

It is very natural that young people, left alone and spending their time all day long together, had to fall in love with each other.

Their healthy natures, unspoiled by civilization, unknowingly chasing each other, were unaware of their mutual feelings.

It was enough for them that they were together, that nothing bothered them in their endless conversations and confessions. They did not care at all about the rest and the definition of the feeling.

They were not surprised at all that one time, when Mary fell off a rock and sprained her leg, James, big old James, terrified about the accident, cried out of joy like a child when he saw that the injury “his girl” suffered was ultimately not

406 There was never a line with this name, but it is worth mentioning that this name was used earlier in 1876 by Henryk Sienkiewicz in his *Listy z podróży do Ameryki*. For an English edition, see *Portrait of America: Letters of Henry Sienkiewicz*, trans. and ed. Ch. Morley, New York, 1959.

that severe. It was also natural that, whenever James drove away, he would receive a hearty, very hearty handshake and a reminder to be careful and . . . come back as soon as possible. It took an accident for the secret mutual feeling to erupt with an exuberant force and reveal to all – even to them – that they love each other to death, and that they are everything for each other.

A Terrible Night

Once James was called out of the blue to replace a sick engineer at the neighboring station a dozen miles away. He left at once, leaving Little Mary alone at the station, as she was on duty, replacing her weak father.

Mary sat down with a book in the office and immersed herself in a story, sometimes interrupted by the tapping telegraph. Just before evening, a telegram came informing that a train will arrive around midnight with 100,000 dollars for one of the owners of a nearby sawmill. West End Station was supposed to keep the money in cash register until the recipient collects it. “All right” typed Mary back and returned to the book.

Time went by so fast that she did not notice when the signals heralding the arrival of the train ringed. After a short stop at the station, the train departed.

Having received the parcels and the money, Mary returned to the office and looked out of the window into the dark night, and returned to thinking. . .

Suddenly, shadows swooshed quickly behind the window. . . Moved by intuition, she ran to the window and tried to penetrate the darkness. . . After a while, when her eyes accustomed to the darkness, she saw three horrifying figures lurking under the wall. . .

Without a second thought, she rushed to the front door, locked it, then ran into the office and blocked the door behind her, then she took a chair. . . Her eyes fell on the telegraph. . . the thought came like a lightning bolt. . . there was a rescue!

Without losing a second, she sent a telegram to the nearest station asking for help.

Meanwhile, the bandits, stuck behind the closed door, began forcing their way through, knowing that nobody would stop them. In a few minutes, a dozen at most, the girl and the money will fall into their hands. . .

To the Rescue

A traffic officer approached James with an alarming message: “West End Station is under assault!” James’s soul trembled. His girl was in danger!

In just a few seconds, he was ready to leave. A few armed workers hopped on the train, ready to rush to the rescue. After a terrifying whistle, the machine filled

with full steam power rushed forward. . . With his hand on the regulator, with his eyes staring far ahead, leaning forward as if trying to fly, James accelerated to reach West End Station in time.

The insane run, full of fear, seemed to have lasted for centuries. Finally, West End Station lights flashed in the distance! . . . After one more minute, the machine stopped at the station.

They arrived in time! The bandits, terrified by the unexpected help, got caught at the moment when they had just forced their way into the office. Little Mary stood there, ready for the final yet hopeless defense! When she saw James, she ran to him, and he, forgetting everything, lifted up “his girl” and smothered her with kisses. . .

First printed in: “Zuch dziewczyna. (Obrazek z życia amerykańskich kolejarzy),” *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* 205/1911.

Chapter Five The Assassination of Świnica: About a Railroad That Never Happened and a Problem That Remained

The summit is jagged, bare, and granite, while two cracks in the mountain lead the way to its top, but you should follow them with great caution, because it leads over the chasm of the Valley of Five Ponds. The view from the top of Świnica is inexpressible.

– Walery Eljasz, “Najwyższy szczyt w Tatrach polskich (7196 stóp)”, *Kłosy*, 262/1870.

The Jungfrau railroad line penetrating the permafrost kingdom of petrified death was a serious assassination.

– Henryk Kunzek, *Czyżby tryumf nonsensu?! Rzecz w sprawie kolejki na Świnicę*, Cracow, 1913.

1. Prolog

The history of rail results from the meeting of words with machines. We must add that not only with machines. Apart from all that constitutes the machine component of railroads, like tracks, locomotives, cars, or station buildings, there is also the textual component. People who design the railroad equipment and those who operate the machines connect both components. Therefore, there are timetables, regulations, service reports, and press reports on the opening of a line or on catastrophes. . . There are medals commemorating tunnel excavations, monuments for heroic workers, plaques commemorating the victims of construction works. It is impossible to imagine the machine component without the text supplement. From the very beginning, various texts accompany the operation of machines and equipment, and the work of people. Some of them concern directly the railroad, like regulations for conductors, and some of them indirectly, like advertising posters and commemorative plaques. Although the boundaries of textual construction probably exist, it is not easy to delineate them. There must be a line separating texts obligatory for the railroad, like timetables used by conductors, and facultative texts like timetables for passengers published in

various forms. We may think about the history of railroads in terms of different strategies of its construction, which would influence the approach to the textual component of railroads. We cannot omit this component, though we may construct history in a way that pays less attention to the textual supplement than the machine component. In a reversed scenario, with the textual body in the center of attention, a researcher would have to consider its usefulness. Whom and how did texts serve? How did they help? Did they help? How did they increase railroad productivity? The latter way of handling the railroad world, in which the textual concept takes the main place in research, is sometimes referred to as the cultural history of the railroads. This name – like any other name – is both good and bad. It is simultaneously fortunate and suffering from a serious defect. The name is good, because it allows scholars to somehow distinguish works that exceed classical railroad history. Such works do not analyze particular stages of construction, review train composition, deal with service fluctuation, or investigate root causes for bankruptcies that affect once profitable lines. The works in the cultural history of railroads focus on texts produced by the railroads, especially texts facultative for the creation of a railroad company. However, the name “cultural history of railroads” is misleading, because it suggests that the further we get from the machine, the closer we get to culture. Railroad is a part of culture. It is part of the material culture. Nobody has ever tried to question this intracultural location. Therefore, when we speak of “cultural history,” we should remember that it is a substitute label that refers to a certain type of reflection on railroads.

The words of people connected in any way to the railroads always participate in the meetings of texts and machines that give birth to the history of railroad. However, there is one very interesting case that blurs the clarity of such approach: plans and projects that never entered the implementation phase. Plans preceded the construction of any railroad ever built. Before the first train ran, the plans were in the heads of engineers, then on the desks of planners, and in various texts that presented the advantages of the future construction. The history of any railroad does not start on the day of its inauguration. Every railroad has its prenatal period – sometimes a very long one. Another aspect are the changes during the construction that may change the outcome from the project in the prenatal phase. We may be sure of one thing: every railroad is announced. The longer the line, the more important it was for economy or culture, the longer, richer, and more interesting was the prenatal period. It was more interesting, because it included more sketched projects later discussed in their various forms. Ultimately, the people involved could only select one of the projects, which doomed the rest of them to be forgotten. Out of a few discussed projects of the Warsaw-Vienna railroad only one remains and serves to this day. Out of several

planned ways of penetrating the Alps by *Lötschbergbahn*, people decided to execute the one with the huge and impressive Lötschberg Tunnel that we still use today. The projects that for some reasons lost the competition and ended up discarded are part of the prehistory of every grand railroad station. The prenatal period of each construction holds texts that accompany such undertaking, such as cost calculations, road plans, tracks and stations layout designs, and accompanying projects like documents on the prospective benefits from the new railroad for the society. In this case, the boundary between what had to, and what becomes completely blurred.

Among the plans and projects, which might interest historians who investigate the cultural history of railroads, there are some that never entered the implementation phase and other that in no way followed the original plans. All of them are worth investigating. They often resemble their epoch better and fuller than the constructed projects. The turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries was a very favorable time of the boldest and most ambitious projects of railroads. Moreover, this period witnessed projects that only echo in its contemporary executions. The proof of railroad planning popularity is not only in the quantity and quality of projects of different levels of detail. The proof also emerges from the dissemination of ideas. Long and short discussions on what engineers created in their studios or what just hatched in their heads appeared in the daily press. Drawings, maps, sketches, and very preliminary calculations often accompanied these verbal descriptions. Of course, it is difficult to talk about a single genre of a press text that served to present railroad plans. On the one hand, there were large multi-page multi-part forms which – apart from text – contained sketches, plans, and lists. On the other hand, there were short notes with a name of the planned project only mentioned. However, all texts about planned investments reveal what we may call a deep conviction about the technical feasibility of a project. In these texts, the nineteenth century was as splendid as nowhere else. Press texts about railroad projects conveyed the conviction that progress has a steady direction and dynamics. In the world of railroad engineering, this conviction meant that all natural obstacles are surmountable, and that the execution of even the boldest and the most ambitious projects is only a matter of time: the time needed to work out certain construction details or raise funds. The Polish report on the French project to lay tracks through the Sahara ends in a very characteristic way: “The dream is to come true in twelve years.”⁴⁰⁷

407 See “Koleją przez Saharę,” *Świat* 12/1914, p. 11.

2. The Death of Rudolf Zakopiańczyk

The article “Railways of the Future,” published in the English weekly *Morpeth Herald*, provides a concise description of plans in the field of railroad transportation. The article opens with a statement that a car may soon become a serious rival of the train. However, the article does not mention airplanes as – for a long time – they will remain only “spasmodic and unreliable” competitors of train travel.⁴⁰⁸ When discussing the directions of the “mechanical evolution,” the anonymous author draws attention to the role that electricity is likely to play in powering future locomotives. Electricity will guarantee them a speed of which the fastest steam locomotives are incapable. The speed of future trains will be extremely important, because railroad travel is soon to enter the era of intercontinental travel. This new type of travel requires two solutions: luxury trains, which already run on the routes of Europe, Asia, and North America, and new investments that will form a coherent “intercontinental system.” In the part of the article entitled “Intercontinental System,” we read:

Possibly, too, at no very distant date, it will be possible to travel in luxury right into or across the heart of the Dark Continent. That great project of the Cape to Cairo railway is slowly but surely coming within range of practicality and completion. In the north the section from Cairo to Khartoum (1,400 miles) already exists, while in the south, rail-head was for some time at Broken Hill, no less than 2,016 miles from Cape Town, but is now being pushed on towards the border of the Congo Free State. The natural difficulties encountered are of no mean order, as for instance, the bridge over the Zambezi gorge at Victoria Falls, which is crossed in a single span of 500 feet at a height of 400 feet above the water.

The future described by the anonymous author has a clear geographical orientation, because it is the future of the United Kingdom. The British perspective is present throughout the whole text. Luxury and freedom to travel are the qualities that a British traveler will one day experience. Therefore, the railroad map of the future has its privileged location: London. The author characterizes the rest of the map from the London perspective:

Cairo may someday become a sort of Charing Cross in the great inter-continental railway of the future. A line from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf is already in sight. The section from Konieh to Eregli to Bugurlu was opened in 1904, and the German promoters of this Anatolian section propose to extend it to Adana immediately. Then the extension of the line through Mesopotamia to Bagdad is only a matter of time.

408 See “Railways of the Future,” *Morpeth Herald* 1908 (November 7), p. 7. Further quotes come from this source.

In the section “Half Round the World by Rail,” the new eastern line turns out to go beyond Asia and connect the Old and the New World:

When the Bagdad railway is finished, it will be a comparatively simple matter to link up, say Alexandria and Bassorah, on the Persian Gulf, a total distance of 1,250 miles: and thence across Southern Persia and Beluchistan to join the Indian system at Kurracheo. It is even now feasible to traverse by rail most of the long journey across our Indian possessions to Kuenlong on the Chinese frontier, whence to Shanghai would be a mere 1,500 miles. / But not content with enabling the traveller of the future to travel by rail from Paris to Pekin via Cairo and Calcutta, railway engineers will undoubtedly go further. A project for constructing a tunnel under Behring Straits has already been seriously discussed. This link between the Old World and the New would only be 38½ miles long, and as there are two islands en route, none of the three sections need be longer than, say, the St. Gothard tunnel under the Alps. The Asiatic terminus of the proposed line would be at Kansk of the Trans-Siberian railway, while the American end would eventually join up with the Canadian Pacific system. The estimated cost (£47,000,000) is the principal obstacle: otherwise the project is quite feasible. Its realisation would enable the inveterate railway traveller to proceed from Calais to Montreal, New York, or perhaps, even Buenos Ayres, without changing carriages, and so avoid the terrors of sea sickness.

The next two parts of the article take the reader to South America and detail how the “Pan-American Railroad” to Buenos Aires would run. This offers an opportunity to present the “marvel of engineering,” that is, the already completed line of the railroad that crosses the Andes and on several sections utilizes the rack railroad system with the third rail.⁴⁰⁹ The mountains and rack railroads are a pretext to return from the distant Andes to the Alps, which are dear to the hearts of the English:

Speaking of mountain railways one's thoughts naturally turn to Switzerland with its tourist haunted peaks. The Jungfrau railway has been found so successful that it is proposed to carry it up to the Jungfrau Joch – 11,150 feet. Even the Matterhorn, notwithstanding the protests of mountaineers and nature-lovers, is in danger of desecration. A mountain railway is suggested from Zermatt to the summit, which is 14,780 feet high.

409 The fascination with technical progress and long tunnels – the best documentation of this progress – makes the author fantasize, for instance, about a ten-mile-long spiral tunnel crossing the ridge of the Andes, equipped with a third rail of the Abt system. Although the Chilean route did use the Abt system in a few sections, such a spiral tunnel was never built in the Andes. The only two short spiral tunnels with a track equipped with a third rail of the Abt system appeared in 1914 in Switzerland, on the ascent to the tunnel under Furka Pass.

It seems that only one train managed to run on the line from Asia to America through the Bering Strait that the article sketches. In 1916, the provincial periodical *Sibirskiye Zapiski* from Krasnoyarsk published a prose poem entitled “Ekspres. Sibirskaya fantasya” under the name of Dozorov. Its author, Alexei Gastev, reports there on the journey of the future between the Ural Mountains and Alaska that people will be able to make by the “Panorama” train.⁴¹⁰ Much earlier, Michel Verne completed an even more ambitious literary project of connecting the Old and the New World. The story “An Express of the Future” outlines a vision of a gigantic engineering structure, namely a connection between America and Europe that runs under the Atlantic. In a suboceanic tunnel, trains were to swiftly move propelled by compressed-air.⁴¹¹

Poland is absent on the railroad map of the future sketched out in the above British article. However, it is present on other maps. Poland was on the route of the planned main line from London to India, which was to utilize existing European lines. Among the cities and towns that the line to the East would run through were Aleksandrów and Warsaw.⁴¹² Transit through Poland became an idea considered after Russia opened the Orenburg-Tashkent connection, as it made it a very realistic prospect to reach India by rail via Afghanistan. By then, the Russian train had already reached Kushka near the Afghan border.⁴¹³ However, I would like to discuss those Polish projects that reflected contemporary Polish interests and perceptions of railroad matters. One of such domestic plans went down in history as the Zakopane-Świnica railroad. When we analyze the plan, we must not forget that – from the very beginning – the European railroad system ruled out particularity. A bold plan drawn by an engineer from Lviv had to consider everything thought and designed in the West. The line from Zakopane to Świnica peak in the Tatra Mountains was not supposed to be a part of the European transport system. It was meant to be a local line, but nevertheless a railroad; a European line based on similar local connections like the ones in Switzerland. The Świnica railroad was also European in the sense that

410 See K. Johansson, *Aleksej Gastev. Proletarian Bard of the Machine Age*, Stockholm, 1983, pp. 88–93. The book includes the poem in Russian, see pp. 140–151.

411 See J. Verne [in fact M. Verne,] “Pospieszny pociąg w przyszłości,” *Ziarno* 24/1905; The French original first appeared as M. J. Verne, “Un Express de l’avenir,” *Le Figaro. Supplément Littéraire* 35/1888.

412 See “Połączenie Londynu z Kalkutą przez Berlin i Warszawę,” *Przegląd Techniczny* 1/1908, pp. 11–12.

413 See Ch. Beresford, *Russian Railways towards India*, London, 1906. I use the reprint dated New Delhi, 2013.

its creators faced the same values conflict as the creators of the Jungfrau and Matterhorn lines. If we want to understand the intentions of the Świnica railroad designers, we must consider this broader context. Therefore, the history of the Zakopane line idea should begin in Switzerland, May 1871, on the day of inauguration of the Mount Rigi railroad line.

Józef Pollak reminds us of the Mount Rigi railroad in a short story published in the summer of 1911 by the Cracow daily *Nowa Reforma*. The main character is Rudolf Vitznauer, a man almost in his eighties who, as we read in the first sentence, was “liked and respected”⁴¹⁴ by all the highlanders in the area. From what area? The author does not mention the name of the place where the action happens, but it can be easily reconstructed. The village is in the mountains near a blue-green lake. The name of the hero is a *nom parlant*. “Vitznauer” means “the inhabitant of Vitznau,” a small village at the picturesque Lake Lucerne, within the borders of the Swiss canton of Lucerne. In May 1871, the first rack railroad in Europe began from a station in Vitznau. Shortly afterward, the train crossed the border of the Schwyz canton and reached the top of Rigi. In the article from *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, which confirms the inauguration of the connection, we find words indicating that – apart from abundant admiration – fears and anxieties also accompanied the occasion: “Let us not think that an enterprise like the Rigi railroad could harm any poetry present in the Swiss and Alpine landscape: mortal human hand did not harm the mighty creation of nature. Its beauty remains unspoiled. Only now more people will be able to witness it. The poetry will triumph.”⁴¹⁵

The London illustrated weekly *The Graphic* published an extensive coverage about the new line. The readers received a full page of the magazine composed of six illustrations that depict the train and various fragments of the inaugurated route. An article entitled “The Rigi Railway” accompanies the visual part of the coverage. A kind of commentary referring to the rapid changes happening in Switzerland precedes the technical characteristics of the new line and the description of the Riggensbach’s rack system with the third rail. These changes are to allow the “lazy traveler” to see the mountain scenery “without leaving the car.” Later, the ironic voice in the commentary becomes even stronger:

But who would have dreamt a few years ago that we should ever climb our old friend the Rigi, most hackneyed, and yet, in some respects, most delightful of Swiss eminences, by

414 See J. Pollak, “Rudolf Vitznauer,” *Nowa Reforma* 392/1911 (August 29), morning issue.

All further quotes come from this source.

415 “Kolej żelazna góry Rigi,” *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 183/1871, p. 5.

means of a steam locomotive? We almost incline to wager that before the end of the century every “prominent” peak in the Republic – Mont Blanc, the Matterhorn, nay, even the crumbling Diablerets – will be provided with its own line. By that time the Alpine Club will have emigrated in disgust to the Andes.⁴¹⁶

In Pollak’s story about Rudolf Vitznauer, fears and anxieties about the fate of Rigi return and become the main motivation of the protagonist’s actions. The short story has a simple plot. One day, the old and popular highlander hears mysterious sounds that turn out to be logging. The sounds come from the slope of a mountain. The main character encounters an engineer who explains that, soon, a train will take anyone to the top of the mountain. Having learned about the construction of the railroad line, Vitznauer becomes even more gloomy and closed off. A couple of days after the first train sets off, the old man climbs to the top of the mountain, tries to pray, and. . . jumps into the lake.

