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Chasing Europe. The diagnosis of backwardness in Polish writings on Galicia during the second half of the 19th century

Michał Krajkowski (Toruń)

Abstract: The main aim of the article is to examine various views of the problem of progress and backwardness presented in Polish writings on Galicia during the second half of the 19th century. At this time Galicia was considered as one of the most backward regions of Europe, and this state of affairs was also noticed by Polish journalists, scientists, politicians and writers connected with Austrian partition of former Poland. However, it does not mean that the diagnoses as well as recipes for economic growth were concurrent. To the contrary, significant differences can be found between views on the development of Galicia. Moreover, these opinions changed over time. This article is an attempt to trace the evolution of these ideas, which was parallel to the changes in the situation of the province. The author does not present a complete picture of the problem of backwardness in multicultural Galicia, but he focuses on Polish writings, as a product of the politically dominant culture of the province.

Key words: Polish literature, 19th century, Galicia, backwardness, progress, economy, industrialization, core, periphery

Progress approaches the Lviv train station

A good image of the diffusion of industrial civilization in the 19th century is provided by the process of the building of the railway across Europe (Tomasik 2007, Jedlicki 1988). The railway brought civilizational development to the most backward regions of the continent, mostly agricultural, located on the peripheries of Europe. For admirers of progress there was no doubt that industrial civilization, blooming in the most developed states of Europe, was a synonym of wealth. And the axiom of an automatic link between instilling Western ideas in backward countries and the rising wealth of their inhabitants was rarely questioned. Undoubtedly, one can have this impression, observing the process of modernization of Galicia in the second half of the 19th century, which accompanied the new era of political relations with Vienna. The admirers of modernization welcomed the first train approaching Lviv with euphoria (Mazan 1997), calculating on changes in the province. So it is not surprising that on the occasion of the newly built Cracow–Lviv railroad “Gazeta Lwowska” published the following notes:

Po długim oczekiwaniu widzimy z radością zbliżający się dzień, w którym zacznie się u nas regularna jazda na kolei żelaznej Karola Ludwika, co połączy bezpośrednio Lwów

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z całą siecią kolei europejskich, z Wiedniem, sercem monarchii i z całą ucywilizowaną Europą aż do wybrzeży Adriatyku północnego i wschodniego morza. Tak stolica jak w ogóle Galicja będzie odtąd przypuszczona do udziału w błogosławionych a u nas jeszcze nie dosyć cenionych dobrodziejstwach czasu, zwiększonej czynności, przemysłu, ułatwionego handlu, na wieki bowiem pozostanie prawdą, że czas jest pieniądz, praca jest ozdobą mieszczanina, a błogosławieństwo jest nagrodą trudów (*Gazeta Lwowska* 1861a).¹

In the article one can easily see the climate of anticipation of changes in the economy of the province. Connecting Lviv with a railway network had an important psychological meaning, because it gave the sense of belonging to European civilization – not only the spiritual, but also the material one.

The patriotic argumentation linked infrastructural development with economic growth, yet the first days of railway operation were met with the beliefs of those who anticipated the negative consequences of the easing of the transportation of people and goods between backward Galicia and the wealthy West. In an article from 18 November 1861 an anonymous author defended the investment and, at the same time, listed the accusations against the railway opponents:

Przed rozpoczęciem jej budowy odzywały się skargi, że Galicja jest zaniedbana, a odkąd dosięgła naszej stolicy, podnoszą się naraz głosy cale przeciwne: Że kolej nie przynosi nikomu korzyści prócz kilku akcjonariuszom; że kraj a osobliwie Lwów nie mogą się po niej niczego innego spodziewać, tylko drożyzny, i że w ogóle kolej żelazna jest dla Galicji niepotrzebna i niestosowna (*Gazeta Lwowska* 1861b).²

As one can see, one of the main fears linked with this new way of communication with the world was based on the conviction of its negative impact on the local economy. The author of the article mentions, e.g., the fear of high prices caused by the selling of agricultural goods to the West and lack of crops on the local market. But this view is confronted with the opinion that “znaczniejszy odbyt pociąga za sobą zawsze wzrastającą produkcję a tym samym znowu zniżenie wartości” (*Gazeta Lwowska* 1861b).³

According to the article, the main benefit brought by the railway is the growth of trade dynamics and the opportunity for earnings based on the gap in prices between Galicia and Austria. One can deduce that the author is unable to see other solutions for growth and especially that he does not notice that his proposal deepens the backwardness of the province: Galicia would remain the periphery, whereas the role of the

- 1 After long-term anticipation we can see with joy that the day is coming, when the regular operation at the Railway of Archduke Charles Louis, which will link Lviv directly with the European railway network, with Vienna, the heart of the monarchy and all civilized Europe up to the North Adriatic and Eastern Sea. The capital, as well as all Galicia, from that day on will benefit from the blessed, although not fully recognized, boons of time, greater dynamics, industry, trade, because the truth will remain unchanged for ages that time is money, work is the pride of man and blessing is the reward for efforts.
- 2 Before the start of its construction complaints were appearing that Galicia is neglected, and after the railway reached the capital one can hear the opposite voices, that the railway gives benefits to no one despite a few stakeholders, and that the country, and especially Lviv, can expect nothing more but high prices, and that the railway in Galicia in general is needless and inappropriate.
- 3 A bigger export causes always a rise of the production and therefore prices fall.

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West would be to manufacture goods. After linking Lviv with Russia and Romania, Galicia would play the role of the agent earning from the differences in crop prices:

Przechodząc obok spichlerza Galicji, przeryzając okolice bogate w lasy będzie kolej przynosić ze wschodu na powrót to, co odpłynie na zachód. My zaś we Lwowie jesteśmy na tym prądzie bliżej obfitego źródła niż ujścia, gdyż i najbliższe powiaty Rosji wejdą w jego zakres, i przeto widoczna jest korzyść po naszej stronie, gdyż taniej jeszcze niż wysłać zboże na Kraków będzie dostawać je z Podola (*Gazeta Lwowska* 1861b)⁴.

The vision presented in this article is a good example of some modifications worth mentioning of the modernization project reaching Eastern Europe. Progress, symbolized by the railway, is not an aim in itself and is not necessarily linked with the further development of the region; however, while it brings some useful technical novelties, which can be fruitful for some specific social groups, it will not change the social structure in general. In the case of Galicia, the railway would preserve, according to the anonymous author, the agrarian character of the province, without changing its position in the international field.

The abovementioned example of the changing, dispersing and breaking of the idea of progress in peripheral Eastern Europe provides a good background for analysing the literary image of this topic. It must be noticed that signs of progress were rarely present in the Polish – and also Galician – novels of the first years after the fall of the January Uprising. The use of the motif of the railway in the Polish literature of the 1870s was connected with the ideology of positivism, which included the idea of building national wealth instead of heroic fights for independence. A good example of such a view is the novel of Michał Bałucki, *O kawał ziemi* (*For a Piece of Land*, 1872), where the motifs of the railway and the factory are connected closely. The tentativeness of the novel can be seen in the contrast between the protagonist, the factory owner Schmidt, and his son, Adolf, who represent the progressive party, on the one hand, and on the other hand Liwocki, a type of a backward aristocrat, who, as Schmidt says, “ze wstrętem patrzy na ten ruch przemysłowy, co zwolna ogarnia ich majątności, w których dotąd tuczyli się kosztem pracy innych, nie umiając nic, jak tylko używać życia, bawić się i wegetować” (Bałucki 1956: 18).⁵

Schmidt claims that railroad, which he wants to build across Liwocki's land, would not only ease “niesłychanie transport wyrobów [...], podniosłaby wartość fabryk, a i dla okolicy byłaby korzystna, zwłaszcza że przeprowadzenie jej dałoby się zrobić małym kosztem” (Bałucki 1956: 17);⁶ it is also the sign of modernity coming to Galicia, which at the moment remains a feudal province. The dispute over a “piece of land”

4 Going alongside the Galician granary and going across the country rich in the woods, the railway will bring back what will flow to the West. And here, in Lviv, we are in this current closer to its sources than to the estuary, because the closest Russian districts will be involved in this process; so one can see our profit, because it is cheaper to get the crop from Podole than to send it to Cracow.

5 With hatred observes the industrial movement which slowly comes into their properties, where they were getting fat at the cost of others, knowing nothing but living well, having a good time, and vegetating.

6 The goods transportation i[...], raise the factories' value and would be profitable for the neighbourhood, especially that it can be done at little cost.

has a territorial meaning not only in a strict, but also in a metaphorical sense, because it concerns the expansion of industrial civilization. Although Bałucki's protagonist underlines the pure pragmatic profits of linking his factories with the railway network, on a higher level the development of this network helps to bring the fruits of civilization to Galicia.

In the background the motif of the railway appears likewise in the second phase of Bałucki's literary production. In the novel *W żydowskich rękach* (In Jewish Hands, 1884) the arguments between a young engineer, Kowalski, and the representatives of the gentry resemble the discussion in the newspapers in the 1860s. Kowalski presents opinions which are close to positivistic thought:

[...] droga żelazna jest dobrodziejstwem, gdyż łączy odległe miejsca z całym organizmem świata ucywilizowanego. Koleje to arterie, w których pulsuje życie ludzkości. – Przez kolej okolica ta wejdzie w bliższy i łatwiejszy stosunek ze światem...

– I cóż zyskamy na tym połączeniu? – spytał Szperacki, chodząca opozycja, zerwawszy się ze stołka jakby do pojedynku naprzeciw Kowalskiego. – Co zyskamy – pytam się? – Chyba to, że zagranica będzie miała łatwiejszy przystęp do zarzucenia nas swoimi wyrobami, za które oddamy ostatni grosz jeszcze dziś trzymający się jako tako kieszeni, bo go się nie ma sposobności pozbyć (Bałucki 1885: 22).⁷

It is worth noticing that some 20 years since the main railroad of Galicia had been built, discussions about the need to reduce the distance between Galicia and the West still raised emotions. In Bałucki's novel the arguments of the negative impact of the railway for Galicia are used by provincial noblemen, and the reason to renew the old dispute is not the sense of unfulfilled hopes but the innate conservatism of the nobles.

The motif of the railway in literature had other functions as well. The railway was used, for instance, as a tool which helped to show the internal problems of Galicia: corruption and greed (e.g., *Głowy do pszołoty* of Jan Lam), and as a new literary space, useful for presenting the sudden or sensational events (e.g., Michał Bałucki's *Za winy niepopołnione*). Eventually, at the turn of the century, in the "oil novels" of Ignacy Maciejowski the railway became fully the sign of modernity and was shown as a force able to revive the economy in the province.

