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Alienation and Powerlessness: Adam Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and Chopin's *Ballades.*

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Abstract

Music scholars have long been trying to determine the major influences on the *Ballades* of Fryderyk Chopin. Some, like Karol Berger, have pointed to ideological influences of the Polish emigration in Paris, while others, like James Parakilas, have given credit to the generic characteristics of the European literary ballad. In my own view, however, the most salient extra-musical factor in the background to Chopin's *Ballades* are *Ballady*, a series of poems by the 19th century Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz.

After Chopin's death, Mickiewicz's *Ballady* were frequently associated with Chopin's *Ballades*, and in the first chapter I demonstrate this by examining the reception history of these works. In the next chapter I analyze the ideology of the Polish emigration in Paris, including prominent themes of alienation, powerlessness, morbid anxiety, pilgrimage, and nostalgia, which were used by that expatriate society to identify itself. Finally, in the third chapter, I trace analogies between these themes and their manifestations in Mickiewicz's *Ballady*. This analysis of Mickiewicz's poems forms the basis of my interpretation of Chopin's *Second Ballade*, where I discuss how certain textual and thematic features of the poems taken as a group can be mapped onto the form and musical discourse of the piano piece.

In sum, although the associations between specific poems and Chopin's *Ballades* have been made by many authors, no one has distilled a single narrative archetype from the group of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* to apply to Chopin's works.

Resumé

Les musicologues ont longtemps essayés de determiner les influences majeures sur les *Ballades* de Fryderyk Chopin. Certains, comme Karol Berger, ont démontrés les influences ideologiques de la communauté d'immigrés polonais à Paris. D'autres, tel que James Parakilas, ont démontrés les influences de ballades litéraires de la grande tradition européenne. Toutefois, d'apres mes recherches, l'influence la plus evidente sur les *Ballades* de Chopin vient de *Ballady*, une série de poèmes d'Adam Mickiewicz, un poète polonais du 19th siècle.

Après la mort de Chopin, les *Ballady* de Mickiewicz ont été fréquemment associées aux *Ballades* de Chopin. Dans le premier chapitre, je le démontre en examinant la réception de ces oeuvres. Dans le chapitre suivant, j'analyse l'idéologie de la communauté des immigrés polonais à Paris, y compris les thèmes prominantes de l'alienation, de l'impuissance, de la morbidité, du pélerinage et de la nostalgie. Finalement, dans le troisiéme chapitre, j'établie une analogie entre les differentes expressions de ces thèmes dans les *Ballady* de Mickiewicz. Cette analyse des poèmes de Mickiewicz est la base de mon interpretation de la *Deuxième Ballade*. Je démontre comment certains caracteristiques textuelles et thèmatiques de ces poèmes peuvent etre traduit dans la forme musicale d'une composition pour piano.

Jusqu'à maintenant, personne n'a trouvé un rapport direct entre les *Ballady* de Mickiewicz et les *Ballades* de Chopin, même si certains auteurs ont fait des remarques sur les similarités entre certains oeuvres.

Acknowledgments

This thesis presents research conducted at McGill University under the guidance of Professor Steven Huebner, whose advice and insightful comments helped me enormously to pursue this topic and to whom I wish to express my sincere gratitude. I am also very grateful to Professor Tamara Levitz for her interest and encouragement. Sincere thanks go to my friends and fellow graduate students Michael Free, Robert Rowat and Lisa Christensen for their suggestions and help in editing. I would also like to thank Piotr Borowiec for English/French translation. Also, I wish to thank my late piano teacher Jan Gorzelany for awakening my appreciation for music. Finally my gratitude goes to my husband Jacek Stachowiak for his help in research, patience, and support.