Did the fate of the old Vitznauer move the readers of the Cracow daily? It might seem that the writer did everything to ensure that there was a large and non-removable distance between the story world and the world of the readers. The time of the story is not precisely set, we may only suspect the late nineteenth century because of the railroad construction. The description of the location only consists of general remarks like a mountain at a lake. The foreign-sounding name of the protagonist suggests that it may be a German-speaking area, but only may. At the same time, however, there are elements in the story that build the atmosphere of familiarity. The protagonist is deeply religious, and he is a “highlander,” which means he is more a man of the mountains than a resident of one or another German-speaking province of Europe. Even if we assume that Vitznauer’s name determined the Swiss passport of the protagonist, which not every reader had to notice, then the embedding of the fictional story in the reality of Mount Rigi still required a lot specialist knowledge, which only a few could have in Cracow of the early twentieth century. These were especially the people who traveled around the world and visited Rigi. However, even the cosmopolitans and connoisseurs of Swiss views did not necessarily know about the atmosphere that accompanied the construction of the first European rack railroad. They could not have heard about the resistance that the project – presented by the engineer Riggerbach at the end of the 1860s – encountered in Switzerland and especially in the canton of Lucerne. It is highly probable that from among the readers moved by the story of Rudolf Vitznauer in the summer of 1911, only a small percentage knew the story of the railroad on Mount Rigi, because its construction and inauguration

416 See “The Rigi Railway,” *The Graphic* 30/1871, p. 3, figures on p. 18.

happened forty years before the publication of the story! Moreover, probably only very few knew the name of the Swiss engineer Rigggenbach, whose mechanical system already served on other railroads. In order to be moved by the story from the Cracow daily, it was enough to know the name of the Polish engineer from the Lviv Polytechnic – Walerian Dzieślewski – and know about his idea to lead the railroad from Zakopane to the top of the Tatra Mountains. Thus, Rudolf Vitznauer became Rudolf Zakopiańczyk or Zakopianin, the unnamed mountain became Świnica, the unnamed lake – one of the lakes from the Valley of Five Ponds or from the Gąsienicowa Valley.⁴¹⁷ In the summer of 1911, the Swiss history from forty years ago was still alive in Poland and waiting for its definitive end. It was up to the reader from Cracow to decide whether Rudolf Zakopiańczyk would live happily until his last days or whether he would be forced to climb Świnica in order to end his noble life by jumping off a cliff. One of the significant elements of Vitznauer's biography was the fight for independence. When on a hot August morning a subscriber of *Nowa Reforma* took in his hands the issue with the story by Józef Pollak, both scenarios connected with Dzieślewski's railroad project were equally possible. Both scenarios could come to fruition or end only on paper: leading to the demise of Zakopiańczyk or the joy of true mountain lovers. . .

Before I deal with Dzieślewski's real plan, I must devote a few words to the characteristics of the fictional highlander. Why does the well-respected highlander Vitznauer, or Zakopiańczyk, is not fond of the railroad to the summit? What do we know about him? Almost nothing, because "Vitznauer was silent and withdrawn; when asked, he answered reluctantly." He took part in "the famous attack of 1813," which would mean that at the time of the action, he is already seventy years old. He has no friends and only two white goats always accompany him. We should not expect any psychological depth from the protagonist of this short story. Moreover, such a depth is not necessary in an extremely interventionist and occasional text, which requires the character to embody just one feature important for the plot. In this case, this feature is the love for mountains:

He loved the mountains with all his soul. He spent his whole lifetime among these monuments of nature, which calmly reflected in the smooth surface of the lake and

417 The unnamed lake from the story would correspond to Lake Lucerne, where Vitznauer is located. However, in order to die jumping into water from Rigi, as Vitznauer does, one has to head north, to Lake Zuger. This location of Rigi strengthens the analogy with Świnica, which is much easier to jump off or fall off – as Walery Eljasz indicates in his description of the peak – than from the Swiss plateau.

whose peaks ran breathlessly to the sky; he wanted to see a peaceful end of his life among them, as they were the most precious in his life. Every bush, every leaf, and every tree bent like an old man were the dearest thing to his heart. He looked down on highlanders who left the mountains, and he hated those who came here on holidays.

His hate for newcomers grows ever stronger as engineers and workers arrive in the mountains to increasingly change their landscape:

Hustle and bustle took hold of the village. The invaders were here. Engineers and workers with axes, in their short jackets and leather boots. And the curious people gathered around and gazed endlessly at the machines and marvels. The works progressed quickly. Trees fell, rocks parted. In a few months, the railroad was ready. The bravest among highlanders, who pretended to be acquainted with the social customs, took the rack railroad to the summit. Soon, the cottages of poor highlanders had to hide between the villas and splendid houses.

An interesting component contributes to the characteristics of Vitznauer/Zakopiańczyk: the religiousness of the old man. We know that the highlander is a deeply religious man and that – before his last trip to the summit of this modern Golgotha – he visits the church, where he “prostrated himself in front of the altar of Christ.” In the church, he prays fervently but – at the very top of the mountain – “he could not pray.” Although many times before, when he heard the bells coming from the village early in the morning, he “humbly whispered his thanksgiving prayer.” It seems that the religiousness of Vitznauer/Zakopiańczyk is very unorthodox. It is Christianity with a shade of some archaic pantheism. It is a belief in God and the sanctity of the whole Nature at the same time. This kind of attitude toward the world allows readers to understand that mountains are here a temple, a house of God, an embodiment of divinity. Prayer is a kind of communication with God. Christ’s prayer on the mountain is the archetype of such contact. Vitznauer/Zakopiańczyk does not end his life like Christ. First, he is old. Second, he commits suicide. Third, he cannot say the prayer on the top of mountain, because physical contact with the divinity of nature replaces prayer. Therefore, the sad ending reads: “And so he knelt for a long time. Then he quickly stood up, ran to the nearest tree, hugged it and kissed it, crossed himself, and then he jumped from the top of the mountain into the lake which, among large circles, hid the old highlander in its depths.”⁴¹⁸

418 At the turn of the century, Rigi was a place of a few tragic events. The English press reported on one of them, the suicide of a tourist, in “Suicide on the Rigi Railway,” *Western Daily Press* 6/1889 (June): “A telegram from Lucerne states that a tourist grew nervous while ascending the top of the Rigi Railway, and leaped out of the train just before crossing a deep gorge; he slipped over an embankment, and was killed.” Of

It is time to return from Switzerland to the Tatra Mountains. To better understand what happened in Poland at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, we must make two short stops in Switzerland: at the Jungfrau mountain and at the foot of the Matterhorn mountain; and then one more stop in Warsaw. Reports from Switzerland provided an important context for both the fictional story of the Vitznauer highlander and the real project of the engineer Dzieślewski. The quick financial success of the Rigi railroad prompted Swiss entrepreneurs to continue their investments and build new mountain railroads. Almost each of these investments encountered some form of resistance; either from the local community or, most often, from the international community invariably led by the English. This resistance could follow three different scenarios: do not influence the project implementation at all, cancel the project, or modify it significantly. The Vitznau-Rigi railroad may serve as an example of the first scenario, soon followed by another company constructing a rack railroad to the top of Rigi from the opposite side of the massif, that is, from the city of Arth located at the Zug Lake. The railroad from Zermatt to Matterhorn provides an example of a project which, due to strong resistance from the international community, only remained at the design stage. Finally, the Jungfrau railroad illustrates a compromise. When travelling from the Alps to Zakopane, it is worth stopping in Warsaw, where from November 1896, Warsaw residents could admire the Tatra Mountains and Świnica on a painting inside a rotunda on Oboźna Street.

3. “The Wholesale Opening-Up and Enjoyment Nature”

In the Warsaw press from the end of the nineteenth century we find both reports about new Swiss projects that tried to exceed the popularity of the Rigi railroad and information about the work progress on making the panorama of the Tatras available to Warsaw dwellers. The common denominator of both these coverages allows us to consider them in a close connection: a fashion for mountain. It was not a product of the late nineteenth century. Traveling through mountains became a type of cherished cultural activity even earlier. Although, a significant breakthrough in this field happened in the middle of the nineteenth century, when the train from Vienna reached the Nordic Alps and the Semmering Pass.⁴¹⁹ Put into

course, we cannot guess what could have been the reason for the tourist's nervousness and what prompted him to make this desperate jump.

419 I elaborate on it in a sketch “Semmering 1858” included as a chapter in my book *Pociąg do nowoczesności. Szkice kolejowe*.

service in 1854, the Semmering line marks the beginning of what Georg Simmel calls forty years later the “the wholesale opening-up and enjoyment of nature” (*Grossbetrieb des Naturgenusses*).⁴²⁰ The Rigi rack railroad notably strengthened this tendency. Soon after its opening, the Rigi line became a model for similar solutions implemented in Switzerland and other Alpine countries at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴²¹ The idea of painting a panoramic canvas that would recreate the view of the Tatra Mountains from the top of the Miedziane mountain belongs to the “the wholesale opening-up and enjoyment of nature.” The painting hanging in Warsaw since November 1896 was an element of a great machine. An important part of the painting was the precisely arranged exposition building. This machine was supposed to transport people to the mountains and present a substitute of a long and tiring climb up the Miedziane mountain for those who could not afford such a journey financially or physically.⁴²² Let us remember that the canvas itself was the most important part of the whole project. In order for the painting to fulfil its function, the project required the support of exquisite architects, stage designers, artists and. . . writers – all acted as composers of the so-called fake landscape. The “Tatra machine” in the building on Oboźna Street had its own manuals. Wojciech Gerson prepared the manuals long before

420 G. Simmel, “The Alpine Journey,” trans. S. Whimster, *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1991, p. 95. German original: “Alpenreisen,” *Die Zeit. Wiener Wochenschrift für Politik, Volkswirtschaft, Wissenschaft und Kunst* 54/1895, pp. 22–24.

421 A unique engineering achievement was the Swiss rack railroad to Pilatus, launched in September 1889. It used the unique Locher’s rack system to climb a 48 % grade slope. See D. Bellet, “Le Chemin de fer incliné du Mont Pilate,” *La Nature* 864/1889.

422 Quis, “Z tygodnia na tydzień,” *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 47/1896, p. 920, writes: “From now on, we will be able to make trips to the mountains every day. We will be able to go to the top of Miedziane, and enjoy the view of Tatra Mountains winds, crags, and valleys, gazing at the wonderful landscape of the Carpathian Switzerland without leaving Warsaw.” Włodzimierz Tetmajer, “Panorama Tatrzańska,” *Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne* 47/1896, p. 558, put it in a similar way: “Especially for the people who know the Tatra Mountains, it will be nice to move for a moment from the streets of Warsaw to Miedziane and look at the rocky Mięguszowiecki Summits or a valley near Wołoszyn. At the same time, those who have never seen the Tatra Mountains before will have a good idea of them, thanks to the panorama.” And one more testimony by Colonna, “Kronika tygodniowa,” *Tygodnik Romansów i Powieści* 1458/1896, p. 733: “We are overwhelmed with the lightness and freedom that we feel in the mountains; our arms and feet tremble with desire to climb the immense peaks; we feel an almost tactile breeze of white fog, hanging between the rocks, crawling between the peaks, or gently drifting over the sapphire quiet of lakes at the foot of the sleeping mountains.”

the ceremony, while Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer published *Objaśnienie do olbrzymiego obrazu “Tatry”* (Explanation of the Enormous Painting *The Tatras*) in the year of the inauguration.⁴²³ The latter work had to answer the specificity of the location where the machine was to operate, the Russian partition of Polish territory. Therefore, the “explanation” by Przerwa-Tetmajer was available in a bilingual version: Polish and Russian.

Even when the panorama was still unfinished, journalists wrote about it a lot. People also discussed it frequently when the “Tatra machine” already operated.⁴²⁴ From the extensive list of materials, I will highlight an inconspicuous advertisement that announced: “the Tatra Mountains Panorama on Oboźna street. Open every day from 10 am till dawn. Entrance fee: weekdays 45 kopecks, holidays 40 kopecks. Children half-price.” Such advert appeared in the August issue of *Zdrowie* (Health) from 1897. Offers of “truly medicinal yogurt” and “hygienic milk” surround it from the sides.⁴²⁵ It is important to notice that both offers underline that they present commodities produced to some extent by a machine. A “special factory” produced kefir, a fermented milk drink, and a “dairy farm” produced milk with a steam mill, a distillery, and a fractionating machine. Moreover, the advertisements underlined that the quality of the product strongly relied on machine production. This means that other machines supported the one presented in the panorama of the Tatra Mountains. The panorama borrowed not only the splendor of “industrialization” used in milk production but above all the seriousness of its intended use. Kefir and milk are good for health, as we read, as both are recommended “mainly to *infants, convalescents, and the sick.*” We may say that *Panorama Tatry* sent a similar message. It was supposed to be good for health and it served to provide the beauty of the Tatra Mountains to those, who could benefit from it the most.

The “wholesale opening-up and enjoyment of nature” that Simmel describes when discussing the development of Alpine tourism was in a direct relationship

423 See W. Gerson, “Panorama Tatry,” *Kurier Warszawski* 307/1894; K. Przerwa-Tetmajer, “Objaśnienie do olbrzymiego obrazu *Tatry*” [the title appears in Polish and Russian], Warsaw [1896] 1897.

424 The reader could learn from the press that the authorities planned the inauguration of the panorama for June 1896, but it actually happened in November. After the first citizens of Warsaw saw the canvas, press proudly noted the high turnout: “In the first three days of its existence, *Panorama Tatry* was very successful. Despite gray and cloudy weather, over 2000 people came to see the canvas.” “Panoramy,” *Kurier Warszawski* 326/1896, morning supplement.

425 See *Zdrowie* 143/1897.

with the development of the railroads. Before the article was finished, the Rigi railroad already operated, and more railroads like this one were planned: “The railway-line up to Eiger appears to have been finalized, and the same number of climbers who have scaled this difficult peak can now be brought up in a single day by rail.”⁴²⁶ In the next part of his text, Simmel adds what will happen thanks to the designed railroad: “I do not know anything in visible nature that bears the character of the materially transcendent as a snowscape that expresses “the summits” in its color and form.”⁴²⁷

The “wholesale opening-up and enjoyment of nature” described by Simmel regards various senses but, above all, it mostly means the mechanization of sight. It opens the “earthly unearthliness” (*iridischer Übereridischeit*). We should add that the authors of the project intended to show exactly the “earthly unearthliness” to everyone through the “railroad to Eiger.” We will not understand the idea to construct the railroad, if we do consider the “hegemony of sight” and forget that the nineteenth century constantly produced new “machines of vision:” panoramas, dioramas, kaiserpanoramas, and cinematographs. Moreover, the nineteenth century gathers huge audiences at world and national expositions; it keeps opening up new perspectives like a balcony, railroad, bike, car, or cable-car perspective; it creates arcades and department stores. However, shopping itself is just an element of the background and becomes part of the ritual, in which the promenading people observe products, other people, and themselves in mirrors. The Jungfrau railroad undertaking had a lot in common with early twentieth-century projects of “amusement parks;” it also employed similar tools, which promised breathtaking views. The Lviv observational wheel “Olbrzym” (The Giant), Ferris wheel, carousels, and various roller coasters produced the “earthly unearthliness” to please the eyes of city dwellers. The Jungfrau railroad was supposed to present or rather sell to its passengers a series of unique views. Therefore, an important part of this great undertaking were the tools that facilitated observation: natural windows with glass at railroad stations, train cars with panoramic windows. Other tools were the ones that provided tourists with necessary explanations. By that I mean various guides and booklets that appeared during construction and after a project’s completion.⁴²⁸ There were also

426 Simmel, “The Alpine Journey”, p. 95.

427 Simmel, “ The Alpine Journey”, p. 97.

428 An example of the first type of study – that is, published during the construction process – may be the luxurious album: F. Hennings, *Projekt und Bau der Albulabahn*, Chur, 1908. The series “Illustrated Europe” published in the 1880s and 1890s by the Swiss publishing house Orell Fussli and Co. in Zürich is an example of guides published

explanations of painted panoramas, which enabled the viewers to identify the peaks.⁴²⁹ People could find similar panoramas at stations and in trains. Some of them are still to be found by windows of train car tables. The most magnificent of the views were later used in posters and postcards. Today, we also see them on some tickets.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the exact shape of the Jungfrau project began to emerge. At the beginning of 1890, the London illustrated weekly *The Graphic* published the article “The Proposed Railway to the Summit of the Jungfrau” and included a illustrations presenting the planned stations along the line.⁴³⁰ In Spring 1895, *The Graphic* published another article “The Proposed Railway of the Jungfrau” with three illustrations.⁴³¹ The first illustration shows the Jungfrau massif and the nearby Mönch and Eiger, with a sketch of the planned line. The second illustration “View of the railway near the summit of the Jungfrau, showing the pathway for pedestrians” has an extra explanation, in which we read: “One of the cars is here shown entering a tunnel. There is a footpath by the side of the railway. In the upper portion of the picture is shown a station overlooking one of the glaciers.” The third figure complements the third one and shows “Sectional view of the lift in the interior of the Jungfrau cone.” The additional text explains, “The drawing show the terminus of the railway, with the restaurants attached. Passengers who dislike the lift may walk up the circular footway which winds round the interior of the shaft.” In an extensive coverage from January 1899, *The Graphic* published a description of the finished section of the Jungfrau railroad. The section ready at that time was the first tunnel fragment with a makeshift station in Rothstock. The figure “The Jungfrau railway. Eigergrotte, the first glacier station” from the coverage has a very brief commentary “An Engineering triumph in Switzerland.”⁴³² In September 1899, the London daily *Pall Mall Gazette* published an article that other English papers soon reprinted. The title of the article was “Among the Eternal Snow” and a sub-heading “Wonderful Piece of Railway Engineering:”

after the inauguration of the line. The series was available in English, German, and French. The first brochure of the series presents the rack railroad from Arth to Rigi.

429 See for instance: L. Courthion, *Le Chemin de fer de la Furka. Petit guide descriptif de la ligne*, Paris, 1915 [Panorama in the insert].

430 See “The Proposed Railway to the Summit of the Jungfrau,” *The Graphic* 1890 (February 8).

431 See “The Proposed Railway of the Jungfrau,” *The Graphic* 1895 (April 6).

432 See “The Jungfrau Railway,” *The Graphic* 1899 (January 28).

The view from the top of the Jungfrau, the most famous peak of the Bernese Oberland, almost exactly 14 000 ft. above sea level, is considered unique. The ascent is no longer regarded as a great mountaineering feat. But it is tedious, and, indeed, impracticable for non-climbers. Hence, according to *Engineering*, the desire to build a railway up the Jungfrau which, with its fellows, the Mönch and the Eiger, and its beautiful satellites, the Silberhorn and the Schneehorn, close to the ridge of the Jungfrau, offers a most magnificent spectacle. The Scheidegg Rack Railway allows us to admire this grand panorama. The Jungfrau Railway takes us right up to the Eiger Glacier, penetrates by tunnels into the Eiger, and is to proceed round the back of the Eiger to the Mönch and the Jungfraujoch, and, finally, into the Jungfrau. The last 240 ft. up to the top of the Jungfrau are to be accomplished with the aid of an elevator.⁴³³

Soon after the opening of the first line section, there appeared a travel guide to Jungfrau railroad in English. Its author presents all that the travelers would be able to see when the great engineering work was completed and the train would reach the Jungfrau summit through the tunnel:

It is impossible to describe the wonderful panorama which breaks into view at this spot. We gaze over the multitude of mountains and valleys and wonder whether it is reality or some beautiful dream; to the north, we can see as far as the Blauen and the Feldberg, to the east, as far as the Silvretta and Bernina groups, Mount Leone etc.; to the south, Monte Rosa, the Matterhorn, Dent Blanche, Grand Combin, Mont-Blanc and Dent du Midi can be easily discerned in the distance, while finally to the west, our gaze is able to rove over the border of France.⁴³⁴

Interestingly, although in Warsaw the level of citizens' fascination with the Alps was much lower than in London and the UK, the press published extensive reports, which made it easy to reconstruct all the planning phases of Jungfrau railroad and – later – all the construction and track-laying stages. In 1889, *Prawda* informs in an even briefer manner: “There is a project of a cable railroad from Lautenbrunnen to the summit of Jungfrau (4167 meters). Estimated cost is ten million francs.”⁴³⁵ Only a year later, the weekly *Wszechświat* (The Universe) analyzed in details the possible problems that Jungfrau project would face. The most important is “mountain sickness” and the human body's ability to adapt to significant and rapid altitude changes.⁴³⁶ Later, the specialized *Kurier Kolejowy* (The Railroad Courier) raised that issue at the end of the article “Kolej żelazna

433 “Among the Eternal Snow. Wonderful Piece of Railway Engineering,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 1899 (September 11).

434 *The Jungfrau Railway. Bernese Oberland (Switzerland)*, 24th edition, Zürich, 1903, p. 6.