It is not surprising that the entering of modernity into Galicia was rarely noticed in the literature of Galicia, if one compares the industrialization rate of Galicia even with other parts of partitioned Poland. So the reason the topic of progress and its consequences for human experience was not presented by the novelist was not that the writers disliked industrialization, but that it was irrelevant. The way of describing a modernization process indicates more the need for change than the facts. It

7 [...] the railway is a blessing, because it links remote places with the whole organism of the civilized world. Railways are the arteries in which the life of humankind is pulsing. – Due to the railway this neighbourhood will get in a closer and easier relation with the world. – And what is the profit of such a linking? – asked Szperacki, always in opposition, getting up from the chair as if for a duel with Kowalski. – What will we earn? – I want to ask. – For sure the foreign countries would have easier access to bring their goods to us, and on these goods we will spend our last money, yet still we keep hold somehow of our pocket because there is no opportunity for getting rid of it.

does not necessarily mean that the ambiguity of progress was not noticed, but due to the slow pace of changes the writers were not interested in describing it. More often they focused on describing the problems of the province and projecting the future not on the basis of imported Western solutions but on the modification of local relations. This way of understanding such underdevelopment was supported by the tradition of satiric literature as well as the writings of the theorists of economy.

The genesis of backwardness

Szkoła polska gospodarstwa społecznego (*The Polish School of Social Economy*) of Józef Supiński, the most important work of the author connected with Galicia, provides an important context for the literary images of economic problems of Galicia. Researchers note the impact of this work on a whole generation of positivists (Biliński 1994: 73–75). It is interesting that *Szkoła polska* contains an intriguing reflection on the railway issue, which is part of a general idea of economic development. Supiński, while discussing the problem of national resources and the differences between developed and emerging countries, uses an opinion of John Stuart Mill, and claims that “Koleje żelazne dni naszych, tylko z wycieńczającymi wojnami porównać można”⁸ (Supiński 1872: 196). It does not mean that Supiński opposed the development of infrastructure or industry. Zdzisław Szymański notices that “Supiński bez wątpienia deklarował się jako rzecznik uprzemysłowienia ziem polskich. Problemem wymagającym wyjaśnienia była natomiast kwestia wyboru właściwych kierunków rozwoju przemysłu”⁹ (Szymański 1999: 256). The researcher underlines that the great problem of backward countries was the lack of funds, therefore *Szkoła polska* contains a warning against huge investments. Instead of investing our own funds in the field of railway or industry it is better, Supiński claims, to use foreign capital to that purpose. “Zasoby przybywające z krajów obcych,” wrote Supiński, “to siły idące nam w pomoc; to żywność dowieziona w miejsca, gdzie głód panuje; to wiedza i praca nagromadzone nie u nas, a dla nas”¹⁰ (Supiński 1872: 198).

But benefiting from foreign investments is very different from losing national assets by selling properties. Supiński notices:

Pomiędzy wykupywaniem ziemi przez obcych, a zakładaniem przez nich fabryk i kolei, wielka zachodzi różnica: sprzedając ziemię, sprzedajemy miejsce na którym stoimy, wyciągamy z pod stóp własnych jedyną istnienia naszego podporę, wysadzamy się rozmyślnie w powietrze; przypuszczając obcych do pracowania na niej i dla niej, wypełniamy miejsca jeszcze próżne, podnosimy nasze siły, nie wypuszczając z rąk nic własnego (Supiński 1872: 197).¹¹

8 The railway of our days can be compared with exhausting wars.

9 Supiński was surely an advocate of the industrialization of Poland. The problem that needed explanation was the choice of the proper direction of industrial development.

10 The resources coming from abroad are the force that will help us; it is food fetched to the places of famine, it is knowledge and work gathered not by us, but for us.

11 There is a huge difference between buying up the land by foreigners and establishing the factories and railways by them: when we sell land, we also sell the place where we stand, we take out from under our feet their only support, we blow up ourselves deliberately; but when we allow

The reformed political system of Austria-Hungary is in Supiński's view a guarantee of wealth of Galicia in the future. It does not mean that the author of *Szkoła polska* questioned the sense of keeping Polish nationality. On the contrary, he constantly advocated the reverse of loyalty for the monarchy and emphasised that attention to technological development is a kind of patriotism and that the eventual goal is the full independence of the Polish nation. Supiński noticed the threat of domination of stronger countries over weaker ones; he also underlined the importance of keeping national identity for improving people's existence (Szymański 1999: 242–246).

Szkoła polska contains a bright comparison of blooming and backward countries. Although in his reflections Supiński did not use the concrete examples for both groups, it is quite clear that the former he associated with Western Europe, and to describe the latter he used his Galician observations:

drożyny kręte, garbate i błotniste, których pierwsze i przypadkowe powstanie sięga pierwszych rubasznych wozów; karczmy smrodliwe i zaciekające; chałupy gliniane, niskie i ciemne, bez kominów, podłóg i zamków; odzież brudna i podarta; zwierzęcość, pijatyki, bójki, kradzieże; sprzęty gospodarskie, jak odzież, chaty i obyczaje, niewiele odeszłe od pierwszych wieków; role zaniedbane lub nieumiejętnie jak przed lat tysiącem użyte; pastwiska zdeptane od niepamięci, pokryte krzewiem i kretowiną; nigdzie szkoły, nigdzie wyższych pojęć i uczuć. Miasta niewielkie i odległe jedne od drugich; handel uśpiony, rękodzielnie upadające przy powstaniu; gdzieniegdzie błyszcząca pozorem u góry oświata, a ciemnota rozpostarta u dołu; gdzieniegdzie okazałość i byt dobry, a niedostatek i cierpienia w ogóle narodu; stan zbliżony do początkującej społeczności, przecież pełnej boleści i utyskiwań, bo znającej lepsze gdzieindziej i pojmującej możliwość lepszego; – oto skutki ubogiej schedy wieków upłynionych, przytłumionego życia w najlicniejszej części narodu, brak społecznego zasobu, niedostatek uzbieranej wiedzy i pracy, którego zniechęcona i cierpiąca ludność dość szybko wypełnić nie może i nie umie (Supiński 1872: 150–151).¹²

Zdzisław Szymański notices that the image depicted is closely related to the writings of Stanisław Staszic (Szymański 1999: 248). Besides listing problems it is also worth mentioning an unfavourable pyramidal social structure and simple economic production, which is a relic of feudal relations and leads to debt. A further consequence

foreigners to work on our land and for our land, we fill places empty before, we increase our strength without losing anything that is ours.

- 12 The paths – winding, crooked and muddy, which originated simultaneously with the first coarse carts; the inns – stinking and damp-patched; the cottages – made of clay, low and dark, without chimneys, floors and locks; the clothes – dirty and torn; bestiality, alcoholism, fights, robbery; agricultural equipment, such as clothes, cottages and habits – not unlike those from earlier centuries; fields – neglected or cultivated incompetently like a thousand years ago; pastures – trampled from time immemorial, covered with bush and molehills; no schools, no higher feelings and feelings. Towns – little and remote from each other; trade in deep sleep, the manufactories being closed down immediately after setting them up, here and there education seemingly shining high above, and ignorance everywhere at the bottom, here and there good wealth, and the privation and suffering in the nation at large, the estate close to primitive society, full of sorrow and complaints, but knowing that elsewhere it is better and understanding that it is possible to reach it; – these are the effects of the poor inheritance of past ages, suppressed life in the most numerous parts of nation, a lack of social reserves, a deficiency in knowledge and work, which a dispirited and suffering population cannot quickly fill, nor does it know how to.

of a bad economic situation is the failure of ideas, an interest in literature and simple historical writings, which in contrast to the natural and social sciences, are unable to form a broad-minded modern citizen (Szymański 1999: 246–251). So there are two main activities to perform – the acceleration of progress and the development of education. Economic progress, based mostly on agriculture, should be harmonious and wide-ranging, and the basic condition for it should be change in the social structure, especially in the countryside. This should be preceded by the emancipation of the peasantry and its reshaping into a self-conscious social group, a Polish middle class. Supiński did not understand the obvious demand for industrialization as large investments in big factories, but rather the developing of smaller craft firms.

This view of Supiński's places him in the position of an independent thinker, who can notice the difference between the richest European countries and their backward peripheries. Supiński's program of national economy development is a moderate one, and industrialization is not the main goal of this proposal (Borkowska 2000). It is important that Supiński refutes a pure monetary understanding of the economy and point to the broad, social and cultural conditions of the described processes. For example, Supiński's appreciation of associations and partnerships joins economic and sociological issues and is an important voice for building a civic society. The program of the enrichment of the periphery is based on the conviction that it can be fulfilled only if the local social relations change.

The sickness of Galicia

The problems connected with the underdevelopment of Galicia have been described in Józef Rogosz's two series of *Choroby Galicji* (*The Sickness of Galicia*). The catalogue of Galician sore points viewed from the perspective of ten years after the political changes in Austria-Hungary is broad and links social and economic issues. The main element of both of Rogosz's texts is the motif of sickness, its diagnosis and consequences. The texts can be understood as interesting documents of the author as well as of the social perception of the problems of Galicia. Rogosz concentrates on three main points: the internal causes of the "sickness", the threat of internal Others, and an Austrian context of economic situation in the province.

The faults of Poles living in Galicia, stigmatized by Rogosz and causing the deplorable condition of the province, are strictly connected with Polish customs and the social structure of Galicia. The caste-like confinement of each social group and the attempts to reach the upper classes are the reason, according to Rogosz, for bad management and losing properties. Post-feudal patterns of culture are therefore the main obstacles in the process of building a modern society, in which the middle class would be the wealthiest social group. However, for many characters in *Choroby Galicji* this state of affairs is fully acceptable. A good example is Count Gucio who makes efforts to enter the high society of Lviv:

Odczuwając instynktowo charakter masy, która go oblewała, wiedział, że w Galicji hrabia lub książę łatwiej podbije powszechną opinię grzecznym ukłonem, wdzięcznym uśmiechem i pozornie przyjacielskim ręką uściśnieniem, niżeli człowiek z niższej warstwy prawością charakteru, czystością przekonań narodowych, pracą i rozumem.

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Ogół galicyjskiego społeczeństwa poczytuje sobie za zaszczyt, nawet za łaskę, jeżeli hrabia raczy się doń zbliżyć, a uczciwą pracę jednostek nie mających karet i służby w liberii, uważa za obowiązek, za który nie należy się nawet podzięka (Rogosz 1876: 101).¹³

However, the dominant role of the aristocracy does not corresponding to the deeds of its representatives, which are judged by Rogosz according to their patriotic commitment. Even worse, a negative cultural pattern is passed on to their descendants. A French tradesman, Louis d'Etienne, says to the Galician youth met in Paris:

Mieszkając w Galicji przekonałem się, że zamożniejsza młodzież tej części dawnej Polski, prawie nie jest zdolną do prowadzenia poważniejszego dyskursu. Gdziekolwiek zejdzie się kilku młodych ludzi, o czym mówią? O kartach, psach, koniach, polowaniu i kobietach. Oto treść wszystkich waszych rozmów, oto filozofia waszego życia towarzyskiego. [...] Spotkawszy was tu, w tym wielkim ognisku cywilizacji, gdzie rodzice przysłali was prawdopodobnie byście się czegoś nauczyli, gdyż jak na turystów za młodo mi jeszcze wyglądacie, myślałem, że może z dala od kraju przyjęliście inny system. Tymczasem zawiodłem się boleśnie (Rogosz 1876: 13–14).¹⁴

The anachronistic nature of the cultural pattern cultivated by the youth comes to light in the double context – it suits neither the time of political dependence nor the reality of the West. The consequence of fixing a gaze on a timeless model of gentry life is idleness, which is inadequate to the pace of life in the centre of the 19th-century world. The confrontation of the Galician model of life with the demand for modernity demonstrates not only the Orient-like exoticism of the incomers, but also their incapability to take up the demands of the present.