Preface

"Wretched am I amid the spiteful herd:
I weep--they jeer at me;
I speak--they cannot understand a word;
I see--they do not see![1]

This poem by Adam Mickiewicz fascinated me since my high school days. It expresses intense and disturbing emotions--alienation, powerlessness, and morbid anxiety--all easily connected to the ideology of the Polish emigration in Paris in the 1830s. Only recently has this ideology been linked to Chopin's narrative works by Karol Berger in his essay "Chopin's Ballade Op.23 and the Revolution of the Intellectuals."[2] In this thesis I further explore the ideology of Polish emigration and its influence on Chopin. I propose a connection between this ideology and a narrative archetype expressed in Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and finally, I analyze its manifestations in the music of Chopin's *Second Ballade*.

In his essay Berger introduces the extremely interesting notion of a relationship between "the temporal structures of Chopin's musical narrative and the historical narrative in terms of which the composer's contemporaries established their identity."[3] This narrative, according to Berger, "provided the community Chopin identified with most closely, the Polish emigration in Paris in the 1830s and 1840s, with their sense of who they were [which] was the story of 'Exodus,' its fundamental structure of past enslavement, present exile and future rebirth."[4] The self-image of exiled Poles, according to Maria Janion and Maria Żmigrodzka, was that of orphanage, pilgrimage, imprisonment, uprootedness, and homelessness. For Berger, this self-understanding was highly relevant

[1] Adam Mickiewicz, *Romantyczność*, translated by George Rapall Noyes and Jewell Parish, in Adam Mickiewicz: Selected Poetry and Prose (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1955), pp. 27-28.
[2] Karol Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op.23 and the Revolution of the Intellectuals," in Chopin Studies 2, ed. John Rink and Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 72-83.
[3] Ibid., p. 77.
[4] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

to Chopin's listeners, nationalist Poles and cosmopolitan Parisians alike. The nationalistic origin of Chopin's *Ballades* is also suggested by James Parakilas, who in his Ballads Without Words observes:

> Chopin might well have felt that dance music alone could not express all he wished to express as a Polish musician. . . . he begun experimenting with new means of treating Polish subjects in piano music. . . . They were, in fact, "songs without words," "stories in sound" for the piano, works in which the cosmopolitan medium conceals a national "text." . . . But the remarkable thing about the Ballade is precisely that its nationalism is not secret; every nineteenth-century European would have understood it.[5]

Nevertheless, although Berger and Parakilas agree about the nationalistic origins of the *Ballades*, their interpretations of the "tale" behind the music are quite different. Berger proposes the construct of the Polish emigration's self-understanding--a story of promise of return from exile--as a narrative model for the *Ballades*, while Parakilas argues that literary ballads of a large European tradition provide a clue to the narrative of Chopin's music. In this thesis I propose a more specific model for Chopin's *Ballades*, Mickiewicz's *Ballady*.

My interpretation of the "program" for Chopin's *Ballades* ties up several arguments made by Berger and Parakilas: as a manifesto of Polish literary Romanticism, Mickiewicz's *Ballady* reflect both the ideology of Polish intellectuals and the European tradition of the genre. My understanding of Chopin's narrative as a reflection of Mickiewicz's poems attempts to avoid some of the problems raised by Berger's and Parakilas' theories. For example, Berger's notion of "ideological narrative" seems to be too general as a "program" for Chopin's *Ballades* (why would the composer's ideological identity influence *Ballades* more than any other genre), and it does not account for the extremely unusual title of *Ballade* which Chopin was the first to use in his compositions. At the same time, Parakilas' theory about ballads of the European tradition as a source of narrative strategies in Chopin's pieces also seems too general and, to a certain extent, weakens his claim of the nationalistic origins of Chopin's works.

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[5] James Parakilas, Ballads Without Words: Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental *Ballade* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1992), pp. 22-23.

After Chopin's death Mickiewicz's *Ballady* were frequently associated with Chopin's *Ballades*, and my first step is to show this by examining the reception history of Chopin's works. Many listeners of various generations related Chopin's *Ballades* to specific poems by Mickiewicz; these interpretations of the works influence many "readings" of the *Ballades*, creating an important "acquired," composite meaning in the compositions. Thus, in chapter one I consider statements of Chopin's contemporaries--other composers and pianists, music critics, Chopin's pupils, and his friends; pianists of various generations; Chopin's biographers; and contemporary musicologists.