435 Note in the section “Sprawy kolejowe,” *Prawda* 43/1889.

436 See M. Fl., “Kolej na Jungfrau i jej niebezpieczeństwa,” *Wszechświat* 51/1890.

na Jungfrau” (Railroad to Jungfrau). *Kurier Kolejowy* includes there a warning by a respected figure from the world of medicine: “People, who are not used to being at high altitudes should not stay longer than two hours at the top of the Jungfrau mountain.”⁴³⁷ In 1905, the railroad from Kleine Scheidegg pass to Jungfrau summit was 3161 meters long and ended in the tunnel of Eismeer station. On the occasion of completing the section, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* published a detailed journey description and thus showed the readers the difficult construction of the railroad and the effects of the heroic efforts of workers.⁴³⁸ The article does not mention the “mountain sickness.” However, it marvels at the effects of conducted works, mostly in the form of illustrations. This is a description of the last section and its final Eismeer Station, which – just like other tunnel stations – had natural windows:

The road to this charming station leads through a tunnel and – for that reason – the surprising view of snow, ice, and rock masses striking upon arrival is even more impressive. After the ride in the stuffy and hot tunnel comes the refreshing, frosty breath of the mountains. After the darkness – endless rays of refracting light. After the memory of green valleys – a wild, huge valley, home of the largest and most beautiful glacier. The bottom of the valley shines with cerulean, green, and blue colors of fallen ice blocks, surrounded by a strip of silvery snow, from which emerge fantastic peaks of Schreckhorn, Grünhorn, Berglis, Walcherhorn, and many other. About twenty glaciers hover over the valley, creating a chaos of ice and snow, interrupted by the black cracks of a precipice, giant boulders and unexpected cliffs. The landscape is wild and magnificent in its horror. [...] It is a symbol of an eternal movement, an eternal creativity in nature, which strives for new forms by destroying the old ones.

Another important sentence is the one at the end of the article: “But even if the construction stopped at the current stage, everyone would still have to admit that Eismeer Station and its line are among the most interesting works of human hands in the recent years.”

The construction did not stop at Eismeer station. The tunnel continued to reach the Jungfraujoch pass in 1912. The completion of this section, which later turned out to be the last one, was the topic of numerous press reports.⁴³⁹

437 “Kolej żelazna na Jungfrau,” *Kurier Kolejowy* 44/1902, p. 2.

438 “Kolej na Jungfrau,” *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 43/1905, p. 803. All further quotes come from this source.

439 See “Kolej żelazna przez Jungfrau,” *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* 163/1911: “This will be one of the most beautiful railroads in the world.” “Tunel pod Jungfrau,” *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* 46/1912: “A journey with the new railroad will be an amazing experience because of the unique road through ice, snowy peaks, and chasms.” “Kolej na Jungfrau,” *Kurier Kolejowy i Asekuracyjny* 16/1912, ends with a reminder: “After the

The article from *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, signed by K., is important for a few reasons. First, because it demonstrates the European character of both the paper and its readers, as it informs about the distant railroad construction, at the same time close due to the “shrinkage” of modern Europe, which is on its way to cultural unity. Second, the article considers the advantages and disadvantages of the construction. Prior to the enthusiastic description of the finished line, the article engages in a polemic with those who are scared of the “black fumes poisoning the air and the human buzz in the first-rate hotels creating the atmosphere of banality that the beauty of nature in its highest forms cannot stand.” The article introduces a Polish accent. Among other ambitious projects, it mentions the Polish railroad, which is supposed to reach “so far only the Świnica peak.” What makes such projects important? What can suppress the anxiety of people haunted by the vision of a train bringing death to the pristine mountain nature? At this point, we can refer back to the argument present in the advert informing about the opening of *Panorama Tatr*, published in one of the issues of *Zdrowie*. Now, it gets stronger and points to a cultural mission. What pushes the builders of high mountain roads forward is culture that contains the postulate of solidarity with the weak. As we read, culture: “wants not only the healthy and strong, who are capable of withstanding all inconveniences, hardships, and dangers on the road to the summit to enjoy the beauty of the mountains. Culture wants to give this beauty also to the weak, sick, women, cripples, and children.” We should remember that the milk advertised in *Zdrowie* was “mainly for infants, convalescents, and the sick.”

I shall now return to the Warsaw *Panorama Tatr* to focus on the building and analyze its structure. It was typical for objects which exhibited large panoramic

railroad reaches the Jungfrau peak, workers will construct a hotel that will give a magnificent view on all the sides of the world.” “Na Jungfrau,” *Biesiada Literacka* 18/1912, ends with the statement: “Workers still have to lay three kilometers of tracks from Jungfrauoch station to Jungfrau. However, it is just a trifle in comparison to all that has been done.” J. Warnkówna, “Koleją na Jungfrau,” *Ziemia* 20–21/1912, p. 331, has mixed feelings about the route’s extension: “How [...] will the pristine Jungfrau look with such a machine on its crown?” “Otwarcie nowej kolei na Jungfrau,” *Kurier Lwowski* 368/1912, ends with an important accent: “It is not sure whether the railroad extension will reach the summit. The engineers advocate the extension and they believe they can overcome all the obstacles. The idealists who want to defend the splendid Jungfrau summit from the hordes of tourist, are against the extension.” J. Orpizewski, “Droga żelazna na górę Jungfrau,” *Przegląd Techniczny* 13/1914, p. 174: “The section leading up to the Jungfrau summit still needs to be constructed. From the future last station tourists will take an elevator to the very top of the mountain.”

paintings in great European cities from the beginning of the nineteenth century. They had the shape of a rotunda, covered with a glass, conical roof, with a decorative entrance, fulfilling representative purposes. Behind the entrance, there was a dark tunnel leading to the center of the rotunda and to the vertical shaft of the staircase, which took the visitors to the level of the viewing platform. Such a shaft could fit an elevator. Włodzimierz Tetmajer writes about these components of the Warsaw “machine:” “The spectator exiting the dark corridor of the inside of the podium entered the daylight and stood by himself inside the depth of the mountains.”⁴⁴⁰ This invisible “interior” hides the scaffolding with the so-called fake terrain (*faux terrain*), the foreground of the composition formed from real Tatra boulders, which covered the slope falling gently to the podium. Tadeusz Jaroszyński compliments this part of the “machine:”

The view comes from the Miedziane mountain (7083 feet). By means of “artificial terrain,” the peak of Miedziane connects with the platform for viewers and – in the same way – it becomes further part of the ridge from the other side of the platform. Once again, it ends on a painting of a wide slope, animated by figures of famous Tatra mountaineers like doctor Chałubiński, Walery Eljasz, priest Stolarczyk, [Stanisław] Witkiewicz, guide Sabala, and finally a group of English gentlemen and ladies.⁴⁴¹

The correspondent of the Warsaw daily *Czas* (Time) also admires the “fake terrain:”

It was so well adapted to the canvas that you have to look closely to discover where the plastic shape of the mountains ends and where the painting begins. The fake terrain is the fall of the Miedziane summit from its main peak, i.e. from the podium where the spectator stands. Therefore, the cliffs, gullies, couloirs, and the chasm were all imitated. At times, admittedly, with striking resemblance.⁴⁴²

If we bear in mind all these characteristics of the Warsaw panoramic “machine,” we will easily notice its astonishing similarity to the Jungfrau railroad project. The Swiss railroad and the Polish panorama are different due to the fact that the

440 W. Tetmajer, *Panorama tatrzańska*, p. 557. Other description offers the article “Tatry,” *Wieczory Rodzinne* 3/1897, p. 21: “Visitors to the panorama enter a vestibule and descend down to the height of several dozen steps, as they have to pass under a terrain consisting of rocks and chasms that surround the platform. Then, through a dark corridor, they reach the steps that lead to the platform and – suddenly, as if touched by a magic wand – they are transferred to verily rendered mountain landscape.”

441 T. J. [T. Jaroszyński], “Panorama Tatr,” *Głos* 49/1896, p. 1164.

442 “Panorama Tatr,” *Czas* 273/1896. See also: “It is difficult to distinguish the constructed fake terrain from the painted one and this is the greatest compliment.” R. Lewandowski, “Tatry,” *Wędrowiec* 47/1896, p. 402.

Jungfrau railroad provided a real view and the Polish panorama only its imitation through a canvas and “fake terrain.” However, there is also a similarity between both projects. The last fragment of the railroad from Jungfraujoch to the top of Jungfrau peak remained only on paper. The railroad reached Jungfrau in stages. The traveler from Interlaken to the Jungfraujoch had to – and still has to – use three separate railroad systems. They were incoherent, with different track gauges and different rack and pinion mechanisms. The last stage of the journey is the *Jungfrauabahn*, a railroad which leads from Kleine Scheidegg Pass to the foot of the Eiger massif and then – already inside the mountain – moves steeply in a horseshoe tunnel. The very last section of the line was to take the traveler to the top of Jungfrau. To be exact, to the station located inside the top cone. From there, the vertical shaft with elevator and stairs leads tourists to where the true panorama of the Alps unveils before their eyes. At the end of the journey, the Jungfrau peak was to be found under the feet of the viewers, which would certainly be a “real territory.” The visible peaks were also supposed to be true, although the beauty of the panorama could have given rise to a suspicion that it was only a beautiful and ephemeral dream. The railroad to Jungfrau was a “machine” designed to follow the identical principle as all the European “panoramas.” One bought a ticket the Kleine Scheidegg station, which was the same as the ticket that entitled one to visit the Warsaw *Panorama Tatr*. Obviously, the price was different.

The railroad project from Zermatt to Matterhorn bore even more resemblance to the architectonic structure of the panoramas. In the most mature form of this project, the first section of the line would run from Zermatt to Schwarzsee station by means of a rack and pinion mechanism. Then, the line would go through a tunnel to a station at the foot of Matterhorn. From here, travelers would take an elevator to the top of the mountain. The elevator was inside the northeast wing in an almost vertical shaft.⁴⁴³ The last two sections of the road – the tunnel under Hörnli and the vertical shaft with an elevator – are an enlarged road that led the visitor of the Warsaw *Panorama Tatr* through a dark corridor to the inside of the rotunda and, then, up the stairs to the viewing platform. At the beginning, the railroad to Gornergrat fulfilled the “panoramic” ambitions of the little town of Zermatt. From the ridge of Gornergrat, the railroad provided a splendid view of

443 See H. Schild, *Visionäre Bahnprojekte. Die Schweiz im Aufbruch 1870–1939*, Zürich, 2013, pp. 170–171. See also “Kolej na Matterhorn,” *Czasopismo Techniczne* 5/1907, p. 87.

the landscape, including the Matterhorn hanging above the Visp Valley.⁴⁴⁴ On the nineteenth-century tourist map, Zermatt was an important stage point. First, it was a place that people could easily reach by train already in 1889. Second, it was a starting point for the journey to Gornergrat, which consisted of walking, then going with mules, and finally with a train. Third, it was the place, where mountaineers would start their Matterhorn attempts. The goal of the planned Matterhorn railroad was to enable those previously unable to reach Gornergrat to take a trip to the most beautiful peak in Switzerland, which for a long time was out of reach for even the most adventurous and fit tourists. The Gornergrat ridge and the train ride to the ridge allowed the observation of Matterhorn. The project of the train ride to the Matterhorn came with a promise of an even greater view. Adam Lewicki writes about the Swiss project in *Gazeta Lwowska*:

This peak from afar looks like a needle, but it is in fact a ridge of over 100 meters, which forms a surface covered with snow and scree that can fit quite comfortably a big number of people and could fit a few small buildings. These conditions inspired the brilliant engineer Infeld to create a viewing platform at the peak of Matterhorn that would be available to all. It would be surrounded by railings and open to all parts of the world. To get there, one would use the only electric railroad in the world!⁴⁴⁵

Let us focus on the order in which the author presents the project. First of all, he speaks of “viewing platform” and then about “electric railroad” that would serve as the platform. The whole construction including the vertical lift and the Zermatt rack railroad that leads to it would jointly form what Wolfgang Schivelbusch calls a “machine ensemble.” In such a “machine ensemble,” the train and the railroad form a unity, greatly underlined by the rack and pinion system, which makes locomotives, cars, and the rack and pinion system a one cooperating unit.⁴⁴⁶ The “viewing platform” complements this structure, but it is actually the most important component that subdued the tracks, rack and pinion system, locomotives, cars, and stations.

444 Mikołaj Mazanowski, “Listy ze Szwajcarii,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 187/1898, recorded the first Polish meeting with this railroad. He does not hide his disappointment that the trains could not run on the constructed tracks, because “the electric machine turned out to not be powerful enough. [...] I must also mention that the construction of the electric railroad to Gornergrat provided an opportunity to discover a new condition, so far unknown in the medical world, which was called the mountain sickness (Bergkrankheit).”

445 A. L. [A. Lewicki], “Projekt kolei na Matterhorn,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 10/1908.

446 See Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey. Trains and Travel in the 19th Century*, chapter “The Machine Ensemble.”

The Lviv article on the Matterhorn railroad project has two parts and presents two viewpoints. The first one is called technical, the second – moral. From the first perspective, the author presents the project as an “incomparable technical idea” and, at the same time, as a “very simple in terms of construction.”⁴⁴⁷ It is simple, because it requires only a two-kilometer-long vertical tunnel that has to be drilled upwards. “The outset of the tunnel drilled in the rock at a distance of about twenty meters from the surface of the mountain would be twenty meters below the very top of the mountain.” At the end of the road to the summit, there would be the viewing platform presenting a view “right at the breathtaking landscape of our planet, from the Maritime Alps to Ortler in Tyrol.” The poetic description of the panorama ends with a sentence: “Somewhere in the never-ending distance, the earth would merge with the sky into one, blue, mysterious expanse.” An airplane flight seems to provide a model for the perspective sketched in this way in *Gazeta Lwowska*. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the flight was still a very elite and risky experience.⁴⁴⁸

The second point of view contrasted with the technical one, is connected with the moral aspect of the construction. It provokes to ask questions about the costs of the project. Although, not those estimated to be around ten million francs, but those that cannot be directly estimated. After the question, “Does the moral side of the project deserve a recognition?”, comes an immediate answer: “We allow ourselves to openly doubt it.” Later, we read:

We can easily say that – by building works of this kind – human culture erects a monument to itself of not a very honorable kind. At the same time, it [...] undermines itself, because it loses the richest possible mine of pure forces and pristine and authentic impressions of this rocky and snowy mountain desert. [...] May those who today pride themselves in having in their native land such beautiful surroundings as Matterhorn understand that the incomparable charm of mystery and horror around Matterhorn will vanish. Soon after the locomotive whistles above the permafrost peak and wild crags, the human buzz will disrupt the majestic silence of the spirits that wander around the staggering cliffs of Matterhorn.

As a result of protests, the Jungfrau railroad stopped before the summit and reached only Jungfrauoch Station. The construction of Matterhorn railroad did

447 A. L. [A. Lewicki], “Projekt kolei na Matterhorn. (Dokończenie),” *Gazeta Lwowska* 11/1908. Further quotes come from this source.

448 Today, one can fly over the Matterhorn in a chartered helicopter that starts from the Zermatt airfield.

not start at all. The First World War gave succor to the defenders of the Alpine nature.⁴⁴⁹

The problem with the Jungfrau railroad plans was the question: who should enjoy the magnificent views? Whom should the mountains serve? And what does it mean that mountains like other elements of nature “serve” someone or something? Indeed, this is a set of questions that bewildered the people in the epoch of modernity, which started when a clear and certain statement appears: nature is for man, the world of nature serves people to give them greater comfort of life, security, pleasant aesthetic experiences; culture must impose its own laws over nature. Max Weber’s disenchantment of the world means that people do not offer to nature their prayers. . . but tools. Economic calculations take the place of worship. Balance pays attention only to what pays off, when and where it pays off, and to whom. In his essay on travels in the Alps, Georg Simmel presents a slightly different problem. Simmel is interested whether the effort of a mountaineer is worth all that the mountaineer gets in return, which is usually “the exhaustion of all vital forces, playing with danger, and the delight with the poignant view.” In short: is it worth for a mountaineer to risk his life? The answer is no, because: “the risking of life as mere enjoyment is unethical; indeed even more unethical since for the hire of a guide for fifty or hundred francs one risks another’s life through possible accident.”⁴⁵⁰

449 The First World War thwarted the finalization of another project, which was previously the subject of a heated discussion: the rack railroad to Mont Blanc (Tramway du Mont-Blanc). By the outbreak of the war in August 1914, the project reached the provisional Nid d’Aigle station at the altitude of 2372 meters. From there, it was supposed to run higher through a series of tunnels, including two spiral ones, until the Aiguille du Goûter Station at the altitude of 3796 meters. The Polish press regularly reported on various projects related to Mont Blanc. See “Winda na Monblanc,” *Gazeta Narodowa* 352/1895; “Kolej na Mont Blanc,” *Kurier Kolejowy* 111/1905; “Budowa dr[ogi] żel[aznej] na Mont Blanc,” *Przegląd Techniczny* 28/1908, p. 350; “Tunel przez Montblanc,” *Dziennik Kijowski* 260/1910. The implementation of the plan to lead the railroad to the German Zugspitze was significantly delayed by the war; see “Kolej elektryczna na szczyt Zugu,” *Przegląd Techniczny* 33/1908, p. 406. On paper only remained a plan of a railroad leading to the highest peak of the Julian Alps (see F. Steiner, *Das Triglavbahnprojekt*, Vienna, 1909) and a plan of the railroad to Sněžník (Czech: Králický Sněžník).

450 G. Simmel, “The Alpine Journey,” trans. S. Whimster, *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1991, pp. 97–98. We definitely hear in this sentence the echo of the tragedy that ended the first successful Matterhorn attempt.

To put life at stake means to return to the times when one fulfilled social or religious duties through sacrifice. Simmel discusses the “romantic charm” of a mountaineer’s struggle and immediately adds that it is anachronistic, “borrowed” from other times. At the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, there were growing voices that referred to the problems posed by the epoch of modernity. Moreover, further cracks appeared in the initially united view of those who advocated the undisputed value of progress and the primacy of cultural over the natural order. Those in doubt felt strong support behind them. When the railroad appeared, it instigated huge fear and anxiety. Among the skeptics were the most powerful authorities from the artistic and scientific world, with William Wordsworth and John Ruskin as their leaders. The advocates of the “romantic charm” thwarted the construction of Matterhorn railroad.⁴⁵¹ However, it is difficult to foresee whether this resistance would have been enough. Although it did not hurt Switzerland, the First World War still led the Swiss to mobilize social and financial resources for purposes other than tourism.

4. The Świnica Station

At the beginning of 1889, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* began to print episodes of “impressions and images from the Tatra Mountains” by Stanisław Witkiewicz. Already in the first issue, there appears a wonderful description of a train journey and strenuous climb up the tracks behind the town of Kalwaria

451 The whole Western world united in protests against the Matterhorn railroad. For that reason, the information about them could be found both in Europe – above all England, where people called for a “war with vandals” – and America. “Matterhorn Railway Plan. Alpinists Bitterly Oppose the Project of Two Engineers,” *The New York Times* 1907 (February 26); “Up the Matterhorn by Rail,” *San Francisco Call* 114/1907; “Protest Against Proposed Matterhorn Railroad,” *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 40/1908, p. 101–102. Protests also appeared in the faraway Australia, see “Matterhorn Railway. Protest by English Alpinists,” *Poverty Bay Herald* 1907 (October 19). The American reader was well-informed about the project, see “By Rail Up the Redoubtable Matterhorn. Europe’s Most Difficult Peak to Be Pierced – Travelers Will Rise Comfortably to Its Summit,” *The New York Times* 1907 (March 17). It is worth mentioning in conclusion, that among other publications concerning the Matterhorn preservation, there was a poem written by an English poet, Francis William Bourdillon. The poem “Ode in defence of the Matterhorn against the proposed railway to its summit” was published in 1910. Bourdillon was a member of the Alpine Club. The whole profits from the sale of the poem were handed to the Swiss organization for promoting the preservation of landscapes (Ligue pour la Beauté).

Zebrzydowska. The travelers on that train were left with a memory “of an unreal and fable-like dream”⁴⁵² The train terminates in Chabówka. Witkiewicz had to continue his journey to Zakopane in an uncomfortable highlander’s wagon. In November 1896, when the first visitors came to the rotunda in Oboźna Street in Warsaw, people still could not reach Zakopane by rail. The only line seen from Miedziane – and the one seen by the viewers on canvas – was on the edge of the horizon. Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer explains: “Through the Cicha Liptowska Valley runs a railroad and a silver thread of the Váh river.”⁴⁵³ The state of the Polish Tatras was far from the one of the Alps analyzed by Simmel. The discussion about “the wholesale opening-up and enjoyment of nature” still lacked its subject. People could conduct it only in relation to the increasingly rich foreign experience.⁴⁵⁴ The discussion assumed a new tone when – in October 1899 – the first train from Chabówka arrived in Zakopane and soon Walerian Dzieślewski, an outstanding engineer and respected lecturer at the Lviv Polytechnic, published a project for a railroad from Zakopane to Świnica peak. At that time, the Warsaw *Panorama Tatr* was already gone.⁴⁵⁵

The project of constructing a railroad from Zakopane to the ridge of the Tatra Mountains reached the public opinion in two ways. On May 17, 1902, the officials inaugurated in Lviv the Jubilee Exhibition of the Polytechnic Society which – among other works – presented those by the members of the Society. A journalist reported on one of these works:

452 S. Witkiewicz, “Na przełęczy. Wrażenia i obrazy z Tatr,” *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 314/1889 (January 5), p. 5.