Rogosz appears as an admirer of social change, and his arguments are based on the belief in negative consequences for the Galician economy caused by an anachronistic model of culture. In *Choroby Galicji* it is the wealthy tradesman Benedykt, coming from a German family, who instructs the reader:

Kupców uczciwych i nie-Żydów, kraj nasz gwałtem potrzebuje, i dlatego dobrze zasługuje się ten ojczyźnie, kto się temu zawodowi poświęca. Równocześnie jednak potrzeba, aby każdy młody człowiek, zwłaszcza jeżeli pochodzi z rodziny szlacheckiej, wstępując na

13 Feeling instinctively the character of the masses surrounding him, he knew that in Galicia it is easier for counts and dukes to win the heart of the public with a polite bow, graceful smile and seemingly friendly handshake than for people from lower classes with the good character, purity of national thoughts, work and reason. The whole of Galician society feels honoured or even favoured if a count gets close to them, and the honest job of people who do not possess carriages and servants wearing livery is for them a duty not deserving of thanks.

14 Once I lived in Galicia I realized that the rich youth of this part of former Poland is hardly able to conduct more serious discourse. Wherever a few people meet, what are they talking about? About cards, dogs, horses, hunting and women. These are the topics of all your conversations, this is the philosophy of your social life. [...] While meeting you here, in this great center of civilization, where your parents sent you probably to learn something – because you look too young for tourists – I thought, that far away from your country you will change your system. Meanwhile I became painfully disappointed.

tę drogę powiedział sobie, że odtąd będzie tylko kupcem, i z polską fanfaronadą, która każdemu każe na pana chorować, rozbrat weźmie na wieki! (Rogosz 1879: 17).¹⁵

The aversion of Poles toward trade is a consequence, as Rogosz shows, of the great attractiveness of the gentry's way of life. But the point of Rogosz's reflections is not to keep the values connected with the culture of the manor. In *Choroby Galicji* he objects to the popular aristocratic tinsel causing financial problems. Rogosz's sketches recall the 18th century satire on fashionable women, but in the reality of early capitalism in Galicia the values connected with the cultural space of the city and the countryside had changed in favour of the first one, as the place suitable to cultivate the virtues far from the ideals of "Sarmatians". The importance of modern culture is underlined by Benedykt during the conversation with the young shop assistant, Roman, who announced he was getting married:

Dlaczego to mój synu na Zachodzie kupcy dorabiają się tak prędko majątków? Bo w żonach mają najlepszych i najrzetelniejszych pomocników. A jeżeli żona obojętna, których u nas pełno w świecie kupieckim, nie jest odpowiednią, to przyznam ci się, że żona z domu szlacheckiego, jest w Galicji dla polskiego kupca prawdziwym nieszczęściem (Rogosz 1879: 12).¹⁶

One can understand this statement as a proof of the shift in at least the literary view of the problems of culture. The imitation, in the sense of compensating for one's own provinciality, in the second half of the 19th century concerns also the Polish gentry and means a negation of the virtues of capitalism: diligence, refraining from consumption, satisfaction with one's position (Ossowska 1985). Rogosz sees the character of Poles as a mixture of wastefulness, feudal behaviours and aspirations to the higher classes. Moreover, these problems are not limited to the narrow group, but can be seen in society as a whole.

Rogosz's emotional commitment to the problems of backwardness in the province is very clear when he comes to the reflections on the most prosperous groups among Galician society: the clergy, aristocracy, lawyers and Jews. Representatives of those four groups, according to Rogosz, could adapt themselves perfectly to the reality of the era of Galician autonomy. But the motivation for their lack of interest in the economic development of Galicia has various origins. In the case of the clergy the point is to preserve the influence of papacy: all activity of this group is subordinated to this goal, therefore progress has little importance, or is even undesirable. For the aristocracy and intelligentsia an important factor is the hybrid status of those groups which, due to the art of collaboration with political power, can conduct their own businesses while pretending to be patriotically engaged (Skórczewski 2010: 137).

15 Our country needs rapidly the honest, non-Jewish tradesmen, so someone who chooses this occupation serves well our homeland. Meanwhile it is necessary that every young man, especially when he comes from gentry, while starting this occupation, tell himself that henceforth he would be only a tradesman and will give up for good the Polish rodomontade which makes everyone imitate a great lord!

16 Why, my son, do the Western tradesmen become rich so fast? Because their wives are their best and most thorough helpers. And if an indifferent wife, who is common in our trade world, is unsuitable, I must admit that a wife from gentry is for a Polish tradesman in Galicia a real misfortune.

Lastly, the Jews are treated as typical Others, whose separate position from the rest of society causes the negative economic results.

Rogosz's criticism of the clergy is seen in his accusation against its representatives of doing unclear businesses and a purposeful treatment of the faith in order to reinforce the Catholic Church. The latter practice is stigmatized in *Choroby Galicji* because it separates the clergy from the national interest. Rogosz depicts the activities of the characters presented as a sign of the pan-European politics of the Papal States that disregards national issues.

The representatives of the clergy function in a triple system: between Cracow, Vienna and Rome, and the last city is doubtless the centre of their interest. Yet for Rogosz the authentic engagement in national life is a primary indication of belonging to the community and even if in *Choroby Galicji* he does not use the epithet "traitor", undoubtedly this is the author's real judgement of the elites indifferent to the nation's fate.

On the edge of the community are also, according to Rogosz, the representatives of aristocracy. In this case the frame of reference is simpler – between patriotic duties and the dependence upon external powers, this group focuses mostly on the protection of its own economic business. In this case Rogosz's voice is presented by old Duke Romuald, who describes the attitude of aristocracy as following: "Samolubstwo, własny interes i zysk, do którego według waszego mniemania każda z dróg wiodących jest uczciwą [...] Wstyd moi panowie, wstyd, tak żyją tylko pasożyty!"¹⁷ (Rogosz 1876: 153). The detachment of the representatives of the aristocracy from the needs of the province, included in the metaphor of a parasite, is concurrent with the notes of Tomasz Zarycki on the status of peripheral elites that operate in two systems, designated by the discourse of hegemonic power and the subaltern. On the one hand, aristocrats use the opportunity offered by the conquerors to enrich themselves, as Duke Romuald concludes bitterly:

Arystokracja węgierska nie ma o wiele więcej jak galicyjska, ale przedstawiciele tamtej pracowali dla ojczyzny, uważając jej dobro za własne, gdy tymczasem wy patrzycie na kraj jak na owego ptaka z bajki, który choć niekarmiony powinien wam nieść złote jaja (Rogosz 1876: 156).¹⁸

On the other hand, the aristocracy apparently works for the nation's good. Though even in the case of members of parliament, involved in public activities, participation in the mission of the province's development is limited to dealing with private businesses:

Ten chciał starać się o nową koncesję, tamten postanowił wkręcić syna do dyplomacji, ów marzył dla jedynaka o posadzie w ministerium spraw wewnętrznych a inni mieli

¹⁷ Egoism, one's own interest and profit, for which all paths are honest. [...] That's a shame, gentlemen, shame, only parasites live like this!

¹⁸ The Hungarian aristocracy does not possess much more than the Galician, but representatives of the first one worked for homeland, regarding its good as their own good, while you look at the country as at the bird from a fairy tale, which though not fed should bring you golden eggs.

znowu do załatwienia bądź ważne spory sąsiedzkie, bądź marzyli o orderach, majoratach i koronach hrabiowskich (Rogosz 1876: 147).¹⁹

As Rogosz notes, it is an erroneous conjecture that the role of spiritual guide of the nation in place of the aristocracy should unconditionally be taken by the intelligentsia. *Choroby Galicji* includes a negative portrait of a representative of that sphere, which was recognised by the positivists as the elite of the nation and was usually presented in a more favourable light. Meanwhile, the lawyer Raczek is portrayed as an unscrupulous parvenu who made a fortune unfairly from the point of view of the Polish patriot – he was involved as an intermediary in the sale of the property of a bankrupt duke to Jews.

The crack between the needs of the province and the practice of the elite – whether in the case of the clergy, the cosmopolitan nobility or depraved intelligentsia – can be seen as a part of the discourse between the centre and the periphery. It is characteristic that the representatives of all three groups are described as the so-called “new people.” The editor of the “Konserwatysta” sums up the lack of taste in the selection of paintings at the home of priest Augustyn with the words: “Nie zna się na sztuce, zwyczajnie jak parwieniusz!”²⁰ (Rogosz 1876: 28). Duke Romuald divides the aristocracy into the historical, which possesses the tradition, and the rest, which owes its recently acquired titles to the conqueror; also the lawyer Raczek is an example of a “new man”. The decisive criterion for the assessment of each group is its degree of identification with Polishness. And that is only possible, says Rogosz, if the characters are firmly established in the Polish cultural universe. A lack of tradition makes the representatives of the new aristocracy unable to take up a correct, from the ethnic point of view, position under conditions of enslavement.

Hence come, according to Rogosz, the problems with the Jews. *Choroby Galicji* contains an opinion that the Jews, as a separate ethnic group living on the common territory with the Poles, do not share the Polish national interest, but retain a tribal bond, thanks to which they can build their own wealth at the expense of their Christian neighbours. Among many voices and positions presented in the text, the author approves both the argument of a young candidate for a Rabbi, Dr. Moses, who is a supporter of national assimilation of the Jews, and the proposal of the speaker requesting the Austrian authorities to carry out the relevant regulations concerning Jewish affairs, e.g., reforming the structure of this community. In contrast to the previously mentioned groups, there is no doubt about the foreign character of Jewish population and its “parasitic” status and therefore Rogosz’s accusations have a different connotation than those addressed to his countrymen. The Jews, whose position in the relationship between the centre and the periphery specifies an additional, ethnic component, are situated outside the community and only their submission to assimilation could lead to a solution of the so-called “Jewish matter”. But the narrator notes

¹⁹ One of them wanted to seek for a new license, the other decided to wangle a good position in diplomacy for his son, another dreamed about the job in the Ministry of Internal Affairs for his only son, and others had again something to fix or important neighbour disputes, or dreamed of medals, mayor functions or the count’s crowns.