But what of the cultural context for the actual composition of the *Ballades*? The next step in my study of the *Ballades* consists of the analysis of the ideology of the Polish emigration in Paris in the 1830s. In the second chapter I discuss the origins and philosophical background of this ideology, and I identify its most prominent, recurring themes of alienation, powerlessness, morbidity, orphanage, and nostalgia. In this part of my study I also consider Chopin's views on Polish expatriate literature and program music, concentrating on the relationship between Mickiewicz and Chopin, their common experience and beliefs, and certain parallels in their work.

In the third chapter I trace common characteristics between the ideology of the Great Emigration and the ideology manifest in the collection of all nine of Mickiewicz's *Ballady*. These analogies include manifestations of the themes of alienation (protagonists who are lonely and misunderstood, a narrator who is impassive and impersonal), powerlessness (a principal character who is transformed from being an agent into a more passive figure, and whose fate is decided regardless of his actions within a pre-destined world), nostalgia (for a distant past or non-existent world), and morbidity (supernatural characters). My thematic and structural analysis of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* as a group establishes a narrative archetype for the narrative in Chopin's *Ballades*. Thus I analyze common themes of the poems (alienation, powerlessness, morbidity, pilgrimage and nostalgia), their subjects, the role of the narrator and the characters, and the common elements of the *Ballady's* scenery. In terms of the structural analysis of the poems, I address patterns of repetition (number of lines per stanza, number of stanzas in each *Ballada*), as well as metric and syllabic structure of the texts.

This analysis of the collection of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and its ideological background forms the basis of my interpretation of meaning in Chopin's Second *Ballade*. In the second part of the third chapter I show how certain textual and thematic features of the poems taken as a group can be mapped on to the musical form and discourse of the piano piece. I analyze the *Second Ballade* drawing upon hermeneutic tools supplied by Parakilas and Berger and adding some of my own: the themes as dramatic personae, thematic transformations and combinations of themes (development of the narrative), the significance of generic mixture (*siciliano* and etude, waltz signifying supernatural Otherness in the ballad world), the narrative prominence of a descending semitone motive (Fate or destiny), tonal structure (tonal alienation of the first theme, homelessness of the two-key scheme), meter and rhythm (6/8 as narrative meter, iambic patterns as authority of the Narrator), overall three-part form (three stages of narrative), and a tendency toward end-weighted structure.

In sum, although the associations between specific Mickiewicz's poems and Chopin's *Ballades* have been made by many authors, no one has distilled a single narrative archetype from the group of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* to apply to Chopin's works. In this thesis I demonstrate that Mickiewicz's *Ballady* should be considered as a significant source of Chopin's inspiration.

Chapter 1

The Reception History of Chopin's *Ballades*

Reception history is one of the most interesting issues addressed by modern musicology, and no less so for Chopin than for many other composers. Dramatic shifts in aesthetics, strong national sentiments, and various political perspectives over the past century and a half have all contributed to diverse, and often contrary, interpretations of Chopin's works. A detailed study of these interpretations, their backgrounds and significance would represent many major cultural and ideological developments in Europe during that time. This, however, is well beyond the scope of the present chapter. Instead, as an introduction to my study of the *Ballades*, I intend to concentrate on the reception history of these works; also, I will emphasize their connection, argued by many authors, to Mickiewicz's *Ballady*.[1]

The evidence concerning the connection between Chopin's *Ballades* and Mickiewicz's *Ballady* is very significant in the context of my study. First, it provides historical background for my own interpretation of the collection of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* as exhibiting parallels to Chopin's narrative. Second, it forms in itself one level of understanding of the works, in which the various interpretations of Mickiewicz's influence affect all of the present and future readings of the *Ballades*. This post-modern notion of an existence of many possible meanings in a musical work is validated by the multiplicity of diverse interpretations of the *Ballades* over time. Since these meanings