453 Przerwa-Tetmajer, “Objaśnienie do olbrzymiego obrazu *Tatry*,” p. 11.

454 In 1904, the correspondent of the newspaper wrote in “List z Zürichu” (A Letter from Zurich) about the construction of Jungfrau railroad and transport facilities. He adds: “These are all things that were undoubtedly created by a very high human culture, and we cannot even dream of such projects that are an everyday reality for Switzerland in our Tatras,” “List z Zürichu,” *Dziennik Polski* 319/1904. However, these impressive projects have also another side.

455 The project ended with a financial disaster. The rotunda closed down and the canvas were sold at an auction. Finally, Jan Styka bought it and, after cutting, used it to paint a new panorama “Męczeństwo pierwszych chrześcijan” (Martyrdom of the First Christians). The creators of the Tatra panorama protested against it, see [Protest twórców panoramy Tatr], *Głos* 7/1900, pp. 105–106. The Warsaw “fotoplastykon” referred to the tradition of the Tatra panorama. In an advertisement for the presentation of the Tatra and Pienin Mountains, *Kurier Warszawski* 94/1902, “fotoplastykon” owners signalize: “The charming views have nothing to do with the former panorama of the Tatra Mountains in Dynasy district.”

Among the exhibits there is an excellently prepared relief map of the Tatra Mountains with little flags signaling the planned mountain railroad to Świnica peak, which is 2306 meters above the sea level. The author of this project, engineer Walerian Dzieślewski, has recently published a booklet on the project, in which he presents not only the technical but also the tourist and economic side of this new railroad.⁴⁵⁶

The journalist's admiration for the relief map of the Tatra Mountains is one of the few testimonies of its existence. The visitors to the Lviv exhibition saw the map and they probably admired it, yet we do not know what happened to it after the exhibition ended.⁴⁵⁷ However, its informative function expired on the very same day that the exhibition space closed.

The carefully published "booklet" also addressed those who had only heard about the Lviv map or did not know anything about it. The influence of this brochure might have been longer and more significant.⁴⁵⁸ The booklet has two different titles. The first one appears on the cover, where we read at the top: "Uprzystępnienie i uprzemysłowienie Tatr polskich" (The Accessibility and Industrialization of the Polish Tatra Mountains), while below – in an artistic composition with "highlander" accents – there is the word "Kolej" (Railroad) in the center and underneath it the word "wąsko-torowa" (narrow-gauge) flanked on both sides by the names "Zakopane" and "Świnica." In a bright box that highlights the words "Kolej wąsko-torowa," below them, there is the expression "stacja końcowa" (terminal station), which is no longer a part of the title.

456 E. Libański, "Wystawa jubileuszowa towarzystwa technicznego we Lwowie," *Przegląd Techniczny* 28/1902, p. 344. It is interesting that there is no mention of the project in the report from the opening published in *Kurier Lwowski*. At the end of the report, we read: "The two relief maps of the Tatra Mountains, with the indication of the borderlands [...] are also very interesting." "Otwarcie Wystawy Jubileuszowej Tow.[arzystwa] Politechnicznego," *Kurier Lwowski* 139/1902. Probably none of the maps illustrating the ongoing dispute with Hungary over the Morskie Oko served Dzieślewski in the preparation of his project.

457 The estimated number of people that visited the exhibition in the first fifty-two days amounted to 15,000. See "Jubileuszowa wystawa politechniczna," *Kurier Lwowski* 188/1902.

458 One of the information sources about the Lviv relief map was an anonymous note "Kolej na Świnicę," *Przegląd Zakopiański* 24/1902, p. 213: "The project of the rack railway from Zakopane to Świnica arouses big interest. It was developed by engineer Walerian Dzieślewski and now exhibited in a form of a model at the Lviv Polytechnic. A more detailed description of this bold and practical project will be published at another time." The announced "description," referring to the brochure, appeared in a later issue: Sp., "Kolej na Świnicę," *Przegląd Zakopiański* 27/1902.

Although “stacja końcowa” is graphically related to the title, it only explains the graphics that fills the central part of the cover and is incorporated into a kind of stylized door with a rounded upper end. The figure shows the terminal station of the railroad located slightly below the Świnica peak. A grand high-rise building of the railroad station with a platform with roofs occupies the middle of the graphics. In front of the platform, there is a diagonal stub track with a clearly visible third rail with the rack and pinion system. The track continues in a form of a footpath that meanders up the impressive peak. On the track appears a train, which consists only of one passenger car and a steam locomotive. At the bottom of the cover there is an inscription: “Engineer Walerian Dzieślewski.” On the page opening the text the title formula is different than on the cover. Here, we read “Projekt wstępny kolei lokalnej wąskotorowej z Zakopanego pod Świnicę systemem mieszanym (adhezja i zębica)” (The Preliminary Project of the Local Narrow-Gauge Railroad from Zakopane to Świnica with a Mixed System: Adhesion and Rack). Below the title is the author’s name: “Written by Walerian Dzieślewski, civil engineer in Lviv;” along with a note: “with six tables;”⁴⁵⁹ and a motto from the main Polish Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz’s “Ode to Youth:” “Reach the places out of sight!”

The beginning of the study takes readers to the time and place already known from “Rudolf Viznauer:”

When thirty years ago, exploding mines broke the rocks used for the construction of the rack railroad to the Rigi Mountain in Switzerland, and their sound echoed between the mountains surrounding the Lake Lucerne, many did not understand the significance of such a railroad. People perceived this undertaking as an insane audacity, which would only bring bitter disappointment and loss of hard-earned capital to entrepreneurs. After the construction of the railroad, numerous Swiss tourists and people living in the vicinity of Lucerne and the Lake Lucerne reached the conclusion that it is much easier and more pleasant to admire the beautiful nature and landscapes of the Alpine world, if one may evade the arduous climbing to the top of the mountains, all the inconvenience

459 See W. Dzieślewski, “Projekt wstępny kolei lokalnej wąskotorowej z Zakopanego pod Świnicę systemem mieszanym (adhezja i zębica)” [reprint from *Czasopiso Techniczne*], Lviv, 1902, p. 1. The project must have been ready at the turn of 1901 and 1902. The evidence for that are the dates of two letters of support reprinted on p. 16; respectively from the end of March and the end of April 1902. Zbigniew Scheigert discusses the technical and financial sides of the project. See Z. Scheigert, “Nieznane karty historii kolei linowych,” in: *Inżynierowie polscy XIX i XX wieku*, ed. Z. Mrugański, Vol. 11, Warsaw, 2008, pp. 108–110. Maciej Pinkwart, *Zakopiańskim szlakiem Mariusza Zaruskiego*, Warsaw, 1983, pp. 105–108, presents the Zakopane discussions over this project.

of the climb, and the danger. Moreover, if one gets on the train, he may also save time getting to the desired summit.⁴⁶⁰

The inharmonious titles and the very beginning of the study is the announcement of what will become visible not only in this “initial project,” but also in its further ingredients. The formula from the cover gives priority to the “accessibility,” which may be understood as an equivalent of Simmel’s “wholesale opening-up and enjoyment of nature.” The structure of the title reinforces this perspective. “Industrialization” follows the “accessibility,” which requires us to treat both parts in parallel and understand “accessibility through industrialization.” The word “railroad” written below in a separate field strongly supports this way of interpreting the cover formula. This is because the railroad is to serve both “accessibility” and “industrialization.” Moreover, it is already a part of industrialization in itself. Therefore, to effectively make the Tatra Mountains “accessible,” people need “industrialization.” To make Polish mountains tourist-friendly, one must introduce railroad, which is the herald of industrialization and the promoter of progress. The cover composition relies on the principle of symmetry emphasized by the unusual spelling of the Polish word “wąsko-torowa” (narrow-gauge) with a hyphen and graphic choices in terms of the illustration and typography. Above the centrally written word “railroad,” there appears part of a frame finished with an element that vividly resembles the outline of a crown. A similar crown adorns the next emblem of a winged wheel located below the illustration. The graphic design of the emblem is a clear reference to the content of the project. In the winged wheel appear clearly visible pinions. Let us remember that the relief map of the Tatra Mountains at the Lviv Polytechnic Exhibition presented the railroad project in three aspects: technical, tourist, and economic. This is how the journalist referred to them. As a result, he opened field for speculations, because it is hard to guess what he meant when writing about the economic side of Dzieślewski’s project. Did he mean the industrial use of railroad or simply its estimated cost?

The booklet only partially dispels the doubts about the use of the railroad. The author does not clearly declare what he understands as “industrialization.” The beginning of the text is very conducive to an interpretation that would give priority to tourism. Mickiewicz’s motto introduces a clear hierarchy of values. It sets aside mercantile considerations and praises dreams, ideals, and youthful fantasy, which does not consider the avarice of the adult world. The reminiscence of Rigi story reinforces this “touristic” variant. The intended use of Rigi railroad was and

460 Dzieślewski, “Projekt wstępny kolei lokalnej wąskotorowej,” p. 1.

is exclusively touristic. From the very beginning, any freight transport constituted only a small fraction of the company's activity. Same holds for other mountain railroad companies. And, as engineer Dzieślewski meticulously calculated, between 1870–1900, solely in Switzerland, there were forty-six new rack railroad companies. In the next part of the study, we read that mountain railroads mean profit not only in terms of train travel. Guesthouses and hotels can develop and generate money only in places quickly and easily accessible by huge numbers of people. Railroad fuels the “hotel industry” and makes mountains more accessible to those who are less healthy and “less fit.” For Dzieślewski, these projects are beneficial both in the sphere of “ideals and industry:” “The view from 2306 meters one can see when he reaches Świnica is undoubtedly the most magnificent view in the Polish Tatras.”⁴⁶¹ The touristic character of the project returns with great clarity in the ending of the study. In this part, we see the announced pictures. The first one is an illustration that depicts Zakopane with a few scattered buildings and the Tatra Mountains hovering above the Giewont massif in the middle. The illustration is entitled *Zakopane*. The next illustration shows a group of Tatra peaks and passes. At the bottom there are names explaining what we can see. From the left, we have: Kościelec, 2159 meters, Zawrat, 2158 meters, Świnica 2306 meters, [Świnicka] pass, 2055 meters, Pośrednia Turnia, 2129 meters. The third illustration is entitled “View from Świnica at Kozi Wierch.” The next two illustrations are regular panoramas: “The Tatra Mountains from Czerwony Wierch (Małołączniak)” and “The Tatra Mountains from Zawrat.” There is no doubt that the attached illustrations present what the railroad was undoubtedly supposed to serve. Its main purpose was to “make available” to tourists, including the “less fit,” the attractive views from the summits.

In the middle of the study, Dzieślewski introduces to the narrative a completely different type of justifications for the planned project. The Świnica railroad appears here as an avant-garde of industrialization, a motor that can fuel the economy in a land considered to be a symbol of civilizational backwardness. When considering the “practical and industrial matters,” Dzieślewski begins with health. If Hala Gąsienicowa were connected with Zakopane by railroad, it would have a chance to become Polish Davos. It lies at the same height as Davos and is similarly located in a mountain valley. The air there is fresh and clean, so it could help treat tuberculosis. The future of this place, which a railroad can guarantee, is to be a modern health resort, with Zakopane as the economic foundation of the resort. Other “practical and industrial matters” in the

461 Dzieślewski, “Projekt wstępny kolei lokalnej wąskotorowej,” p. 2.

study are extremely clear. The railroad from Świnica, connecting the great Hala Gąsienicowa with Zakopane, would allow to bring down fresh milk. So far, its lack constantly bothers tourists and patients. An efficient railroad would allow the Tatra mining industry to rekindle. Poland abandoned the mining of iron ore due to the lack of efficient means of its transportation. The construction of the railroad would enable the exploitation of the Tatra granite. This would satisfy the needs of Galician cities that used granite cubes for streets and guarantee a supply of this material for ambitious hydrotechnical project. Workers would use granite in the construction of the Krakow-Lviv-Brody canal, for example, for lining walls in locks and culverts. "Granite is also the best material to construct ports and marinas with boulevards in Cracow."⁴⁶² Apart from granite, there are more rock materials that the train could help exploit like limestone and sandstone. Moreover, the train could transport wood from the Tatra forests and hay from the meadow areas.

The project of engineer Dzieślewski in the booklet⁴⁶³ quickly attracted sharp criticism. The painter and art critic, Eligiusz Niewiadomski, made the strongest accusation: the project of the Tatra rack railroad is an "assassination of Świnica."⁴⁶⁴ Already in the first sentence, the article establishes the field of conflict: "As magazines report, a "European project" was created in Galicia." Both sides of the dispute have not so much a geographical as a cultural identity. Niewiadomski is clearly a local, while his adversary Dzieślewski – the supporter of rack railroad – reveals his unhealthy infatuation with the West. In the article by Niewiadomski, "Europe" stands for "Western Europe," which combines two negatively perceived features. The first one is attachment to all that is material and can be monetized for profit. It is also a fascination with the progress of civilization, understood

462 Dzieślewski, "Projekt wstępny kolei lokalnej wąskotorowej," p. 13.

463 There were following elements of the project: "A. Line construction [with parts] 1. Road description; 2. System selection; 3. Earthwork – Sleepers; 4. Ballast; 5. Overtrack constructions; 6. Mechanical machines; 7. Telephone, division and separation; 8. Train; 9. Inventory; 10. Costs; [Section] B. Traffic [with parts] 1. Journey time; 2. Number of connections." Section "C. Profitability" describes transportation challenges. The project includes a map with highlighted road along with Zakopane and Czorbafürdo stations. Today, Czorbafürdo is Štrbské Pleso in Slovakia. The project also includes "Longitudinal profile of Zakopane – Świnica rack railway." It presents the length of each section in meters, descents in permils, and curvature. The project announced the stations: Zakopane, Kuźnice, Rudy, Hale, Liliowe, and Świnica.

464 See E. Niewiadomski, "Zamach na Świnicę," *Kurier Warszawski* 221/1902 (July 30 [August 12]). All further quotes come from this article.

as the taming of nature and bringing human rule to places where things used to run according to nature. Civilization “marks signposts with the inscription *Aussicht*, photographs, postcards, telescopes, railroad service.” “Civilized barbarity,” physical weakness, feebleness, and the figure of a sybarite who only misses “dinner with black coffee” complete this negative image. Niewiadomski, the author of “Zamach na Świnicę” (The Assassination of Świnica), sets such understood “Europe” against the physical effort required to climb the Tatra Mountains. For the Polish youth, it is what “strengthens the body and the spirit.” As we read in the article, we must see the ambition to create a second Switzerland in the Tatra Mountains from the perspective of what has been irretrievably lost in Switzerland and what we cannot lose in Poland. “They do the same thing everywhere; they do the same thing in Switzerland. This is right! And this is one more reason to abandon this project and all similar projects.” Because Western Europe has become monotonous, predictable, and boring as a result of civilization conveniences. . . . “the Tatra Mountains should remain as they are, so that tourists can find something different here than in Switzerland and everywhere else.” Rack railroads, comfortable hotels, and other amenities were to populate the West with cripples.

Zakopane from the end of the nineteenth century was in the center of the Polish narrative about health and revival. There was everything in Zakopane to serve health: clean air, views, walks through the valleys. Therefore, the measure of what was beneficial for the place was the extent to which the particular novelty supported the ambitions of the health resort: the place where you come to help the ailing organism. The railroad connection to Zakopane was presented in this scheme of a sublime narrative about activities serving national health. On the occasion of the inauguration of the connection with Chabówka and later with Cracow, *Przegląd Zakopiański* published a significant editorial article, where we can read, among other things, about the following:

Zakopane is at the threshold of a new era. It is about to enter the future, which brings the announcement of profound changes that may completely transform its current existence. However, we do not look with fear but with confidence and joyfully hope to this unknown future. A strong faith builds up in us that now our beloved Tatras will become even more our own, because of numerous hosts that will come to the mountains to rejuvenate their tired souls among the powerful peaks. And even more people broken by the suffering will come here to find refuge and they will regain their health and strengths for their continued work for the state.⁴⁶⁵

465 “Otwarcie kolei,” *Przegląd Zakopiański* 13/1899 (October 26).

In many narratives about Zakopane, there appears a peculiar combination of medicine, hygiene, and religion, or magic. The passage quoted above discusses the healing powers of the Tatra magic. In “Zamach na Świnicę,” this medical-religious point of view is the foundation of the argumentation, which is directed against the project and its initiator. Therefore, we read about the health effects of the Tatra Mountains:

Only a few hours away from the human hive, there is a great, holy silence of the mountains. [...] So far, we had a virgin piece of this strange land, the land of rest and respite. The spirit of a loner wandering freely in these heights, facing their immensity and majesty, standing eye to eye with God, returns to the bosom of primordial nature. In the holy silence of the mountains, under the burning rays of the lonely sun, all the longings and pains brought from that human world, all its passions – noble and despicable – disappear one after another. In these heights, the work of the civilized brain stops and all the issues tormenting the mind at the bottom become small.

One whistle of the locomotive is to be enough to disperse all these healthy powers of the Tatra Mountains. As we read in the article, we need the Tatra Mountains because they require care. “It is the duty of Tatra enthusiasts to awaken the vigilance of public opinion, to explain the real meaning of the “European projects,” and to defend the mountains from trade by all means.” It is necessary not only to defend the mountains, but also to face the “disability” noticeable in Zakopane. It is “European” and definitely not ours. Instead of wandering and drawing strength from these wanderings, the youth at the foot of the Tatra Mountains in Zakopane “play cards, read newspapers, and diligently attend so-called reunions.” Even when the weather is at its finest, the mountains are usually empty, “and in Zakopane, young masters in tight trousers pranced through Krupówki Street and played tennis.” The elaborate dating of the article at the end “Rybieniszki, d. 2-go sierpnia 1902 r.” (Rybieniszki, on the 2nd of August, year 1902) further underlines the “Polish,” “non-European” point of view of a boy scout.

Dzieślewski repulsed the attack. In his opinion, the railroad would carry both those who want to toughen up at Orla Perć and those who could otherwise never reach the ridge of the Tatra Mountains on their own. If the mountains are a temple created by God, then it was not created so that only a few have access.⁴⁶⁶

466 In this dispute, Dzieślewski’s adversary was also Kazimierz Bartoszewicz, a columnist of *Słowo Polskie*. Bartoszewicz wrote about the project twice in the column “Kronika Tygodniowa” (Weekly Chronicle), *Słowo Polskie* 482/1902, afternoon edition. In a text from *Słowo Polskie* 368/1903, Bartoszewicz argues: “First of all, Zakopane needs water, which is not there, it needs sewerage, which is not there, and finally, it needs a decent economy, which is not there. And if Zakopane will be still governed in this way, it will

Contrary to the information in the resolution of the Tatra Society – the railroad would not reach the summit but end below in the Świnicka Pass. From the terminus, there would be a “comfortable path with a railing to the summit.” The exploitation of granite would not deprive the summit of its “current beauty,” because granite would be excavated at a much lower altitude. Moreover, if rack railroad from Štrbské Pleso⁴⁶⁷ reached the terminus of the new line, there would be a chance to open access to Hungary.

Walerian Dzieślewski was not the first to propose the railroad expansion in the vicinity of Zakopane. Even before the completion of the Chabówka-Zakopane section, the Lviv National Parliament received petitions concerning the extension of the then constructed line through Kościelisko and Witów to the Hungarian Sucha Hora. In the justification of the project, MEPs could read about the mistakes made in delineating railroads, which left aside the developing health resorts in Iwonicz, Rymanów, Krynica, and Szczawnica: “Let us not make another mistake! We should take advantage of the moment to facilitate access to the little-known and charming corners of our Tatras, and thus provide our country with the benefits that people abroad have already gained through appropriate transportation solutions.” According to the parliamentary rapporteur, the strongest arguments in favor of the proposed line extension were of medical character:

It is known that we live in times of general nervousness. The way of upbringing children, exhausting mental work, excessive distance from nature, all kinds of abuses – these are the factors that undermine the mental health of the inhabitants of big cities. The best way to remove such deviations is to break away from the harmful lifestyle and look for the relief of wrecked nerves in the countryside, especially in the mountains.⁴⁶⁸

never have a decent economy. However, it can offer bad sanitary conditions, no street regulations, no good fire law, expensive housing and food.” Bartoszewicz comments on the support of Lviv’s city council with 4,000 crowns a year that could help in case the railroad brings small profit: “I explain to myself the enthusiasm of Lviv for Mr. Dzieślewski’s project with our general drive for fantasy and all kinds of extravagance.” The anonymous author of “Kolej Zakopane – Świnica,” *Przegląd Zakopiański* 30/1903 perceives the decision of the Lviv city council favorably.