²⁰ Does not know art, just like a parvenu!

at the same time that the Jews are not “[...] narodem na wzór innych, z których każdy coś buduje, oni są stowarzyszeniem kosmopolitycznym, spekulującym na ludzkie słabości i namiętności – stowarzyszeniem, które wszystko rozprzęga”²¹ (Rogosz 1876: 136). A characteristic feature of the Jews would be their destructive character, expressed in deriving from other nations’ heritage. As one of the reasons for this state of affairs Rogosz sets out the nomadic nature of the Jews expelled from the Holy Land. Rogosz complements these negative characteristics with belittling, religious or racial epithets: “krew azjatycka, w której leży chytryść, chciwość i wytrwałość obok pozornej obojętności i uległości”²² (Rogosz 1876: 136).

What is essential for Rogosz is that the assimilation of the Jews is only a partial solution. The writer concludes that the recipe for the Jewish “disease” would be not so much a transformation of the Jews themselves, but the strenuous self-improvement of the Poles and their undertaking of vigorous work in all areas of the economy, especially those dominated by the Jews, “[...] a gdy to nastąpi – pisze Rogosz – większa połowa Żydów mieszkających dziś w Galicji sama się wyniesie, szukając ludów słabszych od was i lekkomyślniejszych” (Rogosz 1876: 137–138).²³

As a community with the status of Others, the Jews are the perfect object to shoulder the responsibility for the negative economic phenomena occurring in Galicia (Girard 1991); the views expressed in Rogosz’s writing are a classic example of a negative stereotype of a Jew (Tokarska-Bakir 2005).

The Jews are dangerous not only for their practical skills and knack for business, but primarily because they do not use their abilities for the sake of the province, but they have an additional point of reference for their activities, which focuses primarily on doing their own businesses.

However, in *Choroby Galicji* the Austrian context of the problems is also clearly indicated. The main point of Rogosz’s opinion is that, even if Poles themselves are responsible for the misery of Galicia, certainly the policy of Vienna is not conducive to socio-economic changes in the province. Rogosz’s notes have two essential aspects: on the one hand, they are related to the specific actions and omissions, influencing the reality of life of the inhabitants of Galicia, and on the other hand they refer to the sense of Vienna’s activity in the wider plan of Habsburg policy.

In the first dimension Rogosz draws attention primarily to the shared responsibility of central authority for the process of the moral fall of the Polish aristocracy and intelligentsia. The government, by creating a framework for immorality – which means both national apostasy and the ethical evil – legitimizes the social attitudes. On the one hand, the picture created by Rogosz clears his compatriots from responsibility, and on the other hand, he gives the testimony to the lack of faith in their commitment to moral and patriotic virtues. It is important that this disbelief contains

21 [...] a nation similar to other nations, of which each one builds something, the Jews are a cosmopolitan association, speculating on human foibles and passions – an association which turns everything into chaos.

22 Asian blood, in which lie cunning, greed and perseverance along with apparent indifference and submission.

23 [...] and when this happens, more than a half of the Jews living today in Galicia will get out, looking for more vulnerable and reckless peoples.

one of the essential thoughts of *Choroby Galicji* – the Habsburg benefits are used first of all by the afore-mentioned “new people”: by the “artificial aristocracy” or parvenus such as the lawyer Raczek. This tendency can be seen easily in the speeches of Duke Romuald on the patent of Maria Theresa, which facilitated the bestowal of aristocratic titles after the first partition:

Taka arystokracja [...] to żadna. Nie przyniósłszy z sobą tradycji i przywiązanego do niej poświęcenia, ubrała się natychmiast w to wszystko, co w ubiegłych dwóch wiekach gubiło stan polskich magnatów. Oglądą zewnętrzną pokryła próżnię wewnętrzną; język francuski zastąpił u niej uczucia patriotyczne; namiętne spekulowanie na majątek było w jej przekonaniu pracą i zasługą – a za tym wszystkim poszła zupełna obojętność dla ojczyzny, bo nie od ojczyzny otrzymała tytuły (Rogosz 1876: 160).²⁴

In his speech Duke Romuald gives examples of the ennobling of representatives of the lower classes, made without consideration, and the diagnosis of the actual merits of the new counts and barons. This observation reflects on the conservative nature of the position of writers associated with the democratic camp in terms of origin and social advancement. Rogosz's vision of society does not go beyond the horizon of feudal, pre-modern order: the social background establishes one's fate, it designates the impassable framework, from which one can break out only at the cost of becoming wicked, and the Austrian government legitimized this villainy as a standard. Rogosz interprets the introduction of the patent of 1775 as a creation of the possibility of penetrating the elites by those driven by low, material motives, and a further consequence of this fact is the destruction of the gentry and the economic weakness of Galicia.

Rogosz notes similar observations on the role of the Austrian government on the occasion of portraying the Galician judiciary. In addition to the essential disease of Galicia, which is, according to the representative of the jurists, “zastraszający brak charakterów w naszym społeczeństwie” (Rogosz 1876: 186),²⁵ the cause of evil is also, e.g., the arrogance of the Vienna government: “Prawodawcy austriaccy, którzy przyszli uszczęśliwiać Galicję, powiedzieli, że ponieważ Polacy są narodem barbarzyńskim, a prawo polskie bez wartości, więc wszystko trzeba zburzyć, nowe zaś ustanowić” (Rogosz 1876: 183).²⁶ Meanwhile, in the opinion of the protagonist, Austrian law is far from perfection – the acts are too convoluted and overly rhetorical, which “otwierają drogę do pieniactwa, podstępów i niegodnych wykrętów” (Rogosz 1876: 186).²⁷

In the case of both the nobility and intelligentsia, the problem lies between the ambitions of the inhabitants of the province and the activity of the Austrian govern-

24 This is no aristocracy. Having no tradition brought with them and no sacrifice tied to it, they dressed up in everything that in the past two centuries led the Polish magnates to disaster. Exterior refinement covered the internal vacuum; the French language replaced patriotic feelings; passionate speculations with estates were in their belief work and merit – and with it came a complete indifference to the motherland, because not from the motherland did they receive the titles.

25 An alarming lack of character in our society.

26 Austrian legislators, who came to make Galicia happy, said that because the Poles are a barbarian nation and the Polish law is worthless, so everything needs to be torn down, and the new order has to be established.

27 Pave the way for litigiousness, tricks and unworthy excuses.

ment, which, as Rogosz claims, is able to make skilful use of social moods and expectations to achieve its purposes, not for the sake of the province.

The second important aspect of Austrian rule in Galicia is the specific policy toward the province, as an element of the overall policy of Austria-Hungary. The main accusation is the instrumental treatment of the province, recalling more the relationship between the centre and the colony than the governing of the province. Rogosz sees symptoms of this state of affairs already in the first years of the existence of Galicia:

Rząd cesarski przyłączywszy Galicję do Austrii tak się wobec niej zachował, i to od pierwszej zaraz chwili, jak gdyby ten cały kraj nie był jego własnością, lecz dzierżawą, z której prędzej lub później będzie musiał ustąpić. Im uważniej przypatruję się całemu systemowi rządów austriackich w Galicji, tym uporczywiej zapytuje, – co tu więcej podziwiać, złą wolę, czy niedołęstwo? Jeżeli Austria uważała Galicję za swoją własność a mimo to niszczyła ją pod każdym względem, moralnie i materialnie, to twórcy tej polityki byli co najmniej niedołężni. Bo czyż mądry właściciel niszczy własny majątek? A jeżeli na Galicję spoglądała jak na dzierżawę, to czyż wtedy jej polityka nie była nacechowana złą wolą? Wziąć kraj obszerny, poważnie wszystkich jego mieszkańców i przywieść do kija żebraczego, a ziemię tak wyniszczyć, żeby sam kłakol wydawała – potem zaś kraj ten odstąpić pierwszemu lepszemu z przechodniów, czyż by to było roztropne i uczciwe? A jednak Ekszelencjo poprzednicy Twój tak postępowali (Rogosz 1879: 51).²⁸

This lecture has a form of a memorial written by merchant Benedict and addressed to the minister of trade in the government of Vienna. Of course, this is the apparent recipient and there is no doubt that using this technique Rogosz wanted to transmit his own opinions, depicting the Austrian Government from the inside. Rogosz's protagonist accuses the Vienna government of a lack of interest in the development of the province. This could only happen in the case of an active protectionist policy following the model of other European countries.

Rogosz deals at this moment with the issue of the status of peripheral lands within the Empire – concerns about this issue accompanied the expansion of the railway network in the 1860s. Rogosz unequivocally concludes that the Austrian management in the province has a wasteful nature, and the real objective of its economic policy is to widen the market for goods produced in German-speaking countries. Thus the regrettable economic situation in the province is the result of Vienna's policy: "[...] rząd nie tylko że sam nic nie dał, lecz jeszcze zabrał co było; potem zaś dziwi się

²⁸ The imperial government, after connecting Galicia with Austria, acted from the first minutes as if the whole country was not its property, but a lease, which sooner or later will give way. More closely I observe the whole government system of Austria in Galicia, more intensely I ask what's more spectacular, the ill will, or incompetence? If Austria considered Galicia as its property and destroyed it in every way, morally and materially, so the creators of this policy were at least clumsy. Does a wise owner destroy its own property? And if Galicia were seen as a lease, then wasn't this policy characterised by ill will? Take away the large country, stir up discord between all its residents and reduce them to beggars, and destroy the land so that it only produces a corncockle – and then give this country away to just anyone from the passers-by, would it be prudent and honest? However, Excellency, your predecessors acted in this manner.

naiwnie, czemu w tej prowincji przemysł nie kwitnie!! A czemu żebrak nie mieszka w pałacu i nie ma służby w liberii?..." (Rogosz 1879: 53).²⁹

The conclusions about the peripheral status of the province are accompanied by the reflections on the condition of Habsburg Empire. In the quoted excerpts Rogosz's protagonist, reflecting on the reasons for a poor situation in Galicia, enumerated, among others, the incompetence of the government; elsewhere the narrator-ducats while talking with another coin gets to know the backstage of the Austro-Hungarian Empire:

Powinieneś wiedzieć [...] że państwo, którego jestem poddanym, bardzo lubi dukaty, ale właśnie dla tego że za nimi przepada, samo ich nie ma. Każdy rulonik, wybity w jego mennicy, idzie bądź za granicę, bądź przenosi się do kieszeni żydowskich (Rogosz 1876: 9).³⁰

The Habsburg monarchy is presented as the centre which is economically weak, clumsily managing its own resources, which results in increasing debt and brings attempts to balance the budget through the exploitation of Galicia according to a colonial pattern (Frybes 1953: VI). As one of the reasons for the weakness of Austria-Hungary Rogosz points to the multi-national character of the state, which makes the creation of strong links connecting its inhabitants impossible. This problem is illustrated by the conversation of two ducats:

[...] jakiej jesteś narodowości, bo mi twój język brzmi dziwnie... każde słowo inne.
 – Ja nie jestem żadnej narodowości.
 – Czy być może?
 – Ja jestem Austriak.
 – Cóż to takiego?
 – To państwo (Rogosz 1876: 8).³¹

The state connects people, according to Rogosz, much more weakly than nationality; even more so, if it brings together many different nations, it inevitably becomes vulnerable to internal conflicts resulting from the divergence of interests of different groups. Rogosz predicts the fate of such a state, recalling a biblical metaphor: "[...] staruszek [dukat] mówił niewyraźnie jak gdyby miał fluksję, i używał takiego języka,

29 [...] the Government not only gave nothing, but took what there still was; then it is surprised naively that no industry is thriving in this province! And why doesn't the beggar live in the palace and has servants in livery?...