467 See Dzieślewski, “Kolej na Świnicę,” *Czas* 181/1903, evening issue.

468 “Sprawozdanie Komisji Kolejowej o petycji Władysława hr. Zamoyskiego i sześciu petycjach w tym samym przedmiocie o uznanie przez Wysoki Sejm potrzeby budowy kolei żelaznej Zakopane – Sucha Hora. . .,” in: *Alegata do sprawozdań stenograficznych z czwartej sesji siódmego periodu Sejmu Krajowego Królestwa Galicji i Lodomerii z Wielkim Księstwem Krakowskim z roku 1898/9. Alegat* 242, p. 2. Document dated March 19, 1899.

When writing about the project, Władysław Folkierski offers a vision of the rapid Europeanization of the Tatra region: “Should the Kościeliska Valley, Chochołów, and Witów become accessible by train, this whole side of the Tatra Mountains, from Białka and Morskie Oko to Sucha Hora, will become a real Polish Switzerland which, in the future, may attract tourists from all over the world.” Apart from tourism, the railroad would also serve the economy. It would export rock materials, iron ore, and wood, while simultaneously importing food products, including potatoes – which in Zakopane “turn out watery and tasteless and rarely grow.”⁴⁶⁹ The plan to connect Zakopane with Sucha Hora through Kościelisko and Witów eventually lost to a competitive and much cheaper project of a line leading to Sucha Hora from Nowy Targ through Czarny Dunajec. However, it did not disappear without a trace. The unrealized plan left a mark in a type of argumentation that, since then, would return in discussions about the future of Zakopane. The engineer Walerian Dzieślewski returned to the justifications heard by the deputies of the National Parliament in the spring of 1899. The combination of touristic and economic matters in the project do not come as a great surprise.

In the spring of 1905, engineer Dzieślewski presented his project in Cracow and Zakopane. At the April meeting of Krakowskie Towarzystwo Techniczne (Cracow Technical Society), he discussed the construction details of the railroad and introduced minor amendments to the original assumptions. A steam railroad would use crude oil and “blue oil” as fuel. In the long term, electricity could replace steam. When discussing economic arguments, Dzieślewski recalls the country’s demand for granite. Solely for the construction of canals and ports, and the renovation of the royal Wawel Castle, the state would have to buy three-million-crowns-worth of granite. Moreover, Dzieślewski presents the successful results of research conducted on the Tatra iron ore. In the “touristic part” of the lecture, Dzieślewski shows the benefits that the Alpine countries draw from the development of travels. The new railroad will be even more beneficial to this development when one connects it via Liliowe Pass to the Hungarian rack railroad from Štrbské Pleso. As the report states, the discussion “unanimously agreed that the project [...] deserves our wholehearted support.” Cracow said goodbye to the engineer with “a loud round of applause.”⁴⁷⁰ Reports from the

469 See W. Folkierski, *Kolej Chabówka – Zakopane i udział kraju w budowie kolei lokalnych*, Lviv, 1900, pp. 23–24.

470 See “Kolej na Świnicę,” *Przegląd Zakopiański* 9/1905; E. Śm., “Projekt wstępny drogi żel[aznej] lokalnej wąskotorowej z Zakopanego pod Świnicę,” *Przegląd Techniczny* 47/1905.

Zakopane reading are scarce. However, we know that Dzieślewski “gained new subscriptions for shares.”⁴⁷¹

6. The Railroad Worm

Stanisław Witkiewicz devoted an extensive essay “Po latach” (Over the Years) to the future and direction of Zakopane’s development. Witkiewicz wrote the essay as a voice in the ongoing discussion on the “accessibility” of the Tatra Mountains. The essay was included in the second edition of Witkiewicz’s *Na przełęczy* (On the Mountain Pass). The decision to open the new edition of *Na przełęczy* with the essay “Po latach” testifies to the importance of the issues Witkiewicz raises in this text.⁴⁷² Witkiewicz’s opinion is clear, and he sums it up in one sentence: “The railroad will kill the Tatra Mountains. By entering them, trains will destroy the essential content of the mountains, their richness, and I doubt whether the export of sheep cheese from Hala Gąsienicowa, or even granite, will even the score” (119). Witkiewicz closely followed the discussion on the transportation projects concerning Zakopane. When writing “Po latach,” he uses medical arguments that previously supported the idea of leading the railroad to Sucha Hora, but he consistently turns them against the plans of making the Tatra Mountains more accessible. Witkiewicz was probably familiar with “Zamach na Świnicę,” but he constructs his railroad criticism in a different manner.⁴⁷³

471 See “Kolej na Świnicę,” *Przegląd Zakopiański* 19–20/1905. A short note about the Zakopane presentation of the projects ends on a positive note: “Now, only 34,000 crowns separate us from the project’s finalization.” Already in the summer of 1903, the so-called “Memoriał zakopiański” (Zakopane Memorial) was ready. It was a document to the Austrian Government that discussed the necessary state help for Zakopane. Among the seven demands, there was a plan for a “short rail connection with Hungary.” It could become a reality through the construction of a rack railroad from Štrbské Pleso connected to Świnica railroad. “Such a railroad line is guaranteed to be profitable. A petition on this matter will be soon submitted to the Government. We kindly ask for granting the request.” See “Memoriał zakopiański,” *Słowo Polskie* 422/1904, afternoon issue.

472 See S. Witkiewicz, *Na przełęczy. Wrażenia i obrazy z Tatr*, second edition, without illustrations: “I. Po latach; II. Tatry w śniegu; III. Na przełęczy,” Lviv, 1906. All the quotes come from this edition. Page numbers in brackets after quotations.

473 It is difficult to say whether – before writing “Po latach” – Stanisław Witkiewicz managed to read the extensive article by Stanisław Eljasz Radzikowski published as W.H., “Ochrona Tatr,” *Słowo Polskie* 391, 393, and 395/1905. Among other things, the article (part from 395/1905) includes the following opinion: “Even the greatest supporter of the Świnica railroad will not deny that this construction will irreversibly change the

The portrait of winter in “Po latach” is undoubtedly the most memorable part of the essay. This very complex and strongly narrativized fragment breaks from the argument line, gains independence, and frees itself from the obligations imposed on it by the rigid context of the discussion with the railroad project. However, precisely in this autonomy, in this capricious independence do we see the full potential of the power of winter elements that rule even over the composition of the text. When we follow Witkiewicz’s “blizzard” and all the frost’s work, when we read about the mist “that winter will mold into wonders” it is hard to resist the impression that – from this perspective – all human activities and even the boldest projects seem infinitely small. The portrait of the Tatra winter does not contain a word about the railroad to Świnica, but at the same time does contain an extremely important idea for the evaluation the project. Witkiewicz’s description convinces us that winter cannot be drawn into the “inventory of human enterprise,” because winter is – just like a rocky desert – both useless and infinitely beautiful.

Various argumentative modes intertwine in Witkiewicz’s discussion on the ideas of making the Tatra Mountains more accessible. The first mode includes the already mentioned medical and hygienic justifications. They strongly adhere to the era, in which people hear ever more about the high costs of the civilization processes, the devastation to the psyche, the weakening of nerves in result of mental work, the excess of strong stimuli leading to the blunting of senses, and the universal indifference to spiritual values. In “Po latach,” this diagnosis comes with the conviction that the Tatra Mountains can help the shattered nerves, because they are an “abundant source of new experiences.” However, the therapeutic powers of the mountains will last only as long as people will protect Zakopane from urban pollution. The treatment Witkiewicz designs is supposed to be – like any other treatment – connected with individual effort. It must mean that the sick wants to be healed. A tourist will make this declaration when he reaches Świnica “climbing steep rocks.” The tourist’s climb will be proof that he “personally goes after something.” A lonesome climb is an exercise for courage, perseverance, and dexterity. Moreover, at the end, it awards the hiker with a view that should not be disconnected from other bodily sensations. No one who reaches Świnica “in a rattling car of the rack railroad” or “in wheelbarrows” will not undergo the Tatra treatment for body and soul (118). But at the same time,

character of the Tatra Mountains. Moreover, no one will vouch how this will affect tourism. And, before we know it, there will be an organ-grinder at the top of Świnica, and at each mountain a similar station will have an ariston or a monopan!”

rack railroad offers only “eye irritation through images” (118) – a defective view deprived of any other bodily experience.

Medical argumentation smoothly transforms into an aesthetic mode because, according to Witkiewicz, the salutary power of the Tatra Mountains comes from the mountain beauty. Witkiewicz measures the strength of Tatra beauty by its uselessness. The less traces of human efforts to make life comfortable and mountains “accessible,” the more beautiful the place.

Mountains have their value when they remain a “rocky desert,” when they look as if nobody admired them, when they remain unfringed by human bustle – like the harsh Tatra winter. Any attempt to get into contact with beauty more pleasant and easier leads to the transformation of the “rocky desert” into a “suburban park” (see 115). “Bang of the carriage wheels and a tram “ will mar Zakopane, just like “gazebos among steep rocky walls, glass balls on green sticks in front of stations, gravel roads with banks along them” will mar the Tatra Mountains (119). The Tatra park may turn out beautiful, but it will always remain only a park.

In the conclusion of the essay, there is another mode of argumentation, which refers to the Morskie Oko lake dispute and the decision of the arbitral tribunal in Graz, which ended the territorial dispute with Hungary. This successfully resolved border conflict was encouraging, because the victory “belongs to the nation, with no power behind it, who did it in a case concerning only ideals.” (141). Witkiewicz believes that the victory augurs well for the future. True patriotism works well in the fight for rocks, which only value is beauty and “legendary charm.” The patriotic interpretation of beauty imposed on the discussion about Świnica employed the dispute with a political tone.⁴⁷⁴

There is a very interesting image in Witkiewicz’s essay. It is “the railroad worm” that may one day consume the Tatra beauty (see 120). It was not a novelty, as it had already appeared in the discussion about the railroad project. In “Zamach na Świnicę,” Niewiadomski offers the following image: “The lonely sun roasts the huge debris of boulders, from time to time, a chamois rolls the stones somewhere far, high beneath a snowy field; sometimes the winds of unheard power blow

474 See “Po wyroku,” *Ilustracja Polska* 38/1902. Two previous issues of the journal were devoted to the history and political consequences of the dispute over the Morskie Oko Lake.

and monstrous clouds run across the sky formed into incomprehensible shapes, which we could not dream up, we the worms.”⁴⁷⁵

From the very beginning, animal analogies accompany the railroad. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, when trains triumphantly enter the social space of the West, people greet it with comparisons to a bird. The bird's flight, usually a predator like an eagle or falcon, seemed to be the best depiction of the advantages of a new way of travelling: incomparable speed, lack of obstacles, and smoothness. The locomotive soon became an “iron horse” and started clipping coupons from the popularity of the animal permanently inscribed in the history of our culture. Sometimes, the train was a snake, but in this case, it also evoked only positive associations: the quick and elegant moves of a long and multi-part train. The comparison of a train to a worm reached back to another tradition of imaging. It is a much older tradition, which compares human troubles to the actions of “second-rate” despised animals that people could not use in any way. This group of animals includes rats, mice, and worms. However, they are not part of the traditional bestiary, because they are not creatures that cause fear, and neither do they have physical advantage over humans. Maybe rats and worms do not have any advantage over us, but they are annoying. Their threat comes from their inconspicuousness and uncontrolled population growth. Polish literature of the nineteenth century noticed worms and produced images of various meanings. In *Maria* by Malczewski “The worm breeds even in a vivid flower,” while in Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* the worm becomes a symbol of an unremarkable yet effective struggle, which might put some of the Moscow power in jeopardy.

“The railroad worm” of Witkiewicz's essay has clear folk roots. It is not from poetry but from folk tales, Podhale anecdotes, an proverbs, in which it turns out to be an unpleasant and annoying enemy of the household. The image of a worm that breeds on mountains brings the style of the essay closer to the “Zakopane style.” In Witkiewicz's *Na przełęczy*, large parts of narrative reach the reader under the guise of the local dialect. This “stylistic contagion” returns in “Po latach” and has a significant role in building the mood in the description of winter. The image of the worm breeding on the image of Tatra beauty comes before the winter sequence, in which it also finds its stylistic roots. Earlier, we read in the essay about the “social estate of the Tatrás” which, in a way, prepares

475 Niewiadomski, “Zamach na Świnicę.” Stanisław Eljasz Radzikowski wrote about Swiss mountain railroads that “bite with their tunnels into the rocks” in “Ochrona Tatr,” *Słowo Polskie* 391/1905.

the reader for a meeting with the worm that “the estate” should just get rid of. Even earlier, Witkiewicz lectures on his theory of the “Zakopane style.”

Images of worms and mice were particularly justifiable in the narratives that described the “puncturing” of Alps by large railroad tunnels. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the admiration voices prevailed, but they came mainly from those who looked at the mountains from the perspective of their city offices. Engineer’s admiration for the miracles of civilization drowned the folk voice that worked on construction sites of tunnels and had to look at these great works of strangers from their homes. In one of the Italian tales by Maxim Gorky, we see the Simplon Tunnel from two different perspectives. For the young Paolo, it is a triumphant undertaking that will put a medal on his chest. For his father, the puncturing of a mountain is blasphemy.⁴⁷⁶ Witkiewicz’s “railroad worm” belongs to the world of folk imagination. The worm resembles a rat that makes holes in cereal bags or a mouse that eats stored cheese.

In the July issue of *Słowo Polskie* from 1907, in the column “Echa lata” (Echoes of Summer), there appeared a note on the new reprint of Witkiewicz’s *Na przełęczy*. However, the article does not concern literature but culture. Already with its title, it signifies the point of interest: the title reads “W obronie gór” (In Defense of Mountains) with an equally meaningful subheading “Cervin a Świnica” (Cervin and Świnica).⁴⁷⁷ Cervin is the Italian name of the summit, also known under its German name Matterhorn. The author of the article connects the critics of the Matterhorn railroad with the opponents of Dzieślewski’s project with a mutual “mountain defense” front. The Cervin-Świnica juxtaposition is important for the meaning of the whole text. It allows us to say that the resistance against railroad projects is not some kind of Polish domestic affliction. The juxtaposition shows that it is not backwardness speaking through Poles, but a truly European character that the Tatra railroad project tried to imitate. The article from *Słowo Polskie* reinforces a peculiar Swiss-Polish alliance. I used the word “reinforces,” because in the background of the article people could hear the echoing judgment of the arbitral tribunal in Graz. Among the people to whom the press attributed the tribunal’s favorable decision on the course of the border at the Morskie Oko lake were two “free” Swissmen.⁴⁷⁸ In the summer of 1911, the

476 See the chapter “A kiss in the tunnel. Three heterotopies of modernity” in this book.

477 See “W obronie gór. (Cervin a Świnica),” *Słowo Polskie* 351/1907, afternoon issue.

478 The chairman of the arbitral tribunal in Graz was the president of the Swiss trade union tribunal, Johann Winkler. The expert was Professor Fridolin Becker. “Indeed, the names of both free Swiss people should be always remembered by Poles, as they

readers of *Nowa Reforma* could shed a tear over the story of Rudolf Vitznauer. As we know, engineer Dzieślewski eagerly used “Swissness” in his texts. Even earlier, the project of Zakopane-Sucha Hora railroad used the same “Swissness,” which now became a symbol of a wise approach to nature, reasonable planning, and restraint in making the mountains available to tourists. The journalist of *Słowo Polskie* recalls the opinion of the opponent of the Cervin railroad project: “We do not only fight for Cervin but for all the mountains.” The journalist continues to quote: “So that the Alps do not interfere with the brotherhood of peoples [...] we have pierced them with tunnels and will continue to pierce them, but only under the condition that the highest peaks remain an inviolable heritage of the whole nation, a common temple erected by nature to our mother Freedom.”⁴⁷⁹ The author’s commentary to these words is not surprising: “The Tatra peaks do not harm the brotherhood of peoples, so we do not need tunnels or rack railroads.”

In 1908, the book *Z teki taternika* (From the Portfolio of a Tatra Mountaineer) entered bookstores. It was another voice in the discussion on Dzieślewski’s project. The book received a cool reception in the circles of mountain lovers. A reviewer of *Z teki taternika* writes that “it is a collection of experiences written in an impressionist tone, a series of momentary images, as if a roll of photographs taken quickly during a trip with a camera.”⁴⁸⁰ These characteristics of the whole book cannot relate to the last of the stories published in the volume. If all the other sketches are indeed a kind of “photographs” from expeditions, then it is difficult to call “Senne zmary” (Nightmares) as part of such series of images. “Senne zmary” is about all that a tourist could not yet see and photograph in the Tatra Mountain: the mountains turned into a “huge folk park” and “air railways” between the peaks.

The year 1908 was a turning point for the Dzieślewski’s railroad project. For the first time, there was a real chance to win state support for the project. The history of efforts to gain authority support begins with the resolution of

never yielded to any side considerations or influence and contributed to the right and just end of the border dispute.” “Co zyskali Węgrzy?,” *Ilustracja Polska* 38/1902, p. 909.

479 The quoted words are of “Mr. Bovet.” Mr. Bovet is of course Ernest Bovet (1870–1941), a renowned Swiss Romanist and professor of the University of Zurich.

480 See Dr A. L’s [A. Lewicki; review of K. Piliński’s] “*Z teki taternika*,” *Taternik* 3/1908, p. 58. The reviewer writes about Piliński: “An unknown author. Only a few have heard his name.” The reviewer Ks. W. Wiecki TJ, “Z nowszych powieści polskich,” *Przegląd Powszechny* 1908 (July, August, September), p. 400, differs in opinion: “A few personal impressions, descriptions, and humorous sketches illustrating Tatra adventures create a beautiful and well-readable collection *Z teki taternika*.”

the Galician Parliament from July 4, 1902, when the officials submitted a petition of the railroad consortium for further government examination by the Railroad Commission of the State Department.⁴⁸¹ The petition asked to recognize the new railroad project as useful for the general interest of the country, which would allow it to benefit from the financial support guaranteed by the Austrian local railroad act. The State Department refused support. It “found the railroad to be superfluous and unnecessary.”⁴⁸² In response, the Association of Polish Gymnastic Society “Falcon” in Lviv, the Royal Magistrate of the capital city of Lviv, the consortium of the planned line, and others sent new petitions to the parliament. In the resolution from October 30, 1903, the parliament forwarded the submitted draft to the State Department for reconsideration.⁴⁸³ According to the government’s documents from the “first session of the ninth period” (1908), the rejection of the first petition for financial support resulted

481 Initially, the Tatra Society supported the project, which it noted in a report: “On June 21, 1902, the Tatra Society supported Walerian Dzieślewski’s request in the Parliament to build a narrow-gauge railroad from Zakopane to Świnica. The Society presented the matter at a rally of members who came from all sides of our country to Zakopane on August 5, 1902. After recognizing the importance of the project and the benefits for the country and Polish tourism, the members kindly supported the initiative.” “Sprawozdanie z czynności Tow[arzystwa] Tatr[zańskiego] za czas od 21 kwietnia 1902 do 26 kwietnia 1903,” *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* 24/1903, p. 7.

482 “Sprawozdanie petycji inżyniera cyw[ilnego] p[ana] Waleriana Dzieślewskiego imieniem konsorcjum projektowanej kolei lokalnej Zakopane – Świnica. Alegata 536” [dated October 40, 1903], in: *Alegata do sprawozdań stenograficznych z pierwszej sesji ósmego periodu Sejmu Krajowego Królestwa Galicji i Lodomerii z Wielkim Księstwem Krakowskim z roku 1902/1903*.