30 You should know [...] that the State, which I am a subject of, likes ducats very much, but just for the fact that it is very fond of them, they are gone. Each roll, minted in the mint, goes abroad, or ends up into the Jewish pocket.

31 [...] What is your nationality, because to me your language sounds strange... every word is very different.
 – I am of no nationality.
 – Is it possible?
 – I am Austrian.
 – What is it?
 – The state.

jakim mówili ludzie przy budowaniu wieży Babel, skutkiem czego musieli się rozejść, bo się zupełnie nie rozumieli [...]” (Rogosz 1876: 10).³²

Rogosz’s observations on the Austrian context of the underdevelopment of Galicia oscillate between accusations and depreciation of the conqueror. Both methods for sure could lift the spirit of the author and his readers, and certainly eased a little the meaning of text devoted to Polish sins. But there also can be seen in this a need for symbolic compensation for self-impotence. Even if Austria was a weak centre, facing a wide range of its own problems, it still remained the occupant which could not be ignored with a simple shrug, because it actively decided about the shape of life in Galicia.

The great experiment: from the Galician poverty to Eldorado

In 1880s there appeared a new and important voice in the discussion on the backwardness of Galicia. Although, as researchers note, Stanisław Szczepanowski’s *Nędza Galicyi w cyfrach* (*Galician Misery in Numbers*, 1888) contains some controversial data that hardly can be proved (Śliwa 1994, Wyka 1951), the coverage of and discussions caused by this work are the best sign of its importance. In the context of backwardness, the introduction seems to be especially noteworthy.

Turning to his voters, Szczepanowski stresses the historical dimension of an election of an industrialist to Vienna’s Council of State. In his opinion, it is evidence of the changes taking place in social-economic relations in the province, and Szczepanowski adds to this process a clear interpretative frame:

[...] zaznaczyliście potrzebę [...] wytworzenia tego stanu średniego, na którym Polsce zawsze zbywało – i dalsie przykład wylamania się z ciasnych zaściankowych wyobrażeń, które do niedawna zdawały się jeszcze w całym kraju wszechwładnie panować (Szczepanowski 1888: V).³³

Negative social phenomena, which strengthen the backwardness of the province, are for the author specifically Galician, in contrast to creative Polish traditions, aimed at development, in connection with the West. This vital tradition starts with the reformers from the period of the Great Sejm which leads our society to “zrównania [...] z narodami ucywilizowanymi i do zaszczerpienia w nim tych wszystkich zarodków samodzielnego rozwoju duchowego i ekonomicznego, które stanowią cywilizację nowożytną” (Szczepanowski 1888: VI).³⁴

Galicia was not privy to the benefits of Polish reforms of the last quarter of the 18th century, which, according to Szczepanowski, resulted in the ossification of the social situation in the province. It is the place, Szczepanowski writes, where

32 [...] the old man [ducat] spoke vaguely as if he was ill, and used such a language which was used by the people building a tower of Babel, which resulted in their dispersion, because they did not understand each other.

33 [...] you expressed the need to [...] create the middle class, which Poland always lacked – and you gave an example of getting out from provincial notions, which even until recently seemed to reign invincibly throughout the province.

34 [...] draw level with the civilized people and to instil all these germs of spiritual and economic growth which represent modern civilization.

przechowały się częściowo przedpotopowe tradycje szlachty przedrozbiorowej, które przyprawiwszy o zgubę dawną Rzeczpospolitą w przeszłym wieku, jeszcze dzisiaj stanowią poważną przeszkodę w odrodzeniu się społecznym naszej prowincji” (Szczepanowski 1888: VII).³⁵

The influence of the negative cultural patterns is accompanied by a second problem of Galicia – since the first partition of the province was, according to Szczepanowski, “przygnieciona [...] zmorą biurokracji niemieckiej” (Szczepanowski 1888: VII).³⁶ After a period of “monumental incompetence” of the Austrian government, an opinion spread among the inhabitants of Galicia that polonizing the administration could be used in the era of autonomy to defend Polish interests. Szczepanowski disagrees with this view and assesses it as an example of political naivety and wishful thinking.

Meanwhile, entrusting the mandate of the deputy to the representative of industry is, according to Szczepanowski, an act of prudence, “wyłamaniem się z [...] tradycji galicyjskich i zaściankowych, a powrotem do tradycji narodowych i polskich” (Szczepanowski 1888: VII).³⁷ For the author, this turning point in the perception of the needs of the province gives hope for the province to get out from the misery, the diagnosis of which constitutes a greater part of the work.

Having compiled a list of statistics crushing for Galicia and pointing the gap between the province and the rest of Europe, in the chapter *Bilans gospodarstwa krajowego* Szczepanowski indicates the causes of the poor economic condition of Galicia. He repeats the opinion of a century-old delay of Galicia in relation to the rest of the Polish lands and notes the discrepancy between the needs of the residents of the province and their capacity to meet these needs:

[...] jeżeli dotychczas pod niejednym względem zbliżyliśmy się do krajów ucywilizowanych zachodniej Europy, to zbliżenie to było dotychczas bardziej zewnętrzne aniżeli wewnętrzne. Przyswoiliśmy sobie potrzeby i pozory cywilizacji, ale jeszcze nie jej potęgę i twórczość. Pracujemy z nieudolnością barbarzyńców a mamy gusta i potrzeby europejskie. Czujemy potrzebę administracji europejskiej, a zbywa nam na środkach, ażeby tyle łożyć na cele oświaty i robót publicznych ile taka administracja wymaga. Czujemy potrzebę i fabrykatów i wykwinności europejskiej, ale nie umiemy sami ani ich wyrobić w kraju, ani też rozwinąć naszego eksportu we wystarczającej mierze do ich sprowadzania bez uszczerbku dla konsumpcji krajowej. To też mając podatki najłżejsze w Europie nie mamy ich z czego płacić; mając coraz większe potrzeby fabrykatów i wyrobów europejskich, nie mamy ich za co sprowadzać. Ten brak stosunku pomiędzy naszymi potrzebami a naszą umiejętnością i siłą wytwórczą, jest przyczyną trzech zastraszających symptomatów coraz to zwiększającej się anemii ekonomicznej, które rozbierzemy pod trzema tytułami: niedoboru finansowego, niedoboru życiowego i niedoboru społecznego w Galicji (Szczepanowski 1888: 52–53).³⁸

35 The antediluvian traditions of pre-partition gentry which caused the doom of the former Republic in the previous century, and which today still constitute a serious obstacle to the revival of social life of our province, were partly accommodated.

36 Overwhelmed by [...] the nightmare of German bureaucracy.

37 The rejection [...] of Galician and provincial tradition, and the returning back to Polish national traditions.

38 [...] If we have so far approached the civilized countries of Western Europe in more than one respect, this encounter has been far more superficial than real. We have acquired the needs and

Particularly dangerous for Szczepanowski is the social shortfall, i.e., the lack of “enlightened and independent citizens”, which brings deplorable consequences. “Cały nasz samorząd,” writes the author, “staje się mało co lepszym od komedii kosztownej a bezskutecznej” (Szczepanowski 1888: 59).³⁹ Galicia lies in the pre-modern social order, which is comprised of unfavourable relations of size and importance of the productive and unproductive classes (Szczepanowski 1888: 59–60).

The weakness of the middle class is accompanied by the excessive growth of the bureaucracy, which fulfils Austrian interests; such a state of affairs results in “upadkiem ducha publicznego, apatią i martwością całego społeczeństwa, utratą wiary we własne siły i nadziei w możliwość ratunku” (Szczepanowski 1888: 90).⁴⁰

Szczepanowski precedes his indication of the right path of the development of Galicia with a refutation of economic myths existing in Galician society. He points out that a metaphor of a disease is used to describe Galicia by many commentators; however, not all of them are competent enough to indicate the reasons for poverty in the province. “Zamiast szukać w obrazie całości gospodarstwa krajowego i diagnozy choroby i wskazówek do jej wyleczenia,” he writes, “powodujemy się osobistymi widzimi się i przypadkowymi symptomatami” (Szczepanowski 1888: 91).⁴¹ Szczepanowski fights against, for example, bad views on emigration, depopulation, fiscal policy, loans or duties. He mentions socialism as a false ideology, which is easily adopted on the grounds of ignorance and poverty, but he devotes a lot of time to anti-Semitism, showing the absurdity of the racial theory standing at its base and a false view of the economic domination of the Jews in Galicia. The main danger Szczepanowski sees in the Poles’ own impotence and their erroneous life ideals, especially among the aristocratic youth.

However, the positive program of economic development of Galicia, in the view of Szczepanowski, is not, as it might seem, a lecture of pure liberalism based on the opinion of healthy, natural selfishness that is the urge to get rich. Although the author stresses that prosperity can be built only on a “swobodnym i umiejętnym rozwoju zdrowego organizmu narodowego i sił produktywnych drzemających bez użytku w jego głębiach” (Szczepanowski 1888: 139),⁴² on the other hand he points out a great

a semblance of civilization, but not yet its power and creativity. We work with the clumsiness of barbarians, but we have taste and needs of Europeans. We feel the need for European administration, but we lack the assets for the purposes of education and public works required for this administration. And we feel the need for European refinement, but we are unable to reach it at home nor to expand our export in sufficient measure to import these goods without damage to domestic consumption. So having the smallest taxes in Europe, we have no money to pay them; having ever increasing needs for the European products, we do not have money to import them. This lack of relationship between our needs and our skills and productive force is the cause of three alarming symptoms of increasing economic anaemia, which are: the financial shortfall, the shortfall of households and social shortfall in Galicia.

39 Our whole local government becomes little better than comedy, expensive and futile.

40 The decline of public spirit, apathy and deadliness of the society as a whole, the loss of faith in its own strength and hope in the possibility of salvation.

41 Instead of looking for the diagnosis of the disease and the tips to cure it by looking at the whole picture of the provinces’ economy, we are driven by our own whim and accidental symptoms.

42 Free and skilful development of a healthy body of the nation and on the productive forces slumbering without use in its depths.

importance of the issue of moral revival, which is of primary importance in relation to the growth of wealth. A significant part of the chapter containing conclusions of Szczepanowski's work is devoted to an outline of an idealized picture of the national character of Poles, who by nature are unfamiliar with the ideals of "łakomstwa, dobrobytu i używania" (Szczepanowski 1888: 156)⁴³ detached from the higher desires. Under the influence of historical accidents, however, the original nature of the people was contaminated with the traces of strangers, therefore Szczepanowski repeats several times his recommendation for "clearing away the garbage", i.e., getting rid of foreign patterns, because only returning to the correct identity will allow the Poles to utilize social energy in a creative way. The author complements his main postulate with more detailed recommendations: breaking with fashion and saving; surprisingly little space is given to the specific program of economic development. The last chapter of *Nędza Galicji* recalls rather a set of guidelines than an internally structured project for the modernisation of the province.

In his practical activity, Szczepanowski turned his attentions to the oil industry, believing that crude oil could become a panacea for the ills of Galicia. Although already in the 1850s there were attempts to use Galician oil on a wider scale, after almost 30 years since the first successful attempt to refine the raw material by Ignacy Łukasiewicz the exploitation of Carpathian deposits was still largely amateurish. Wells were dug by hand, their deepening usually advancing slowly, and the extraction remained at a fairly low level. As Alison Frank notes, the 1880s brought a breakthrough in oil production in Galicia due to the activity of Stanisław Szczepanowski and William MacGarvey, who revolutionized the technology of oil extraction. Both represent the type of self-made man who achieves success due to his own effort and energy, although there are also significant differences between them. While in the case of MacGarvey Galician oil was interesting as pure business, for Szczepanowski it was primarily a force serving the national interest. Undoubtedly, both personalities gave impetus to the Galician oil industry, because the change in technology of extracting raw materials started a sharp increase in production. The traditionally impoverished villages around Carpathian Borysław were transformed into an oil basin covered with dozens of oil wells, and the flowing oil enriched those who managed to place their wells profitably.

The downside of the province's sudden prosperity at the end of the century was the increasing pollution of the environment and the inflow of the poor from various parts of the world to "the Galician Eldorado", longing for a better income, though in general, the living conditions of workers were deplorable. But for Szczepanowski, who promoted a dynamic industrial development of Galicia, oil was not a threat, but rather the vehicle that was meant to situate the province among the wealthier regions (Frank 2005, Kuberski 1997).

This motif of a chance for Galician development was used in the works by Ignacy Maciejowski (Sewer), who described in his two novels the stories of Polish oil industry pioneers. *Nafta* (*The Oil*, 1893) and *Ponad siły* (*Dead weight*, 1900) are among a few literary traces of an industrial invasion into Galicia. In both texts, Maciejowski treats oil not as a means of enriching people quickly and easily, but rather as a factor that affects the spiritual maturation of human beings (*Nafta*) or the entire nation (*Ponad*

⁴³ Greed, affluence and hedonism.

siły), an element of nature that in the long term can be used to transform the agrarian culture into modern industrial culture, and thus can rescue the province from poverty (Fiolek 2011, Krajkowski 2012). The importance of oil for social transformation and its role in raising the standard of living in the province were underlined by Wilhelm Feldman in a review of *Nafta*:

W Galicji jesteśmy obecnie świadkami głębokiej przemiany stosunków. W społeczeństwie, którego najwybitniejszym typem do niedawna był rolnik i poetycki marzyciel – powstaje warstwa nowa, warstwa zdobywców, silna energią czynu, zbrojna w naukę i technikę przemysłu. Są to pionierzy zachodnio-europejskiej burżuazji. Im Galicja zawdzięcza, że bogactwa mineralne, uśpione od wieków, leżące setki metrów pod ziemią wśród głazów, ilu i gazu – wytrysnęły strumieniami nafty; wpływ ich w życiu społecznym z każdym dniem wybitniejszy; idealnym ich oddźwiękiem w literaturze jest dzieło Sewera (Feldman 1894: 152).⁴⁴

The oilmen portrayed in the novel and praised by the critic seem to meet the ideal dreamt about by positivists twenty years earlier, the ideal of a new character: an activist, industrialist, endowed with energy to achieve objectives for the benefit of society.

The most visible characteristic in the creation of the protagonists of *Nafta* is their energy. In the case of Stefan, residing near the Podniebie wells, this energy takes the form of wild persistence; the work causes unusual renewal also for Zygmunt:

Nie wiem, co mi jest, co się ze mną od kilku dni dzieje – odezwał się wesoło Zygmunt – lecz i ja nabieram wściekłości. Jakiś szal mnie opanowuje, gniew, a zarazem zawziętość i upór. Gdym zobaczył maszyny, zawrzało we mnie. Czuję zmianę. I kto wie, czy i ja się nie zrobię nafcjarzem, wściekłym nafcjarzem (Maciejowski 1894: 142).⁴⁵

Indeed, Zygmunt transformed into an oilman, but it happened after the recurrences of “lordly whims” – after earning his first large amount of money the protagonist leaves Podniebie and visits Cracow, where he carelessly spends money among the other youths and escapes to Vienna with a newly met actress. However, finally he goes back to work, which became for him a necessity.

A different approach to oil can be seen in the main character of the novel *Ponad siły*. Tadeusz, the alter ego of Stanisław Szczepanowski, is not only a person full of energy, but he is also dominated mostly by the freshness of youth and idealism:

Wybiegł z całym rozmachem młodości. [...] Tadeusz, ubrany w bluzę i długie buty, przedstawiał typ dobrze zbudowanego młodzieńca. Zgrabny, ramiona szerokie, długa

44 In Galicia we are currently witnessing a profound transformation of relationships. In society, the most important representative of which was until recently a farmer and poetic dreamer – a new class is being created, a class of winners, strong with energy of action, armed with science and technology. Those are the pioneers of Western European bourgeoisie. Galicia is indebted to them because the mineral resources, asleep for centuries, hundreds of feet below the ground among the boulders, loam and gas, have spurted with streams of oil; their impact on social life each day is more eminent; the perfect response to them in literature is the work of Sewer.

45 I do not know what is going on with me for the last few days – said Zygmunt cheerfully – but I too am becoming enraged. A kind of frenzy is taking control over me, rage and also determination and obstinacy. When I saw the machine, something erupted in me. I feel the change. And who knows, perhaps I will become an oilman, a fierce oilman.

szyja, oczy jasne, słowiańskie, osadzone głęboko, i czoło wypukłe, całość mówiła o energii, wielkiej fantazji, niewyczerpanej miłości idei, optymizmie i marzycielstwie. Zarówno mógłby być apostołem, filozofem, prorokiem nowej religii, męczennikiem dobrej sprawy, jak dziś był inżynierem, mechanikiem, przemysłowcem. [...] Zwykle zamyślony i roztargniony, czuł potrzebę wypowiedziania się przed ludźmi, których kochał i wierzył im. Ta chęć zmuszała go do jasnych określeń zdań i do ich pięknej formy, wytwarzając z niego pierwszorzędno mówcę. Szeroki umysł, głęboki, bystry przesycony był uczuciem miłości (Maciejowski 1900, 1: 13–14).⁴⁶

Almost evangelical, and, at the same time, self-confident and energetic, Tadeusz is a complementary figure to the protagonists of *Nafta*, who, while acting in good faith in carrying out the program of industrial development, are much more pragmatic, absorbed with the purely material dimension of work. Tadeusz is not a “fierce oilman” but rather “an apostle of oil”, spreading the good news about the power of this raw material extracted from the depths of the earth. Tadeusz’s oil fever is not manifested in his physical manner, as it was in Stefan’s case: “świeciły mu oczy, ręce kurczowo ściągnął, jak gdyby chciał pazurami szarpać” (Maciejowski 1894, 1: 142);⁴⁷ although he also eagerly looks forward to the fulfilment of his hopes. But there is no gambling in him – oil in his case is not a capricious lover, but a necessary means of materializing dreams of lifting up the province. Industrial activity is not considered to be simple money making, but is situated in an ideological plan:

– Robota nie czeka, społeczeństwo nie czeka, idee nie czekają.
 – Czekały dotąd, Tadziuniu, poczekają i dłużej!... Pali ci się pod stopami.
 – Pali, przerwał. Jakiż kraj dziki, żeby nie miał kredytu na roboty, które mu dadzą miliony!... Czuję tu – uderzył nogą – miliony, a tyle nowych robót do podjęcia na innych polach. Gdzie spojrzę, serce się krwawi, a głowa pęka!... Zdaje mi się, że sama natura, żywy, ludzie wyciągają do mnie ręce i wołają – wydobądź nas z nicości, my chcemy żyć – ratuj!... Cóż to jest ta jedna dolina, gdy cała Galicja woła ratunku (Maciejowski 1900, 1: 15–16).⁴⁸

46 He ran out with all the verve of youth. [...] Tadeusz, dressed in a jumper and long boots, represented a type of well-built young man. Clean-limbed, wide arms, long neck, bright Slavonic eyes, deeply embedded, and a protruding forehead – all spoke of energy, imagination, the inexhaustible love of ideas and dreaminess. He could be both an apostle, a philosopher, a prophet of a new religion, a martyr for a good cause, as today he was an engineer, mechanic, industrialist. [...] Usually walking lost in thoughts and absent-minded, he felt the need to speak in front of people he loved and believed in. This desire forced him to use sentences clearly and form them beautifully, making him a first-class speaker. A broad mind, deep and sharp, was saturated with a feeling of love.

47 His eyes shined, he tightened his hands, as if he wanted to scratch with his nails.

48 – The work is not waiting, the society is not waiting, the ideas aren’t waiting.

– They were waiting, Tadziuniu, and they can wait longer!... Things are getting too hot for you.
 – That’s right, he stopped. What a wild country, since there is no credit for works that will give millions!... I feel here--he stamped his foot--the millions, and so many new jobs to take up in other fields. Looking around, the heart is bleeding, and the head is aching!... It seems to me that nature itself, the elements, people reach out to me and cry – get us out of nothingness, we want to live – save us!... This single valley is nothing, when all of Galicia is crying for help.