483 In 1903, the initially strong support of the Tatra Society for the project expressed at a rally in 1902, significantly weakened, “Sprawozdanie z czynności Tow[arzystwa] Tatr[zańskiego] za czas od 27 kwietnia 1903 do 7 kwietnia 1904,” *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* 26/1904, p. xvii: “The Society discussed the project on this day due to the fact that the Society once supported the project of engineer Walerian Dzieślewski to build a narrow-gauge rack railroad from Zakopane to Liliowe Pass, assuming that a similar rack railroad could one day be constructed from the south of the Tatra line. The Society was in favor of the benefits of building the railroad from Zakopane to Dolina Kościeliska and from there through Upłaz glade to the Czerwone Wierchy summits, and in favor of constructing a hotel on Upłaz glade. The aspects of the project that gained less support of the Society was the construction of railroad to Krzyżne and a hotel at its ridge. Moreover, the least favored aspect of the project was the construction of railroad to Stawy Gąsienicowe and the Liliowe Pass, or the potential hotel beneath the pass.”

from the fact that the government “perceived [...] the planned mountain railroad as *touristic*.” However, within a few years, the institutions supporting the project managed to prove a different character of the railroad. For this reason, the State Department changed its mind and, when forwarding the case to the parliament, it recommended a positive decision in its report: “The railroad project has a very *economic* character. Even if the railroad might contribute to an increase in its profitability, it is primarily designed and built to enable the exploitation of abundant raw materials in the Galician Tatra Mountains.”⁴⁸⁴

The report of the Railroad Commission ended with two resolution proposals. The first one was to instruct the State Department to examine the utility of the planned railroad and oblige “the institution financing the company to precisely calculate the profitability based on a rough cost estimate.” The second resolution obliged the State Department in case of a satisfying profit prognosis to “seek a one-off share of 500,000 crowns from the Imperial and Royal Government for common shares and to present at the next session of the parliament a motion to support the railroad construction with the same share.”⁴⁸⁵ A new entity appears in the report that shows interest in the project: the Galician Electric Society⁴⁸⁶ declared its willingness to build and partially finance the construction. This meant that the modern train to Świnica would run on electricity. However, above all, it meant that dark clouds began to gather over the Tatra Mountains and Zakopane.

“Senne zmyry” portrays the Tatra Mountains after they had become “accessible and industrialized.” The witness of these new Tatras is a protagonist, who makes a stop in his long and unhurried hike to spend the night “in a forest beneath Hala Pyszna.” A series of bangs interrupts his sleep. “These were simply the annual night artillery exercises near Nowy Targ.” (89)⁴⁸⁷ Sleep did not return.

484 “Sprawozdanie Komisji Kolejowej o petycji Centralnego Związku Galicyjskiego Przemysłu Fabrycznego w sprawie finansowego poparcia kolei z Zakopanego pod Świnicę. Alegata 415” [dated October 24, 1908], p. 1, in: *Alegata do sprawozdań stenograficznych z pierwszej sesji ósmego periodu Sejmu Krajowego Królestwa Galicji i Lodomerii z Wielkim Księstwem Krakowskim z roku 1908*.

485 “Sprawozdanie Komisji Kolejowej,” p. 5.

486 “Sprawozdanie Komisji Kolejowej,” p. 4. The interest in the project on the part of the AEG Union society turned out to short-term and limited to this initial declaration. The National Department called on the Society to submit a cost estimate and profitability calculation. “This call has not yet been answered by the Society.” “Kolej lokalna Zakopane – Świnica,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 284/1909 [December 14].

487 K. Piliński, “Senne zmyry,” in: Piliński, *Z teki taternika*, Cracow, 1908. I mark the quotes from this publication with page numbers in brackets.

Instead, the protagonist had sorrowful reflections about the Kościeliska Valley, which people “deprived [...] of its charm.” Next come the visions of Morskie Oko lake, where disgusting “shacks” stand. Finally, a thought of the planned Świnica railroad appears and evokes a “thrill of indignation” (90–91). The worst feelings start bombarding the protagonist. His feverish imagination, now somewhere between dream and reality, produces a real kaleidoscope of images. Civilization managed to invade the Tatra Mountains for good. A travel between the peaks became quicker and more comfortable than ever:

A train runs along Orla Percé: Mięguszwiecki Summits. . . Rysy Mount – five minutes, Wysoka – three minutes, Gerlach – ten minutes!⁴⁸⁸ Huge iron bridges hang somewhere in the clouds. A whole network of wires – air railways – cars sliding on an iron line over unexplored chasms./ Dressed-up ladies lean out of the windows, then they quickly move back with a quiet scream of horror, enjoying the impression of. . . safe danger./ The whole Tatras turn into a huge folk park.

This “folk park” is something else than the “Tatra park” that Witkiewicz feared. Moreover, it means something much worse for the mountains. Between the mountains of Żabi Szczyt and Miedziany, constructors stretched a rope on which “On a barely visible height, a tightrope walker carries a small boy in a wheelbarrow” (92). After the performance, the audience crowds in restaurants and kiosks with soda water. There are plenty of attractions everywhere. “At Czarny Staw lake: shacks, carousels, menagerie.” (92). On the wall of Mount Rysy, a huge advertisement of a Cracow leather and clothes shop appears. At the Mięguszwiecka Pass, there is an Art Nouveau pavilion with a huge poster.

In the Hincowa Lake Valley, there is an amphitheater and the lake itself becomes the stage for the performance. The theme of the play is “the sea battle at Fusi-Mu, from the last Sino-American War” (93). A torpedo blast returns the protagonist to reality. It turns out that it was not a torpedo, but a cone crackling in a fire. Waking up is comforting because the Tatra “folk park” is fortunately not yet a reality. . .

Piliński’s short story faithfully recreates the atmosphere of the time. A significant element of this atmosphere were cultural novelties: the project of Świnica railroad, “air railroad,” and the first amusement parks. Discussions and disputes

488 Orla Percé – a tourist trail running along the main ridge of the High Tatras from Zawrat through Krzyżne, Wołoszyn to Wodogrzmoty Mickiewicza (Mickiewicz Falls). The trail was prepared between 1903–1906 and is the most difficult tourist trail in the Tatras. Mięguszwiecki, Rysy, Wysoka, Gerlach (Slovakian: Gerlachovský štít) – summits in the main ridge of the High Tatras.

over the accessibility of mountains from the beginning of the twentieth century took place in different countries, in different environments, and lead to different conclusions. We should consider the social objections against the Matterhorn railroad as one of the important stimuli that prompted engineering circles to work on a new type of mountain transportation that would be less harmful to the natural environment. The “air railroads” that Piliński writes about, were supposed to be a reasonable alternative to rack railroad. They provided comfort and magnificent views. Cable cars offered advantages, which attracted a great deal of public notice, while the project was still on the drawing boards. Even America noticed these advantages: “The latest form of railway mountaineering does not disfigure the scenery, it requires no cuttings or tunnels, and there is no smoke.”⁴⁸⁹ When the stories from *Z teki taternika* entered Polish bookshops, the construction of the first cable car to the top of Wetterhorn in the Swiss Bernese Alps⁴⁹⁰ was just about to be completed. Although cable cars were already in use at that time, they transported only goods. In July 1902, Wieliczka launched “cable railroad” to transport sand for backfilling exploited salt chambers.⁴⁹¹ The production of steel wire ropes made it possible to increase the load on the car and guarantee the safe transportation of passengers. The Wetterhorn cable car opened a new chapter in the history of Alpine tourism. From now on, mountain tourism and landscape conservation seemed to be able to reach a compromise. The image of the mountain woven with wires serves as a kind of Tatra dystopia. It is an expression of a perspective of a skeptic who sees no chance to reconcile modern technology with the dignity of mountains. That is why the end of the story speaks in a highly religious tone. A railroad in the Tatra is nothing more but a profanation: “This place is sacred” (93). Piliński’s story documents one more important cultural breakthrough. At the beginning of the century, civilization creates the first amusement parks. The attractions of the New York complex on Coney Island soon had their European replicas. In 1908, the Wurstelprater in Vienna was the closest park to Poland. In the spring of 1913, two modern Polish amusement parks opened in Lviv and Cracow.

489 “Mountain Railways,” *San Francisco Call* 163/1907.

490 See F. A. Talbot, *Aerial Mountain Railways. The Method of Alpine Viewing which is Safe, Luxurious, Rapid and Popular*, in: Talbot, *Railway Wonders of the World*, London, 1914. I want to draw the attention to the subheading that makes from the mountain railroad yet another “machine of vision.” See also: “Koleje wiszące,” *Biesiada Literacka* 8/1912.

491 See “Najwspanialsza komora ‘Steinhauser’ w Wieliczce zaszypana,” *Ilustracja Polska* 30/1902.

In the autumn 1912, the press reported that the State Department prepared a motion for the parliament to support the Świnica rack railroad with a subsidy of 500,000 crowns. This could have meant that the ten-year-old project will finally enter the implementation phase and give priority to the transportation of Tatra rock materials over tourism. An efficient yet complicated – because of the rack and pinion system – transport created a realistic chance that Poland could open granite quarries on the slope of Hala Gąsienicowa. In the booklet *Czyżby tryumf nonsensu?! (A Triumph of Nonsense?!)*, Henryk Kunzek, the Cracow painter and sculptor, discussed mainly the aesthetic side of the project and portrayed an image of a nightmare that the Tatra Mountains and Zakopane will become when the ridiculous modernization spoils them. The town still awaits electric light and sewage, and only such novelties can prevent the progressive degradation of the summer resort: “You decorate all the peaks of the Tatra Mountains with railroad, illuminate the waterfalls with colorful lamps, hang cable cars over chasms, then carry up these baskets of fat people, but all these weird things and witchcraft, all these “Lunapark” pleasures will not prevent the fall of Zakopane, if the change for the better does not begin soon.”⁴⁹²

Kunzek returns to the question that drives the railroad discussion: whom should the mountains serve? Kunzek attacks “maudlin altruism” expressed in the postulates of making “high mountain panoramas available to a handful of sick and old people.” This altruism will not justify “destructive attacks on the pristine Tatra Mountains.” It will only evoke a bitter laugh, because the area of “elementary insatiation” is huge. There are “swarms of orphans without a roof or a slice of bread, shelters for the elderly and cripples burst at the seams.”⁴⁹³ Dreams about a Polish Rigi must give way to much more important needs. “And if there must be a railroad, if all the Poles want a railroad, then we can build one at the Gubałówka.”⁴⁹⁴

The years 1912–1913 were the period of the greatest social opposition against the railroad to Świnica. On January 11, 1912, the Tatra Society opened its fifth section: the Tatra Protection Section.⁴⁹⁵ On August 10, 1912, in Zakopane, there was a rally for the protection of the Tatra Mountains. One of its decisions was to

492 H. Kunzek, *Czyżby tryumf nonsensu?! Rzecz w sprawie kolejki na Świnicę*, Cracow, 1913, p. 27. The phantom of a “folk park” returns in a warning on page 28: “We cannot change the Tatra Mountains into Wurstelprater.”

493 Kunzek, *Czyżby tryumf nonsensu?!*, p. 28.

494 Kunzek, *Czyżby tryumf nonsensu?!*, p. 29.

495 See “W sprawie ochrony Tatr,” *Kosmos* 3/1912.

lodge a strong protest against the railroad plans.⁴⁹⁶ In April 1913, the participants of the General Assembly of the Tatra Society in Cracow declared to stand “against the construction of any rack railroad in the Tatra Mountains.”⁴⁹⁷ As we read in the report published by *Czas*, “every railroad will undoubtedly disfigure and trivialize the Tatra Mountains.”⁴⁹⁸ Also in April 1913, the Executive Committee of the Conference of Tourist and Ski Societies in Lviv expressed its opinion. The Committee adopted a resolution that coincided with the “touristic” assumptions of the Dzieślewski project:

Enabling the general public to admire the summit view of the Tatra Mountains would greatly contribute to the popularization of domestic tourism. It would draw more attention than before to the beauty of the country, it would increase the value of Galicia and especially Zakopane as a tourist area. It could significantly reduce tourist emigration from Poland to other countries.

However, the resolution considered Dzieślewski’s project “unfeasible,” because the location of the terminus over 300 meters below the summit would “prevent nine out of ten travelers using the railroad from climbing Świnica.” At the end of the resolution, the Committee decided “to conduct preliminary research for the Zakopane-Lysa Polana rack railroad with a line to Krzyżne.”⁴⁹⁹ Until the end of 1913, several new articles and brochures extended the list of publications showing the harmfulness of Dzieślewski’s plan.⁵⁰⁰ At the beginning of 1914, Ferdinand

496 See “Ochrona Tatr,” *Kurier Lwowski* 367/1912; “Ochrona Tatr,” *Gazeta Lwowska* 184/1912; “Kronika krajoznawcza,” *Ziemia* 38/1912. In the report of the Tatra Society, we read: “Our Tatra Protection Section expressed its opinion on the planned Zakopane-Świnica railroad in the brochure “W sprawie kolei na Świnicę” by Dr. Kuźniar, published with the Nature Section, and in a memorial sent to the National Department. The Department of the Tatra Society may only show complete solidarity with the views expressed in the memorial, which correspond to the essential state of affairs and show the only correct way of resolving the matter, without damaging the beauty of the Tatra nature and with a significant benefit for the modern needs of increased tourist traffic.” “Sprawozdanie z czynności Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego za czas od 15 marca 1912 r. do dnia 31 marca 1913 r.,” *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* 34/1913, p. xi.

497 “Z Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego,” *Gazeta Podhalańska* 17/1913.

498 “Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie,” *Czas* 170/1913.

499 “Kronika krajoznawcza,” *Ziemia* 24/1913, p. 404.

500 Apart from the mentioned brochure by Henryk Kunz, these appeared: M. Limanowski, “W sprawie kolejki na Świnicę,” *Czas* 582/1912; W. Kuźniar, “W sprawie kolejki na Świnicę,” Cracow, 1912; “Memoriał do Wysokiego Wydziału Krajowego w sprawie projektu budowy kolei lokalnej Zakopane – Świnica, Zakopane” [1913?];

Goetel returned to the case. In an extensive article “Droga na Świnicę i ochrona Tatr” (Road to Świnica and Tatra Protection), Goetel adopts a slogan: “Tatra Mountains for the strong and the bold!”, which ended the discussion on whom the mountains should serve. People created a “great international tourist fair” in the Alps. The only chance for the Tatra Mountains lies in their inaccessibility, as Goetel warns: “Let’s not take up there all of our ailments, all that we’re running away from – the urban civilization with its railroads, hotels, and cafes!”⁵⁰¹ This voice resounded almost exactly when the readers of *Nowy Wiek* received the last episodes of Andrzej Strug’s novel *Zakopanoptikon*.⁵⁰²

Strug’s novel is undoubtedly the greatest literary reflection on the railroad discussion on Świnica. The novel has a collective protagonist of the inhabitants of Zakopane and summer holidaymakers, bitterly disappointed with the weather. However, we can say that there also appears the eponymous character, which is the coupling of town and visibility. The title of the novel is a neologism and a compound noun created from the words “Zakopane” and “panopticon.” The second word brings to mind two meanings: a “panopticum” and a “panorama.” All three variants, panopticon, panopticum, and panorama focus on one thing: visibility. “Panopticon” is the name of an architectural structure from the end of the eighteenth century, which made it possible to reform the prison system. Jeremy Bentham, the creator of the panopticon, planned for it many more applications, which he scrupulously mentioned on the title page of his treatise. Besides being a penitentiary-house, the panopticon was liable to be a workshop, shelter for the poor, home for the insane, a hospital, or a school. The panopticon is a circular building with a tower for guards (supervisors) on its axis, with windows facing all sides. The cells located inside the circular building allow the observation of prisoners – or residents, employees, sick people – without giving them the opportunity to contact and see each other. The structure was to give the detainees the impression of constant control, regardless of whether such control was actually present or not. The other word, “panopticum,” is a cabinet of curiosities, gathering specimens of various animal species or people

T. Lulek, “W sprawie kolei na Świnicę. (Finansowa strona projektu),” Cracow, 1913; Z. Weyberg, “Słów kilka w sprawie projektu p[ana] Dzieślewskiego,” Lviv, 1913.

501 F. Goetel, “Droga na Świnicę i ochrona Tatr,” *Ziemia* 3/1914, p. 46.

502 It was long before the novel was published in a book form. The book was released twice, but only after the Second World War. See A. Strug, *Zakopanoptikon, czyli kronika czterdziestu dziewięciu dni deszczowych w Zakopanem*, Warsaw, 1957. I use this edition and give page numbers in brackets. See also Strug, *Zakopanoptikon, czyli kronika 49 dni deszczowych w Zakopanem*, ed. R. Hennel, Cracow, 1989.

with deformities. It can also mean a wax figures museum. The most famous such museum of this kind was in England run by Mrs. Tussaud. Finally, a panorama is one of the nineteenth-century “machines of vision.” In Poland, people could test its efficiency in Warsaw while watching the Tatra Mountains in the building on Oboźna Street.

Strug uses all three meanings in his novel. The penitentiary meaning is present in the form of the rain that imprisons the summer holidaymakers in the town and prevents them from making hikes in the mountains. Additionally, the long rainfall causes a break in rail transportation and, for some time, the whole Zakopane is completely cut off from the world. The comedic side of the novel uses the meaning of panopticum. The rainy Zakopane gathers various figures that reveal a variety of curiosities, aberrations, and deviations. Seven weeks of bad weather lead to a complete degeneration of the Zakopane population. A new disease appears in the town. Thin membranes grow between the fingers of summer visitors, the way they walk changes, and the voices become similar to quacking. Let us not forget that Strug’s novel is also about a panorama that one can only long for. From the town, people cannot see the Tatra Mountains. What was supposed to attract visitors to Zakopane, remains only in words – in the boasts of mountaineers and in hopeless disputes about the right to be the first one to hike the new variant of an already known route. Another constituent of the panorama aspect is a cinematograph that comes to Zakopane. The machine’s owner ends poorly, although the last scene in which the man tries to make a film from Marchońtowa’s funeral is filled with meaning. In a way, it is a quintessence of the theme investigated by Strug: the catastrophe of visibility.

In the rainy Zakopane, the idea of building a railroad to Świnica keeps coming back. This is not surprising. Bad weather makes us talk a lot and not walk in the mountains. Moreover, it makes us irritated and raises the heat of discussions. Disputes concern various issues; one of the main divisions between the people concerns the “accessibility” of the mountains. There is a thriving “section for the primevalization of the Tatras” in Zakopane that associates those who “will never allow to besmirch true highland villages with electricity and comforts” (19). This is what we read about Mr. Ceprowicz:

The President had endless ideas, and his beloved secret dream was to destroy the railroad track, locomotives and carriages, railroad officials, all passengers with their luggage and return to the old means of transport from the times of Sabała and the widespread trembling of human guts in picturesque wagons, at least from Chabówka.

The grotesque tone of the novel brings all Zakopane disputes to the level of President Ceprowicz’s dreams. Obviously, this leads to a mockery of the actions

of the real Tatra Protection Section. As we know, on August 10, 1912, the Section organized an enormous rally, which ended with the adoption of a protest against the construction of the Świnica railroad. It is difficult to determine the time of the fictional world of the novel, but one thing is certain: on August 13 “of a well-known year of our Lord,” engineer Bosakier comes to Zakopane to “continue his campaign in defense of the great idea” (214, 216). A poster advertises the rally against the railroad. Its description is a masterpiece of literary grotesque. The description appears in a footnote, because the novel is written in form of a report by a conscientious “chronicler,” who stops the narrative for a while, whenever he feels obliged to outline a broader background of the events:

This poster is a bibliographical rarity, because the opponents of the project destroyed it and ripped with barbaric fervor. It depicted a magnificent European yellowish hotel on a top of a mountain. Blue guests were sitting at the tables on the terrace in front of the hotel, a sapphire orchestra played in a gray gazebo. Below, in the medallion appeared a portrait of the creator of the work, while still lower were two long trains. One carried up green people in red cars, the other, cinnamon-colored, went down with precious hay and cisterns of milk. Between the trains, there was Polish Davos with an enormous sanatorium for the madmen who opposed the construction project (244–245, footnote).

Unlike in real Zakopane, nature is the one that ends Strug’s August rally. It wants to avoid a clash that happened between the railroads’ supporters and opponents, Bosakier jumps out of the window, hides in a barrel of pears, grabs an umbrella, and then a strong blow of the Tatra wind carries him away. “An hour later he flew over Chabówka, and no one has heard of him since” (252). At this moment, the “chronicler” once more broadens the reader’s knowledge about the details of all that happened later:

But the great idea didn’t die. Every year, it will return in the summer season as a permanent, irresistible, spontaneous phenomenon. The project, buried a hundred times, will resurrect every year. Enemies and supporters of the railroad die of various diseases or murder each other in disputes and fights. New generations of enemies and supporters are born and mature. There will never be a shortage of evidence and arguments on either side, neither insufficient faith nor lack of insults and insinuations. Protocols, resolutions, articles, brochures, will make up a huge library. Law professors, hay professors, milk professors will habituate themselves in a new branch of knowledge: railroad science. Historians of the dispute will create schools, celebrate jubilees and anniversaries of the most eminent moments of the combat. The eternal motifs of the dispute will be embodied in countless dramas, operas, and miracle plays. But the rack railroad itself will never be built, which is known to all supporters and enemies from the very beginning of the centuries-old conflict (252, footnote).