The extraction of valuable raw material creates a new social class, which was described by Feldman as “the pioneers of the bourgeoisie”, but it has to be stressed that it causes also changes to other social groups. In particular Maciejowski gives a lot of space to the peasants, showing how participation in the development of a new industry can change the current situation in the countryside, expressively pictured in *Nędza Galicji. Nafta* can be understood as a literary image of the processes described by Szczepanowski, but the peasant’s overview of the situation before the creation of oil industry is limited only to the most tangible signs of poverty. The peasants mention the overcrowding and economic emigration (which was nothing wrong, according to Szczepanowski) only in the past tense: “Kto ino mógł i miał za co, leciał do Hameryki, ciułał grosz i wracał. A wielu przepadło... Dziś jest zarobek w domu, to wielgie słowo, Hameryki nie potrzeba” (Maciejowski 1894, 1: 152).⁴⁹ On the one hand, the improvement of the financial situation is manifested by an increased consumption of goods that used to be luxurious, and on the other hand, by a falling tendency toward alcoholism and an increased attention to assets. At the same time, with increasing wealth money becomes a fetish and leads to negative changes in the mentality of the quickly enriched peasants:

Gazda mówią, że jak chłop biedny, to go do rany przyłóż. Ale od kiedy uciula, choćby stówkę, to niema się co z nim wdawać. Robi ci się z niego chciwiec, handlisz, śpikulant, co by za papierkiem w piekło poleciał. A zanim krajcar wyda, opatrzy go dwa razy (Maciejowski 1894, 2: 33).⁵⁰

The interesting thing is the question of motivation, which in Sewer’s novel pushes the peasants to work in the oilfields and to get rich. The employees do not bind their existence with the newly built oil wells on a permanent basis, but they treat the good earnings in oilfields as a way to get rich faster:

– Na cóż ciułacie?

– A na cóżby? – odpowiedział zdziwiony – na chałupę, a potem na grunt. Cóż to za chłop, co niema choćby skrawka świętej ziemi i własnego legowiska? Na starość iść pod kościół, rękę wyciągać?

Błyskawica myśli przemknęła się raptownie przez czaszkę Zygmunta (Maciejowski 1894, 2: 34).⁵¹

49 Who had the possibility and enough money, went to America, grabbed pennies and returned. And many are lost... Today we have earnings at home, it’s a great thing, there is no need to go to America.

50 Gazda [landholders in Podhale region] says that the poor peasant is all sweetness and light. But since he has grabbed even one hundred, it’s no longer worth it to take up with him. He becomes a greedy person, a tradesman, a profiteer, who would do everything for money. And before he spends a kreuzer, he would look at it twice.

51 – What do you scrimp and save the money for?

– And for what else – he answered surprised – than for a cottage and a field. What kind of man is that who does not possess even a piece of holy land and his own bed? In old age should one stay next to the church and beg?

The lightning of thoughts flashed suddenly through the skull of Zygmunt.

Maciejowski shows that working in oilfields brings a change in their material situation of peasants and, partially, in their mentality. However, it does not lead to a total change of their identity. The sudden enrichment allows them to make plans to catch up in wealth with landlords, who still designate the horizon of expectations for a peasant in the semi-feudal order. Formerly this horizon was unachievable, but with the eliminating power of money also the relationships in the countryside become more democratic.

The example of the owners of the wells is not an attractive model of life for peasants. They can appreciate the momentum and scale of activities of industrialists, their hard work among workers, their concern for employees and efforts to pay the wages timely, but, as Sewer shows, for the rural communities their fates are schema impossible to duplicate. They are newcomers, strangers, who can help in improving life conditions, but for practically-oriented peasants cultivating their own field is more attractive than the pursuit of an uncertain profit.

Whereas in the case of peasants and oilmen one can see the social change, expressed in greater mobility and democratization of relationships, in the sphere of the aristocracy – with very few exceptions – it would be difficult to find an example of similar transformations. The contacts of noblemen with industrialists are presented by Sewer in two ways – in *Nafta* the clash of industry with feudal social structure is described as a process, parallel to the individual spiritual evolution of Zygmunt. In the novel *Ponad siły* the relation of the main character with the world of the aristocracy is more complex than in the previous case and involves both the sphere of Tadeusz's feelings as well as his broad political and economic activities. The love relationship of Tadeusz and Maria is accompanied by the higher ambitions and aristocratic aspirations of the girl's father. In the eyes of the rich nobleman Tadeusz is not a proper suitor for Marynia, and he calls a partner in petroleum interests using a contemptuous term "clerk" ("oficjalista"):

Oficjaliści?!... – Żyd sprytna bestia, wybornie ich określił!... Bo i czymże oni są?... Prawda, i wydajże córkę za własnego oficjalistę, to lepiej się powiesić. I do tego najpierwszą partię w kraju!... Poradzę sobie z dziewczyną i jej adoratorem. A to skaranię pańskie z tymi oficjalistami... Takie już czasy! (Maciejowski 1900, 1: 274)⁵²

The clash with the world of the aristocracy takes place also in a public activity of Tadeusz. Representatives of this class, operating with platitudes about the need to promote "a poor country", have no appreciation for the oilmen, assuming that Galicia should remain a typical agrarian province. When Tadeusz is trying to get a loan to pay off the debt taken at the start of the business, the Red Prince says: "Powieм panu prawdę, nie lubię w naszym kraju przemysłu: tworzy proletariat, a chłopom głowy przewraca i odrywa ich od ziemi" (Maciejowski 1900, 4: 240).⁵³ The prince does not hide his anger after Tadeusz left his palace:

52 Clerks?!... The Jew, a clever beast, described them deliciously!... For what are they?... True, and marry your daughter off to your own clerk, it is better to hang yourself. And the very first match in the province!... But I will manage with the girl and her admirer. This is a real pest with these clerks... Such are the times!

53 I'll tell you the truth, I don't like industry in our country: it creates a proletariat, turns peasants' head and drags them away from the field.

Ci głupcy myślą, szeptał w gniewie książę, że ja dla pierwszego lepszego nafcjarza, który dziesięć dziur wykopał w ziemi, mam miliony! Buta tych ludzi jest wstrętna!... A jakie to harde, a jakie pewne siebie! Dawniej takich batami uczyło się rozumu i był posłuch, był spokój, była subordynacja. Dziś życie się przykrzy, i jeszcze trzeba się do nich uśmiechać, do drzwi odprowadzać!... Wszystko to robi ta podła prasa, i nie ma rady, trzeba będzie kupić piśmidło i w nim omunштukować najdowcipniejszego z pis-maków, jeżeli go nie można batami uśmiercić (Maciejowski 1900, 4: 241).⁵⁴

In this way, the anti-democratic and traditional attitude of wealthy aristocrats confirms the failure of Tadeusz's enterprises. Because of the lack of new credit he is unable to pay the debt and ultimately he is forced to sell the oilfield at a lower price. Paradoxically, in a short time one of the wells is starting to produce a huge amount of oil, and begins to give profits.

Ponad siły is not only a story about Stanisław Szczepanowski's efforts or the history of the Polish oil industry, but it is also a novel devoted to a cultural change. The events associated with the development of the oil industry are therefore an exemplification of the changes associated with modernization processes, which in the 1860s might have seemed to be a dream. At the turn of the century these changes could be seen in reality, but their introduction – about which the writers could not foresee forty years earlier – was associated with the defeat of multiple barriers, both internal and external. The former Maciejowski indicates in the dialogue of the main character with Felek:

- Już się zaczyna, rzekł spokojnie Felek. To pierwszy objaw odporu społeczeństwa, któremu niesiesz kulturę i bogactwo.
- Walczyć! zawołał z entuzjazmem młodości Tadeusz.
- Rusinów i głupiego Żyda z karczmy pokonasz od razu, jeśli ropa tryśnie, lecz wychylają się inne, potężniejsze hydry.
- Co ty nazywasz hydrą? zagadnął raptownie Tadeusz.
- Co ja nazywam hydrą? powtórzył spokojnie Feliks. Głupotę społeczeństwa, jego chciwość, zazdrość, złość, apatię, nienawiść do dobra, które będziesz mu dawał (Maciejowski 1900, 1: 28).⁵⁵

So not the strangers, but the negative features in the behaviour of individuals and the entire Polish community are the main obstacle. The battle of cultures takes place in

54 These fools think, the prince whispered in anger, that I have millions for the random oilman, who dug ten holes in the ground! The insolence of these people is awful! And their haughtiness and self-confidence! Formerly, one could knock some sense into such people with whips and there was obedience, order and subordination. Today life is getting unpleasant, and it is necessary to smile to them, and to see them out!... All of this is created by these ignoble newspapers, and there is no other option but to buy this newspaper out and rein in the most witty of these hacks, if we cannot kill him with the whips.

55 – It is starting now, said Felix quietly. This is the first symptom of society's resistance, the society which you provide with culture and wealth.
 – Fight! exclaimed Tadeusz with enthusiasm of youth.
 – You can defeat the Ruthenians and the stupid Jew from the inn immediately, after the oil gushes, but there are also other, more powerful hydras.
 – What do you call a hydra? asked Tadeusz abruptly.
 – What do I call a hydra? Feliks repeated calmly. – The stupidity of the society, its greed, jealousy, anger, apathy, hatred for the good that you will give to it.

many fields – Tadeusz is fighting for the soul of the peasants, gentry and aristocrats, and his guiding idea is to lift the province out of stagnation. In this way, the novel provides an essential supplement to *Nafta*, where action (dealing with nature, striving for industrial development) did not have such a clearly defined address. Polish culture, understood as the system of ideas specific to the given population, is still at a lower level than the culture of Germans, and the Galician gentry did not mature to the changes that bring progress.

What is therefore the forecast for progress in the Galician province? The prognosis is provided by the main characters of the novel, Maria and Tadeusz:

- Wszędzie ta kultura, wszędzie i zawsze jedno i to samo prawo pracy całych pokoleń, że aż życie się przykrzy! Co my ze sobą zrobimy?...
- Musimy milczeć, zęby zaciskać i rwać się naprzód. My mamy jeszcze jedną wielką potęgę, której brak naszym sąsiadom – bohaterstwo! Mając bohaterstwo, mamy przyszłość, kultura sama przyjdzie (Maciejowski 1900, 4: 81).⁵⁶

The end of the novel seems to confirm the latter statement. Tadeusz, as well as Stanisław Szczepanowski, was defeated in the material sphere, but his debts were paid off unselfishly by his friends, Władysław and Witold, who at the same time lost their assets. Heroism wins, though it is synonymous with material ruin. These are, according to Sewer, the costs of making changes, which are not limited only to the launching of several oilfields, but include a transformation of the whole social life.

The second type of conditions affecting the development of the industry in a negative way is associated with the position of Galicia within Austria-Hungary. The acquisition of Tadeusz's oilfield by the Austrians, as well as a case of forgery, which allowed the Austrian refineries to import cheaper raw material from the Caucasus, and the reluctance to lower the taxes on rail transport of Galician oil – these events, taking place in the novel *Ponad siły*, can be understood as confirmation of the colonial nature of the Austrian government and the lack of interest of German-speaking politicians in the development of the north-eastern part of the Empire. Additionally, these actions are part of a broader context of the discussions on civilization, where the racial factor played a decisive role. However, in purely economic terms the history of the Galician oil industry, portrayed by Maciejowski, indicates that the economic development of the peripheral region is dependent not only on its own wealth, but also on an entire network of conditions, out of which the relationship to the centre is of great importance.

The success of the periphery?

In 1872 in Lviv an anonymous brochure *Galicja i wystawa powszechna w Wiedniu 1873* (*Galicia and the World Exhibition in Vienna 1873*) was issued. The intention of the author was to draw the attention of readers to the World Exhibitions, which from the time of the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace in London began to play the role of the show of might. One can read on the first pages of the book:

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- 56 – This culture is everywhere, everywhere and always one and the same law of labour throughout the generations, so that life is getting unpleasant! What do we do with ourselves?...
- We have to remain silent, set our teeth and stride forward. We have a great power, which our neighbours do not possess – heroism! Having heroism, we have the future, and culture will come itself.

[...] na tym placu wystawy staczają się walki i odnoszą zwycięstwa, mające wpływ na losy całych ludności. I tak jak w dawnych wiekach przegrana bitwa oddawała w jasyr i niewolę rodzin krocie zwycięzcom, tak i dziś pominięcie lub odrzucenie jakiego wyrobu lub przemysłu na wystawie powszechnej, a uwieńczenie innego pogrąża wyrobników pierwszego w nędzę i ubóstwo, a okrywa drugich sławą i bogactwem, oddając szczęśliwym zwycięzcom niejako monopol tego przemysłu w ręce (*Galicja i wystawa powszechna 1872*: 5–6).⁵⁷

The author gripes that during the next year the World Exhibition in Vienna Galicia will not have an admirable representation, because the potential domestic exhibitors, with a view of placing their products next to the producers from other lands belonging to the Habsburgs and other European countries, were afraid of their exhibitions going badly; hence the Galician team was to remain small. But the author acknowledges that

[...] dziś ani fabryk, ani przemysłu nie mamy, któryby mógł choć w części stanąć obok tego, co ościennie wystawia kraje, a nawet co sąsiednie wystawia prowincje, to jest fabryk i przemysłu, powszechnie dziś jako taki uważanego. Porównując nasze wyroby skromne i prawie pierwotne z przepychem materiału i formy, błyszczącymi wyrobami ościennych krajów, przychodzi każdemu na myśl, że byłoby niekorzystnym rzeczy te obok tamtych wystawić (*Galicja i wystawa powszechna 1872*: 7).⁵⁸

Beside the fear of embarrassment, the author also indicates other causes of a weak interest in the exhibition: a traditional lack of confidence in the positive effects of participation in the event, unwillingness to bear the costs and the threat of new taxes. As a result,

[...] Galicja nieświeźnie uzbrojona stanie do tej walki rozumu, pracy, wytrwałości i nauki, odbywającej się na placu wystawy powszechnej w Wiedniu r. 1873 [...] Łatwo więc i dalej przewidzieć, że i pożytek [...] zewnętrzny dla kraju, będzie niestety drobny tylko, oby nawet wrażenie, które wystawa galicyjska zagranicą sprawi, nie było dla nas szkodliwym, oby nie okazało jaskrawo nieudolność naszą nawet korzystania z tego, co natura tak hojnie po kraju naszym rozsiała (*Galicja i wystawa powszechna 1872*: 10–11).⁵⁹

57 [...] on this exhibition space battles and the victories, which have an impact on the fate of the entire population, take place. And just as in the old ages the lost battle gave to the winners all families into captivity and slavery, so today the omission or rejection of the product or industry at the universal exhibition, and the honourable distinction of another one plunges the manufacturers of the first one into misery and poverty, and bestows on the second both fame and wealth, giving the lucky winners a kind of monopoly of industry into their hands.

58 [...] today we have no factories, nor we have industry which would be able even in part to stand next to what neighbouring countries or even neighbouring provinces will show, that is the factories and industry, widely considered as such today. Comparing our simple and almost primitive products with lavish materials and forms, glittering in the products of neighbouring countries, everyone has to think that it would be unfavourable to show these things next to them.

59 [...] Galicia will take part not armed very well in this fight of reason, work, perseverance and science, in the exhibition square in Vienna in 1873 [...] So it is easy to foresee that [...] the external benefit for the province will be unfortunately very small, or even the impression of the Galician exhibition abroad will be harmful for us; hopefully it will not show clearly our inefficiency in using what nature sowed so generously in our country.

These quoted excerpts from the brochure not only provide insight into the weak interest in the planned exhibition in Vienna, but also are valuable examples of the phraseology used to describe issues related to the economy. Above all its confrontational character is emphasised, but the rivalry occurs mainly in the national dimension and is not used for the construction of individual fortunes. Also worthy of noticing is the aspect of the external image: the residents of Galicia, looking at themselves through the eyes of the others, feel shame because of their own deprivation. According to the text, this feeling does not have to be a reaction to the actual opinions of foreign commentators, but takes the form of an internal complex of backwardness.

In the same text the author shows also, from the perspective of the next exhibitions, the positive way of self-presentation of the province. Interestingly, he mentions it apart from the issue of industrialization of the province, but instead focuses on a better use of the traditional wealth of Galicia: forests, crops or handicrafts. Therefore no costly investments will make Galicia a land capable of competing with other countries of the monarchy or whole Europe, but rather skilful management, an idea already known from the text of Supiński.

In 1894 in Lviv's Strytskyi Park a General National Exhibition, the largest exhibition in the Polish history of the nineteenth century that presented economic and cultural achievements of the province, took place. Its opening was accompanied by a completely different mood than in the past. The most important Lviv's Polish-language newspapers welcomed it with genuine enthusiasm. In "Gazeta Narodowa", which on this occasion doubled its volume, its editor, Aleksander Vogel, wrote:

Patrząc [...] dziś na nagromadzone na obszernym placu Wystawy, która za godzin kilkanaście uroczyście otwartą zostanie, wyniki naszych usiłowań, – z dumą możemy sobie śmiało powiedzieć, że tej pozostałej nam broni i tego jedyne go puklerza, – chyba nie gorsza używaliśmy, że jakkolwiek nie osiągnęliśmy szczytu a może i w pół drogi doń nie jesteśmy, że jakkolwiek w staraniach około postępu rozwoju ekonomicznego, ciągle jeszcze musimy podążać za innymi narodami, dopędzając je, – to jednak wśród nad wyraz trudnych warunków nie ustaliśmy ani na chwilę w ciągłej, wytrwałej pracy, z działaliśmy stosunkowo już wiele i da Bóg resztę z działamy (Vogel 1894: 3).⁶⁰

The correspondents of "Dziennik Polski" or "Gazeta Lwowska" (*Dziennik Polski* 1894, *Gazeta Lwowska* 1894) wrote in a similar vein. An exhibition guide, released on this occasion, shows perfectly that the organization of the exhibition was seen as a success:

Z różnych stron kraju przybywają do Lwowa gromady dzieci szkolnych ze swymi nauczycielami, włościanie z wójtami, rękodzielnicy, ażeby obejrzyć Wystawę krajową. [...] Wszyscy chcieliby tu jak najwięcej obejrzyć, jak najwięcej nauczyć się. Każda chwila jest

⁶⁰ Looking [...] today at the results of our efforts, accumulated in a large square of the exhibition that in a couple of hours will be solemnly opened, we can proudly say that the rest of our weapons and our only defence we used in a good way, though we did not reach new heights and maybe we are not even half way to them, though in our efforts which went into the progress of economic development we still need to follow other peoples, chasing them, so despite the difficult conditions we did not stop for a moment in our continuous, relentless work; we have done relatively a lot, and with God's help we will do more.

droga, a tu tyle różnych pięknych i ciekawych rzeczy chwyta za oczy! (*Mały przewodnik*: 4)⁶¹

In fact, the organizational momentum and the diversity of presentations at the exhibition even today can be admirable: guests could visit 129 pavilions containing the exhibits grouped into 34 sections. So it should not be a surprise that the interest in the exhibition was huge: over the course of a few months it was visited by about 1.15 million people (the population of the city was ten times smaller) (Purchla 1995: 6). Jacek Purchla points out that the significance of Lviv's exhibition for Galicia is obvious: in addition to the dimension of the patriotic manifestation the exhibition "stała się też symbolem zwycięstwa idei pracy organicznej i postępu gospodarczego w Galicji – najbardziej zacofanej prowincji ziem polskich" (Purchla 1995: 7).⁶²

It seems, however, that its value lies elsewhere. The new tone in the press statements accompanying the event deserves attention: the tone of pride because of achievements and the opportunity to act. An overview of the departments of national manufacturing strengthened the visitors in the opinion about the correctness of the chosen direction of work and the ability to escape from the vicious circle of impotence. This is why at this point even the backwardness mentioned in relation to the West is not discussed with fatalistic resignation but with confidence in the possibility of national rebirth. Undoubtedly, the faith in one's own strength was not shared by all the publicists (*Czas* 1894: 2), but definitely it dominated in the press articles. It seems that the prevailing opinions had a well-balanced character, and commentators managed to avoid both repetition of the martyred platitudes about the misery of the province, as well as excessive megalomania.

The economic peripherality of Galicia in the second half of the 19th century did not seem to observers as something unusual, and even if this fact was inconvenient, they did not try to undermine the established hierarchy of nations. The meaning of the facts was clear: the railway of Charles Louis has been brought to Lviv at the same time when the world's first section of subway was built between Paddington and Farringdon Street in London, and more than a quarter of a century later, when the exhibition was opened in Lviv, in Paris the Eiffel Tower had been standing for five years already as the symbol of industrial power of France. There is no doubt that the process of modernization came to Galicia with delay, but the geopolitical situation in Poland and in the Western states was also completely different. Suffice it to say that in less than two weeks after the opening of the first line of the London underground the Poles started a new uprising on the territory occupied by the Russians.

61 From different parts of the country groups of children with teachers, peasants with mayors, craftsmen, come to Lviv to see the exhibition. [...] Everyone would like to see here as much as possible, and to learn as much as possible. Every moment is precious, as there are so many beautiful and interesting things which are eye-catching!

62 Became a symbol of the victory of the idea of organic work and economic progress in Galicia, the most backward Polish land.

In the literary description of the problem of underdevelopment of Galicia, as we have seen, the admiration of modernity was not common. Usually, while discussing economic issues, writers focused on the condemnation of traditional national faults, promoting moderation and accusing the guilty of the poor economic situation, which does not necessarily meant being in raptures over modern inventions. Significantly, it was not envy at more fortunate nations that dictated the accusatory tone--some writers could appreciate the value of progress, and the acts of Western engineers were viewed with sincere admiration (*Dziennik Polski* 1889) – but rather a genuine concern about the fate of their own province. It seems that it was the source of the positivistic dreams of Bałucki, the recriminations of Rogosz and the novels of Maciejowski. Each of those writers was looking for the program of national development and an escape from peripherality, though at the same time, none of them could find an effective remedy for Galician backwardness. Each of them faced in fact similar problems: the backward mentality of the social elites, an unfavourable social structure, and external, i.e., coming from the Austrian centre, indifference to the development of the lands lying to the north of the Carpathian Mountains.

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