The financial troubles that ended the life of *Panorama Tatr* in Warsaw was a harbinger of the catastrophe of visibility and the failure of the railroad project. There are many catastrophes in *Zakopanoptikon*. The endless rain is a catastrophe for all the summer holidaymakers.⁵⁰³ In the desert Zakopane, there is an Imperial and Royal postman assassination attempt. Later, there is an avalanche formed from the Skawulin's masterpieces, Count Jajski's car crashes with the new Zakopane government and soon drowns in a swamp – along with the driver. Strug's novel is a discussion with the Young Poland's image of the Tatra Mountains. The novel is a part of the liquidation process of that era. Strug's irony disarms the armies that fiercely fought against each other. There are no advocates of progress here. "Tourist worms" and engineer Bosakier hiding in the barrel with pears replaced them (212).⁵⁰⁴ There are also no Tatra defenders, only "the Tatrás' primevalizers."⁵⁰⁵ The owner of the cinematograph who came to Zakopane goes bankrupt. The bailiff takes his camera. Then, with the camera stolen back, its owner makes a film from Marchońtowa's funeral. In Strug's world, everything is out of place and all the meanings change. Even the funeral turns out to be a deception. At the very last moment before the coffin goes down, it opens and Marchońtowa screams: "They wanted to bury me alive! I will show you what Zakopane means. . ." (296). Strug's Zakopane is a derision of nineteenth-century culture. It is a scoffing laughter from the claims of this culture to visibility. It is a caricature of institutions and inventions like panoramas, photographs, or rack railroads that were supposed to facilitate watching. In Strug's Zakopane, we cannot see anything, even when it stops raining for a moment.

503 When the weather improves for a brief moment, everyone goes to the mountains. Among mass excursions, there is one to Świnica organized by the "Butcher's Club" (see p. 143). I presume that this is veiled allusion. Among Walerian Dzieślewski's works, there was one about butchers. See Dzieślewski, "Miejska centralna rzeźnia i targowica na bydło w Gdańsku," Lviv, 1896 [print from *Czasopismo Techniczne*].

504 Strug's Zakopane tries to open up to the world. Therefore, it organizes "International Convention of Stamp Collectors." The event abounds in attractions, which realizes the idea of a Tatra amusement park: on the peaks there are bonfires "in honor of the oversea guests," at Morskie Oko lake, there is "feast for a hundred people." "The cost of a thorough cleaning of the Magóra cave from mammoth bones and other rubbish, and covering it with stamps, was financially supported by a good Lithuanian benefactor of Zakopane, Mr. Drągajło from Poniewieża" (64).

505 Apart from "the Tatrás' primevalizers," the Mountain Guard also protects the Tatra Mountains. We see it in the scene, when they run after "groups of prisoners caught red-handed as they offended the majesty of the mountains" (165).

With his novel, Strug not only ends the discussion about the railroad, but also artistically balances the dispute. In this balance, unlike other authors, Strug shows no winners and losers.⁵⁰⁶ Soon after the printing of Strug's novel is finished, it will turn out that a real defeat will affect the whole European culture. In the summer of 1914 began the First World War.

7. Epilog

In the meantime, when engineer Dzieślewski was popularizing his Świnica railroad project, Warsaw probably managed to forget about the panorama of the Tatra Mountains. However, the dispute could have supported itself with the specific example from Warsaw that was absent in Lviv and Cracow. In the spring of 1903, workers laid the third track with a rack and pinion mechanism on the three hundred meters steep section of the Wilanów Railroad, leading from the Belvedere station to the terminus at the end of the Mokotów district, now the Union of Lublin Square. Since June, the city began attempts to bring from Sweden "a geared locomotive."⁵⁰⁷ Both the railroad track clearance (800 mm) and the used rack and adhesion system with Abt third rail corresponded to the Zakopane-Świnica railroad designed by engineer Dzieślewski. In 1923, Warsaw dismantled the cogwheel.⁵⁰⁸

On December 16, 1922, Eligiusz Niewiadomski, one of the pioneers of the Tatra protection movement and the author of "Zamach na Świnnicę," murdered the first president of independent Poland. Two weeks later, the perpetrator stood before the court and received the sentence of capital punishment. The sentence was carried out on January 31, 1923.

At the beginning of 1934, on the initiative of the Deputy Minister of Communication, Aleksander Bobkowski, Poland began a study on the cable car project in the Tatra Mountain. The researchers considered two variants of the railroad: from the Mała Łąka Valley to the Czerwone Wierchy Peaks and from Kuźnice to the Kasprowy Wierch peak.

Despite large protests that swept through Poland and all the arguments repeated after the opponents of the Świnica railroad, the government announced

506 Por. J.G. Pawlikowski, "Kultura a natura," *Lamus* 1912/1913.

507 See "Z kolejek podmiejskich," *Kurier Warszawski* 156/1903 (June 9 [May 26]), morning supplement.

508 See B. Pokropiński, *Kolej wilanowska*, Warsaw, 2001, p. 27.

a decision to build a railroad to Kasprowy Wierch at the end of July 1935.⁵⁰⁹ In August 1935, the first preparatory works began.

On January 11, 1935, the engineer Walerian Dzieślewski died in Lviv.

509 When outlining the conflict about the railroad to Kasprowy Wierch, Adolf Nowaczyński humorously writes: “The matter is as old as the world, because it began in the nineteenth century, the times of an old civilization. Of those who live today, hardly anyone remembers anything about it. It was something about making Świnica [The Swine Peak] into a swine.” Nowaczyński, “Oj Tatry moje, Tatry! . . .” *Kurier Powszechny* 134/1934. See D. Stone, “The Cable Car at Kasprowy Wierch. An Environmental Debate in Interwar Poland,” *Slavic Review* 3/2005. The works on the Polish side of the Tatra Mountains moved forward almost in parallel to the works on the Łomnica cable car on the south side of the Tatras. The works on the south side also encountered strong protests. People could read about them in the Polish Press; see R. Kettner, “Budować, czy nie budować kolejkę na szczyt Łomnicy?,” *Ziemia* 5/1934. Among the materials supplementing the article on Łomnica, there was a fragment from Stanisław Witkiewicz’s essay “Po latach,” *Ziemia* 5/1934, p. 91, originally from his collection *Na przełęczu*. The essay refers to the project of the Świnica railroad. The note in the footnote below the fragment reads: “The editorial team of *Ziemia* reprints these words without a commentary, as an expression of their position on the new ideas of cable cars in the Tatra Mountains.”

Annex

Jules Verne [actually Michel Verne, his son]

“An Express of the Future”

“Take care!” cried my conductor, “there’s a step!”

Safely descending the step thus indicated to me, I entered a vast room, illuminated by blinding electric reflectors, the sound of our feet alone breaking the solitude and silence of the place. Where was I? What had I come there to do? Who was my mysterious guide? Questions unanswered. A long walk in the night, iron doors opened and reclosed with a clang, stairs descending, it seemed to me, deep into the earth – that is all I could remember. I had, however, no time for thinking.

“No doubt you are asking yourself who I am?” said my guide: “Colonel Pierce, at your service. Where are you? In America, at Boston – in a station.”

“A station?”

“Yes, the starting-point of the Boston to Liverpool Pneumatic Tubes Company.”

And, with an explanatory gesture, the Colonel pointed out to me two long iron cylinders, about a metre and a half in diameter, lying upon the ground a few paces off.

I looked at these two cylinders, ending on the right in a mass of masonry, and closed on the left with heavy metallic caps, from which a cluster of tubes were carried up to the roof; and suddenly I comprehended the purpose of all this.

Had I not, a short time before, read, in an American newspaper, an article describing this extraordinary project for linking Europe with the New World by means of two gigantic submarine tubes? An inventor had claimed to have accomplished the task; and that inventor, Colonel Pierce, I had before me.

In thought I realized the newspaper article.

Complaisantly the journalist entered into the details of the enterprise. He stated that more than 3,000 miles of iron tubes, weighing over 13,000,000 tons, were required, with the number of ships necessary, for the transport of this material – 200 ships of 2,000 tons, each making thirty-three voyages. He described this Armada of science bearing the steel to two special vessels, on board of which the ends of the tubes were joined to each other, and incased in a triple netting of iron, the whole covered with a resinous preparation to preserve it from the action of the seawater.

Coming at once to the question of working, he filled the tubes – transformed into a sort of pea-shooter of interminable length – with a series of carriages, to

be carried with their travellers by powerful currents of air, in the same way that despatches are conveyed pneumatically round Paris.

A parallel with the railways closed the article, and the author enumerated with enthusiasm the advantages of the new and audacious system. According to him, there would be, in passing through these tubes, a suppression of all nervous trepidation, thanks to the interior surface being of finely polished steel; equality of temperature secured by means of currents of air, by which the heat could be modified according to the seasons; incredibly low fares, owing to the cheapness of construction and working expenses – forgetting, or waving aside, all considerations of the question of gravitation and of wear and tear.

All that now came back to my mind.

So, then, this “Utopia” had become a reality, and these two cylinders of iron at my feet passed thence under the Atlantic and reached to the coast of England!

In spite of the evidence, I could not bring myself to believe in the thing having been done. That the tubes had been laid I could not doubt; but that men could travel by this route never!

“Was it not impossible even to obtain a current of air of that length?” – I expressed that opinion aloud.

“Quite easy, on the contrary!” protested Colonel Pierce; “to obtain it, all that is required is a great number of steam fans similar to those used in blast furnaces. The air is driven by them with a force which is practically unlimited, propelling it at the speed of 1,800 kilometres an hour – almost that of a cannon-ball! – so that our carriages with their travellers, in the space of two hours and forty minutes, accomplish the journey between Boston and Liverpool.”

“Eighteen hundred kilometres an hour!” I exclaimed.

“Not one less. And what extraordinary consequences arise from such a rate of speed! The time at Liverpool being four hours and forty minutes in advance of ours, a traveller starting from Boston at nine o’clock in the morning, arrives in England at 3.53 in the afternoon. Isn’t that a journey quickly made? In another sense, on the contrary, our trains, in this latitude, gain over the sun more than 900 kilometres an hour, beating that planet hand over hand: quitting Liverpool at noon, for example, the traveller will reach the station where we now are at thirty-four minutes past nine in the morning – that is to say, earlier than he started! Ha! Ha! I don’t think one can travel quicker than that!”

I did not know what to think. Was I talking with a madman? – or must I credit these fabulous theories, in spite of the objections which rose in my mind?

“Very well, so be it!” I said. “I will admit that travellers may take this mad-brained route, and that you can obtain this incredible speed. But, when you have

got this speed, how do you check it? When you come to a stop, everything must be shattered to pieces!”

“Not at all,” replied the Colonel, shrugging his shoulders. “Between our tubes – one for the out, the other for the home journey – consequently worked by currents going in opposite directions – a communication exists at every joint. When a train is approaching, an electric spark advertises us of the fact; left to itself, the train would continue its course by reason of the speed it had acquired; but, simply by the turning of a handle, we are able to let in the opposing current of compressed air from the parallel tube, and, little by little, reduce to nothing the final shock or stopping. But what is the use of all these explanations? Would not a trial be a hundred times better?”

And, without waiting for an answer to his questions, the Colonel pulled sharply a bright brass knob projecting from the side of one of the tubes: a panel slid smoothly in its grooves, and in the opening left by its removal I perceived a row of seats, on each of which two persons might sit comfortably side by side.

“The carriage!” exclaimed the Colonel. “Come in.”

I followed him without offering any objection, and the panel immediately slid back into its place.

By the light of an electric lamp in the roof I carefully examined the carriage I was in.

Nothing could be more simple: a long cylinder, comfortably upholstered, along which some fifty arm-chairs, in pairs, were ranged in twenty-five parallel ranks. At either end a valve regulated the atmospheric pressure, that at the farther end allowing breathable air to enter the carriage, that in front allowing for the discharge of any excess beyond a normal pressure.

After spending a few moments on this examination, I became impatient.

“Well,” I said, “are we not going to start?”

“Going to start?” cried the Colonel. “We have started!”

Started – like that – without the least jerk, was it possible? I listened attentively, trying to detect a sound of some kind that might have guided me.

If we had really started – if the Colonel had not deceived me in talking of a speed of eighteen hundred kilometres an hour – we must already be far from any land, under the sea; above our heads the huge, foam-crested waves; even at that moment, perhaps taking it for a monstrous sea-serpent of an unknown kind – whales were battering with their powerful tails our long, iron prison!

But I heard nothing but a dull rumble, produced, no doubt, by the passage of our carriage, and, plunged in boundless astonishment, unable to believe in the reality of all that had happened to me, I sat silently, allowing the time to pass.

At the end of about an hour, a sense of freshness upon my forehead suddenly aroused me from the torpor into which I had sunk by degrees.

I raised my hand to my brow: it was moist.

Moist! Why was that? Had the tube burst under pressure of the waters – a pressure which could not but be formidable, since it increases at the rate of “an atmosphere” every ten metres of depth? Had the ocean broken in upon us?

Fear seized upon me. Terrified, I tried to call out – and – and I found myself in my garden, generously sprinkled by a driving rain, the big drops of which had awakened me. I had simply fallen asleep while reading the article devoted by an American journalist to the fantastic projects of Colonel Pierce –who, also, I much fear, has only dreamed.

Michel Jean Pierre Verne (1861–1925) – son of Jules Verne’s, writer and editor of his father’s works.

First printed in: Michel Jules Verne, “Un Express de l’avenir,” series: “Zigzags à travers la science,” *Le Figaro. Supplément Littéraire*, 35/1888. For some time, the story was thought to be written by Jules Verne, to some extent this attribution was perpetuated by translators. Today, it is mostly believed that the work belongs to the son of the great writer. Anonymous Polish translation: J. Verne [Michel Verne], “Pospieszny pociąg w przyszłości,” *Ziarno* 24/1905, pp. 459–460. This version reprinted after the translation for *The Strand Magazine* (November) 1895, translator unknown.

Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer

“Explanation of the Enormous Painting, *The Tatras*” [a fragment]

When I climbed the podium in the Munich building where the painting was executed, I was temporarily under the illusion that, because of some miracle, I suddenly found myself in the Tatra Mountains.⁵¹⁰ For a moment, I thought

510 The fragment given here ends the book, whose first part is a literally understood “explanation” of the panoramic painting. The group of people meritorious to the Tatras and tourism painted by Teodor Axentowicz gives an opportunity to present the most important events in the history of the region. The next part concerns the history of Henryk Lgocki’s idea from June 1894. Lgocki was a lawyer, a mountaineering amateur, and the sponsor of the project. The presented excerpt discusses painting of the panorama in a suitable room in Munich. The following painters took part in the work on the painting: Antoni Piotrowski, Apolinary Kotowicz, Stanisław Janowski, Stanisław Radziejowski, Kasper Żelechowski, and the German Ludwig Boller. Boller died tragically after his fall during the work on the canvas.

I could feel the Tatra air, hear the sound of water in the Roztoka Valley⁵¹¹ and the whisper of the wind that whistles between the mountain tops. The first impression was a complete illusion. I reminded myself of the Apelles' birds that wanted to sit on the branches that were painted.⁵¹²

The painters were able to evoke and make vivid the two most important aspects: the basic tone of the Tatra color and the large dimension of the mountains, hence my impression.

Every mountains in the world have their own specific tone, their own color, which depends on their geographical location, climate, and formation. The blue of Alpes-Maritimes on the Riviera, the Alps, the violet Abruzzo, the pink rocks of South Tyrol over Lago di Garda, the gray rocks of Sweden, each of the smaller ranges, each part of the large ranges, have their own elementary color, which is the backdrop for the colors of the seasons, the time of day, and the weather conditions that paint it with different shades. After all, mountains always remain the same mountains. If they are bright, their brightness will prevail even in the clouds, if they are dark, their darkness will reveal itself even on the most radiant morning. Unlike the sea that transforms completely, mountains have the most complete palette of the richest colors, from pure azure to mud clay, from pure emerald to milky white, from golden to the darkest pink, from purple to sapphire. If the sun makes the sea monotonously azure, or if it makes it monotonously gray, the whole sea is gray and we may assume that – at the moment – even the deepest waters are gray, and that there was never a different color that it should ever have. The sea color fluctuates like the sea itself, so that it would be difficult to say what is the fundamental tone of the Mediterranean Sea. Is it blue? Yes, but blue comes in a few dozens of the most important shades, then a dozen or so of their varieties, and several dozen differences are often lost in the blue Mediterranean Sea without leaving a trace. Meanwhile, the Tatras are gray at noon, on a moonlit night, on a sunny day, and in the rain; they are always gray. This is their principal tone, their principal color, and this tone, this color has been developed and recreated by the artists. They lit the huge canvas extensively, they painted forests and grass, and they were able to extract and capture the gray

511 Roztoka Valley – a valley in the High Tatras, the lower part of the Valley of the Five Ponds.

512 Apelles' birds – the story about the Greek painter Apelles (4th century BC) mentions a painting, which is so perfect that it achieved the illusion causing birds to try to sit on the painted branches of grapes.

of the Tatra Mountains, visible in all of them: in the granites of Gerlach, and in the shelves of Wołowiec alike.⁵¹³

The painters also managed to make their painted Tatras colossal. In this respect, the selected viewpoint served them perfectly, as they could boldly rely on the contrasts. There are mountains above and beneath Miedziane summit, and the skillfully painted perspective makes the top of Walentynkowa or Holica seem low, while the top of Świnica and Baranie Rogi⁵¹⁴ rise high into the sky.

Out in the nature, the juxtaposition of these elements presents itself to me in a huge contrast. With the skillfully outlined perspective, the contrast is also present on the canvas.

The valleys at the foot of the mountains and beyond appear as an even greater contrast, provided that the painter manages to place them substantially low for my eyesight without any trace of artificiality. In this case, it has been done splendidly. When contrasted with the Valley of Five Ponds or Nowotarska, the peaks become tremendously high. If the painters picked a less fortunate point, maybe some sort of a pass, from where the sight does not reach beyond the mountains, it would significantly reduce this probably the most important effect in this work.

The colossality of the painted Tatras is simply amazing. One does not want to believe that these huge masses of granite are only paint covering over one hundred meters of space. The painting is 115 meters long, sixteen meters high, and the podium is nine meters high. And there is so much of it: the whole mountains, the whole Tatras!

The painted day was one that is the most beautiful in the Tatras: a bright, peaceful, clear, and sunny day. On such a day some sweet, immeasurable, and dreamy reflection comes down onto the mountains. Mountain clearings hold the smell of flowers, white fluffy clouds hang in the sky, streams of silver and crystals flow, while waters in lakes have a strange shiny translucency to its very depth and a rainbow of lights on their glass surface. On a day like this, the air in the woods trembles, creating a golden and transparent gauze, and the Hungarian lowlands

513 Gerlach – the highest peak in the main ridge of the High Tatras; Wołowiec – a gently descending peak in the Western Tatras.

514 Miedziane – a peak in the Tatra Mountains; the panorama in question depicted the view from its summit. Walentkowa or Walentkowy Wierch – a peak in the main ridge of the Tatras, rising above the highest floor of the Valley of Five Ponds; Holica or Holica Jaworzyńska – a peak in the side ridge of the High Tatras on the Slovak side, once Hungarian. Świnica – a peak in the main ridge of the High Tatras rising above the Gąsienicowa Valley; Baranie Rogi – an outstanding peak located in the vicinity of the main ridge of the Tatra Mountains on the Slovak, once Hungarian side.

look from the top like a dream, like a vision. The charm of all this is unlike any other. At such a moment, at the summit, one falls into an indefinite infinite reverie, everything in man is silent. Memory, knowledge, thought are overtaken by the beauty of nature, which absorbs him and melts him into itself. It feels as if man ceases to exist, that his soul slips away from the body and is free, and flies like a sunlight, spreading endlessly throughout space.

The soul wants to escape through the eyes

Drunk, never satiated – says Asnyk.⁵¹⁵

It is difficult to convey a similar impression in words: it is too strong, it is a spell that nothing else can equal. Even in the most beautiful weather, in the most wonderful azure play of colors, the sea will not make us revel in life and disperse our souls as deeply as a high mountain peak on a quiet sunny day.

Everything is so far away, so far away. . . it seems that it has entered some other world and that this one is real, and that one, down there, is a dream. After all, the soul is created *for this* world! How can it live in another world? Isn't it her nature to drown in light, infinity, silence, and heights? Isn't its nature to stretch out its eagle wings and hang silently in the immeasurable blue under the silent sun? A whole new world of thoughts is born, a new world of feelings different to the ones down there. Thoughts run across the sky like a rainbow, feelings shine like clouds in the sunlight. We are stunned with this miracle and in it we bask.

Forests and waters in the valleys, clearings, all this becomes some kind of a magical symphony of nature, something that comes out of the soul's chest: "The soul wants to escape through the eyes, drunk, never satiated."

Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer (1865–1940) – poet, novelist, writer.

First printed in: K. Przerwa-Tetmajer, "Objaśnienie do olbrzymiego obrazu "Tatry"" [with an accompanying Russian title and text], Warsaw, 1896, pp. 45–53.

515 Fragment of Adam Asnyk's poem "Ranek w górach" from the cycle "W Tatrach," in: A. Asnyk, *Poezje*, Vol. 3, Lviv, 1880.

Kazimierz Piliński

“Nightmares”

A sudden bang woke me up. I stayed overnight in the forest beneath Hala Pyszna.⁵¹⁶ I was alone, my guide went to the shepherd huts to buy provisions. At first, I thought that the sound I heard was just a dream, but the repeating bangs that shook the air again clearly proved that I was awake. These weren't thunders, because the night was clear and the sky full of stars.

I thought it could be huge boulders falling from the summits. However, listening carefully I realized that these were cannon shots. The war must have broken out! The Russian army is forcing its way to Hungary.

It was already my second week in the mountains, far away from people and newspapers, but before I left there were no rumors of war, and the last journals I read at Płonka⁵¹⁷ contained only the usual July complaints of tourists that disturb the spa resorts and conflicts between Mr. X and Mr. Y in Zakopane. There were also some important but peaceful news. Among others, the mayor of Baligród ordered to all dog owners to walk them in muzzles. On the market square in Tarnów, three oranges were stolen from a fishwife. On his way to Karlsbad,⁵¹⁸ at the Cracow station, Mr. Malzduft lost a big black leather bag containing one comb, one clean collar, and nine onion wreaths. In the field of natural sciences, there was an extremely interesting treatise on the dentition of a sea serpent.

There was no news on the political horizon, because all the statesmen departed to bathhouses. There was no war on the horizon.

The mystery was solved by the guide who returned with the food.

These were simply the annual night artillery exercises near Nowy Targ.

After the war alarms, the provisions that consisted only of cheese and żentyca⁵¹⁹ were delicious.

516 Hala Pyszna – shepherd's area located in the upper part of the Kościeliska Valley, in the Western Tatras.

517 A famous confectionery located in the center of Zakopane owned by Walerian Płonka. Andrzej Strug presented the restaurant and its owner, Pchełka, in the grotesque novel *Zakopanoptikon*.

518 Karlsbad – today Karlovy Vary, a town and health resort in the North of Czech Republic.

519 Żentyca – a drink made of sheep milk obtained as a by-product in the manufacture of cheeses.

Today's late meal and the night in the forest proved the accuracy of the aphorism of Obrochta's guide:⁵²⁰ "A man carries a bag, but a bag also carries a man."

Until one had sufficient food in his bag, he could joyfully walk the unbearable Hungarian Kamieniska Valley,⁵²¹ but when it lacked, our strength to march further to the inn in the Kościeliska Valley also lacked. We planned to camp in the forest on our way.

It was very peacefully over a bonfire on a small clearing among tall trees, but the sleep failed to return.

The images of various views, different mountain trips, interesting adventures, walks in nice company in the nearby the Kościeliska Valley wandered through my mind. Ah, this valley, what have people done to it.

They deprived the primeval virgin nature of its charm. In the middle, there was a road with bridges every now and then. On the rocks, there were inscriptions and sculptures. Everywhere around, there were shacks, shelters, gazebos with disgusting literature on the walls. You can't lie down on the grass. Empty bottles, cans of sardines, egg shells, sausage casing.

And the situation at Morskie Oko lake is not much better.

I remember I was on the Mięguszwiecka Pass,⁵²² inhaling the wonderful view, hovering on cloud nine! Suddenly, a piercing sight appeared in front of me. It was like a rasp on glass or a dissonance of a broken string: horrible shacks stood around the lake. All the charm was gone. Yet, even if one replaced them with the Doge's palace, it wouldn't be any better.

In mountains such as the Tatras, every work of human hands spoils the harmony of this wild primeval nature. Nature cannot stand any architectural lines, any symmetry, any straight lines, any geometry. Every path, even the narrowest one, strikes with its parallel side lines.

Why do we experience such overwhelming feelings in the open seas, in the virgin forest? Because there is no man. He cannot spoil anything, bend the nature to his taste and whim. Nature there remains primordial and pristine!

However, it is not surprising, that people try to make the mountains more accessible. Not everyone is healthy, strong, or skilled enough to walk the faraway

520 Bartłomiej Obrochta (1850–1926) – a highlander from Zakopane, Tatra guide, musician.

521 Kamienista Valley – a large alley on the Slovak, formerly Hungarian, side of the Tatra Mountains.

522 Mięguszwiecka Pass – a pass in the main ridge of the Tatras, closing from the south the Polish Rybi Potok Valley, and from the north Slovak, once the Hungarian Mięguszwiecka Valley.

wilderness, climb scree,⁵²³ and ride the rocky horses. Why should the weak, women, and children not experience the highest pleasures that the views from the Tatras can provide? Why should only a unique minority experience it? Personal interest must succumb to the greater good.

Despite such philanthropic views on the idea of the railway project, I was shaken by the thrill of indignation.

The most beautiful of all, Hala Gąsienicowa,⁵²⁴ these naked slender sharp peaks pierced with railroads! The locomotive whistle is to be heard here, and the black fumes are to cover the clear skies!

Will that be all that happens?

In my fevered, overactive imagination that was half awake and half asleep, the nightmares indicated more and more sacrileges!

A train runs along Orla Perc: Mięguszowiecki Summits. . . Rysy Mount – five minutes, Wysoka – three minutes, Gerlach – ten minutes! Huge iron bridges hang somewhere in the clouds. A whole network of wires – air railways – cars sliding on an iron line over unexplored chasms.

Dressed-up ladies lean out of the windows, then they quickly move back with a quiet scream of horror, enjoying the impression of. . . safe danger.

The whole Tatras turn into a huge folk park.

Between the Żabi Szczyt and Miedziane peaks,⁵²⁵ there is a rope hanging over the Morskie Oko lake. On a barely visible height, a tightrope walker carries a small boy in a wheelbarrow. Thousands of people sit comfortably in numbered seats around the lake. A thousand eyes looks up. Unbelievable tension! Finally, the never-ending applause! The echoes intensify them and they sound like a coming down of a thunder!

The audience forms crowds heading to restaurants.

The gentlemen gather around newsagents' – they flirt with the soda water maids.

At Czarny Staw lake:⁵²⁶ shacks, carousels, menagerie.

523 Scree – a type of rock debris at the foot of the slope.

524 Hala Gąsienicowa – a vast flat area in the upper part of the Gąsienicowa Valley, in the High Tatras.

525 Żabi Szczyt – the highest peak in the side ridge of the Tatras, going from Mount Rysy to the north.

526 Czarny Staw – Tatra lake located in the upper part of the Rybi Potok Valley over the Morskie Oko Lake.

Someone calls:

“Famous in the world, not yet seen! A terrifying Bengali tiger, which has already eaten thirty-three negroes.”

“A huge crocodile from the pyramid – 5,000 years old!”

“Inside, gentlemen! Inside, ladies!”

High up the Rysy wall, a white inscription says:

Kraków, ulica Biegasa 16

ANTONI MIKUSZYŃSKI

recommends

gloves, purses, blouses, suitcases, cylinders, socks

wide choice – factory prices

An Art Nouveau pavilion on the Mięgoszowicka Pass.

From afar, a lengthy poster strikes with the words:

Les estates plastiques

*La belle Duvernois*⁵²⁷

The wildest of the valleys in the Tatra Mountains, Kocioł Stawów Hińczowych,⁵²⁸ is now an amphitheater!

On the smooth walls of rocks, forged steps pile up somewhere to the very peaks.

Like Circus Maximus!⁵²⁹

Over 300,000 people sit down on the steps.

527 *Les poses plastiques* – the art of arranging bodies to achieve the effect of a *tableaux vivant* practiced in the nineteenth century in small theaters and music-halls. Tight, body-colored costumes of performers gave the impression of nudity; *La belle Duvernois* – at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, a Frenchwoman, Suzanne (La belle) Duvernois, became famous for her poses of “astonishing purity.”

528 Kocioł Stawów Hińczowych – the highest part of the Mięgoszowiecka Valley, with the largest lake on the southern side of the Tatra Mountains, i.e. the Great Hińczowe Lake.

529 Circus Maximus – a facility (now a park) located on the slope of the Palatine in ancient Rome used to organize public events and shows.

The pond hosts a play:

According to the poster, it is the sea battle at Fusi-Mu, from the last Sino-American War. The models of warships make various maneuvers. The enemy fleets formed two lines.

A piercing bang! – Probably torpedoes exploded!

No – it was just a cone crackling in a bonfire.

I woke up. Around me stood slender columns of firs, covered with pale flickering light of the glowing fire.

Great, deaf, mysterious silence of the forest!

The feverish nightmares were over.

There are some lonely and inaccessible areas in the Tatras, like the Ciemnosmreczyńska Valley!⁵³⁰ A truly virgin forest, a truly Lithuanian wilderness! Huge fabulous trees and scattered rotting logs.

Antediluvian thicket swing with an unbridled primeval force.

And above, smooth and inaccessible rocky walls rise to the sky, surrounded by the majesty of stone giants.

Some kind of horror, some kind of fear overwhelm a man. He does everything trembling, as if in fear of desecration!

This place is sacred.

Because not on the cobblestones of overcrowded cities, not in the whistles of locomotives, not in the rattling of speeding wheels, not among the noises of fairs, salon flirting, and markets, but in the places where the walls are torn apart by wild crags, where the buzzing souls of waterfalls tumble into huge cracks, where our feet have never been, where there is no trace of man or his works, can we hear speaking to our souls. . . the voice of the Lord!

Kazimierz Piliński (?–1924) – mountaineer, landlord of Tarnowiec near Jasło.

First printed in: K. Piliński, “Senne zmory,” in: K. Piliński, *Z teki taternika*, Cracow 1908, pp. 89–93.

530 Ciemnosmreczyńska Valley – a valley in the High Tatras, the upper part of the Koprova Valley, separated from it by a high rocky threshold. It is located on the southern Slovak, once Hungarian, side of the main ridge.

Francis William Bourdillon
“Ode in Defence of the Matterhorn against the proposed Railway to its Summit”

Thou noblest of the Atlantes who upbear
 On silvered brows Europa's roof of stars,
 Burst thine enduring bars!
 Break forth in fire on those who would not spare
 One yet unravished sanctuary of dream
 Snow-peak or glacier-stream!

Or, half in slumber, heave thy snowy hood,
 Thine icy-mantled shoulders lightly shake,
 Too weary quite to wake!
 Ev'n as thy sister, Altels, in rare mood
 Of anger, from her slippery loins doth launch
 Ruin and avalanche.

Call yet again thine old defender, Death,
 That jealous lover whose dark wing o'erbroods
 Thy silver solitudes!
 Aye, call the Earthquake! call the terrible breath
 Of frost, the stealthy legions of the snows
 To safeguard thy repose!

These who would bribe the angel at the gate
 Of Eden, and for gold let in the lewd
 Many-hoofed multitude:
 Blind to Earth's glory, impious and ingrate:
 Sons who make profit of their mother's shame:
 Blots on the Switzer's name.

On thee, too, they have cast their covetous eyes.
 Because thy name through all the world is known,
 They plot against thy throne,
 Seducing – like the snake in Paradise –
 By promised blessing, and with evil skill
 As good gifts proffering ill.

They fear thee not: thy slumber is too deep.
 Aye, though one motion of thy mighty head
 Should lay a thousand dead,
 They fear thee not. O, sleeper, wake from sleep!
 The Philistines are on thee: up, and smite,
 Like Etna in her might!

Thou hearest not nor heedest; thou art dumb,
 Stony, insensate; as a statue wrought
 In marble by man's thought.
 To thee what is it, though the sapper come
 And urge his galleries to thy topmost towers?
 The wrong, the wrath, are ours.

Have we not seen the Angel of the Day
 Poise on thy pinnacles with feet of rose
 To kiss thy blushing snows?
 Or Thunder set his battles in array
 Amid thy perilous fastnesses, and form,
 Cloud upon cloud, the storm?

Have we not loved in thee a visible type
 And bodied grandeur of the Eternal Power
 That rules from star to flower?
 And felt the soul within us here grow ripe
 To worship Him, on Whom man may not look,
 Through Nature's service-book?

Have we not mounted to thy cloudy height,
 As to the hill of Horeb, at the dawn,
 By aspiration drawn
 On happy pilgrimage, that needs no rite,
 Nor victim slain, nor sanctimonious air,
 Nor piatory prayer?

Where is the angel who kept undefiled
 That mountain-top in Canaan, when at morn
 The ram caught in the thorn

Ransomed the anguished Abraham's only child?
 Is his arm shortened, that he sheathes the sword,
 And spares this impious horde?

Or He, more dread, who spake from Sinai
 To light heart, faint heart, hard heart, gathered there
 Neath the thick thunderous air:
 "If one but touch the mountain, he shall die?"
 (The gayest dancer round the calf of gold
 Then kept his beast in fold.)

No holier were the hills in Palestine,
 But love was larger then, and eyes unsealed
 To catch each glimpse revealed
 Through Nature's veiling of the Unknown Divine:
 The Will that moves, the Light that doth illumine,
 The glory and the doom.

Awake, fair Switzerland! Art thou not she
 That in thy breast's own marble badest grave
 The record of thy brave
 Who for thine honour died, though not for thee,
 That they in lion-likeness might endure
 As thy strong mountains sure?

What gold could buy of thee that guarded treasure?
 What proffered bribe for injury atone
 To that immortal stone?
 Hast thou no wrath for these, who mine and measure
 Thy nobler trust, God's altar of the morn,
 The matchless Matterhorn?

Francis William Bourdillon (1852–1921) – an English poet, translator, editor.

First printed in: F.W. Bourdillon, *Ode in Defence of the Matterhorn Against the Proposed Railway to its Summit*, William Rice: London, 1910.

Józef Pollak**“Rudolf Vitznauer”**

All highlanders in the area liked and respected the highlander Vitznauer. He was admired for his seventy years of experience, and he was loved for his good heart, his forbearance, and his love for others.

Vitznauer was silent and withdrawn; when asked about anything, he replied reluctantly. Sometimes he sat down at the lake, surrounded by a handful of brave alpine highlanders, and took a walk down the memory lane recalling the famous attack of 1813 in which he partook. At those moments, his cloudy forehead brightened up, his eyes flashed with some strange light, his face welcomed a smile. These were rare and short moments. He put loneliness above all else. Two faithful companions, white goats with bells around their necks, dragged behind him into the wild mountains. There, gazing at the blue-green lake, he brooded in the past or listened to the regular splash of the lake or the sounds of bells, or maybe he was dreaming about the great treasures hidden at the bottom of the lake. Nobody dared to ask him, nobody dared to interrupt him.

He loved the mountains with all his soul. He spent his whole lifetime among these monuments of nature, which calmly reflected in the smooth surface of the lake and whose peaks ran breathlessly to the sky; he wanted to see a peaceful end of his life among them, as they were the most precious in his life. Every bush, every leaf, and every tree bent like an old man were the dearest thing to his heart. He looked down on highlanders who left the mountains, and he hated those who came here on holidays.

He often spend his nights among woods and mountains, and in the early morning, when the church bells called for prayers, and their echo sent far its melancholic words, he took the hat off his head, made the sign of the cross, and humbly whispered his thanksgiving prayer. After that, he lit his smoking pipe and gazed at the cerulean lake for a long time or played longing songs on his pipe. The charm of the sound was so great as if his whole soul was in each and every note.

When he once played, he heard a strange noise in the forest. Surprised, he stopped playing, put away his toot, put a hat on his head, and started listening:

“What could that be?” wondered old Vitznauer. “A storm? The sky is clear and blue! No, it was not a storm,” he murmured, “these are people speaking, someone is chopping something. People are chopping?” he screamed and stood up.

“Yes, they are chopping,” answered a stranger, who came unnoticed and stared at the highlander smiling.

Vitznauer looked at him with contempt, sat under a tree, and dived into his thoughts.

“Local?”

Vitznauer was silent. The stranger touched his shoulder and asked again:

“Are you a local?”

Vitznauer, as if slowly woken from a dream raised his eyes filled with tears and replied.

“A local, what is it that you want?”

“So you don’t know that the area is closed?”

“Closed?” Vitznauer smiled with tears running down his face. “How come? Since when are my mountains closed?”

“You just can’t sit here. Don’t you know it’s been all bought?”

“What?”

“This whole range is where trains will run, can’t you hear the chopping?”

“Chopping? . . . Trains?” Vitznauer said half-consciously.

“Yes, it will reach the very summit, you won’t have to climb it anymore,” the engineer laughed.

Vitznauer quickly rose to his feet.

“What are you saying!” he shouted. “Tell me it’s not true! Trains running through my beloved mountains? My woods chopped down?” Vitznauer started beating his breast.

“What are you saying, grandpa? Your?”

“My, my, my!” He moved his arms as if he wanted to hold them close. “I won’t allow it!” He fell down to the ground exhausted with the experience, and the noise of the falling slender trees and approaching voices ruthlessly filled the forest.

Vitznauer saw the merciless newcomers cutting down trees, whose crowns miserably bent their heads to the ground. They lied down quietly without any complain, trampled by men. Vitznauer lied motionless for a long time, as if the engineer’s words stunned him. The poor soul of the old highlander wept. It hurt Vitznauer to see the trees fall, he cried out of his sorrow and confessed to the blue lake. The lake listened to the complaint, and it began to fiercely crash against the shores, foaming, buzzing, but unable to help, it calmed down. Vitznauer wiped of the tears with the sleeve of his shirt, he sinisterly frowned his eyebrows, took his hat, and went back to his hut. He trembled with anger, and his insides twisted and turned like a leaf in a strong wind, his soul hurt. “Is there not enough space in the world?” he thought, “Do people have to strip nature off of its beautiful dress that good God gave it? Do they have to destroy what the wise God created? Do they have to build railroads here? Oh, my mountains! Avenge your harm! My

poor trees!” and he repeatedly clenched his tired hands sinisterly or reached out to the mountains in a begging gesture.

Vitznauer locked himself in his hut, didn't let anyone in, and he covered the windows with shirts.

Hustle and bustle took hold of the village. The invaders were here. Engineers and workers with axes, in their short jackets and leather boots. And the curious people gathered around and gazed endlessly at the machines and marvels. The works progressed quickly. Trees fell, rocks parted. In a few months, the railroad was ready. The bravest among the highlanders, who pretended to be acquainted with social customs, took the rack railroad to the summit. Soon, the cottages of poor highlanders had to hide between the villas and splendid houses.

No one has seen or heard from Vitznauer until one time, elegantly dressed, thin, he entered the church with a pale face. He prostrated himself in front of the altar of Christ and, having said the prayers his father had taught him, he went out without looking at anyone, with his head proudly raised, and headed straight into the mountains. He walked slowly forward with his back slightly bent, as if carrying a great burden, he climbed to the top higher and higher, carefully avoiding the rack railway. In the evening, when he climbed to the top of the mountain that hung over the deep lake, he knelt piously and joined his hands to pray. But he could not pray, because he was overwhelmed with sorrow that his trees were falling, and he wept quietly. In the light of the setting sun, his face began to show an unearthly calmness, his black hair shone in the golden sunlight. And so he knelt for a long time. Then he quickly stood up, ran to the nearest tree, hugged it and kissed it, crossed himself, and then he jumped from the top of the mountain into the lake which, among large circles, hid the old highlander in its depths.

Switzerland, 1911

Józef Pollak (1882–1947) – teacher of German language, novelist, playwright.
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