[1] I intentionally use an original Polish word *Ballady* in reference to Mickiewicz's poems, and English term *Ballades* in reference to Chopin's compositons. Mickiewicz's poems are not generally known to English speaking readers and, as poems, they are closely related to the original language; therefore, I decided to refer to these works as *Ballady*. Chopin's *Ballades* are an important part of musical repertoire, and therefore should be referred to by their proper French title. This distinction lets the reader to easily distinguish between poems and piano works. That notwithstanding, it is important to notice that in Polish both poems and piano works have identical title of *Ballady* (*Ballada* for a single work).

result from contextual readings of the works, they were influenced, implicitly or explicitly, by past interpretations creating these contexts. Instead of a fixed meaning created by an understanding of a musical text, a musical work has multiple meanings created by contextual interpretations. Thus, reception history becomes not only important from a historical point of view, but is also relevant to any modern understanding of a composition. This notion of contextual meaning is acknowledged by Jim Samson:

> In its afterlife a musical work threads its way through many different social and cultural formations, attaching itself to them in many different ways, adapting its own semblance and in the process changing theirs. The work remains at least notionally [*sic*] the same object--at any rate it is the product of a singular creative act--but its manner of occupying the social landscape changes constantly.[2]

Whether Chopin consciously used Mickiewicz's *Ballady* as a model for his *Ballades* is beside the point here.[3] It is the fact that for the past hundred and fifty years these works have been linked together that matters. This connection, passed down from Schumann to modern day listeners and performers, forms one distinctive level of meaning in the *Ballades*. Thus, regardless of its origins, the link between Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and Chopin's works becomes relevant through its long connection in receivers' consciousness; it has been known to them and it has influenced their understanding of the music. As Samson observes, in discussing the French criticism of Chopin's music: "The implication of a hidden emotional content is clear, and it becomes part of the ambiance of the music for later generations."[4] The extra-musical content of the *Ballades* is particularly apparent in demotic culture (manifested by generations of listeners and performers convinced of its existence), but is also manifest at other levels of meaning. That is to say, a semantic understanding of the extra-musical model may provide an explanation, or at least a "thick" context, for the narrative qualities, and unusual musical syntax of the *Ballades*.

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[2] Jim Samson, "Chopin reception: theory, history, analysis," in Chopin Studies 2 ed. John Rink and Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 2.
[3] I will address the question of Chopin's possible intent in chapter two.
[4] Jim Samson, "Chopin reception: theory, history, analysis," p. 3.

Of all of Chopin's compositions, the *Ballades* are particularly interesting in the light of reception history. Their unusual generic title invited extra-musical interpretations since the earliest reviews of the works, while strong nationalistic connotations of the genre itself opened possibilities for various nationalistic appropriations. The reception history of the *Ballades* reflects and intensifies the problematic issues in Chopin's reception in general.

The evidence from reception history is highly problematic. Each interpretation presents a subjective reading of a work influenced by author's personal agenda, education, and is strongly affected by author's national background and even state of mind. Most important, it also reflects the aesthetics and ideology of the time. For instance, the early reception of the Mazurkas in Poland viewed them as extremely nationalistic by emphasizing their familiarity, simplicity, and native character; at the same time in France they were considered exotic, due to their irregularities and strangeness. Or to take another example: Chopin himself was a national hero during the Polish fight for independence, symbolizing the character and strength of a nation, while communist propaganda portrayed him as a composer who was interested mostly in folk music and preoccupied with unjust situation of Polish peasants (this is probably as far as we can get from "Chopin the salon composer").[5] Jim Samson discusses some of Chopin's profiles in his innovative essay "Chopin reception: theory, history, analysis"; he demonstrates that at the same time (the second half of the nineteenth century) Chopin was viewed as a "poet of the piano" by French critics, composer of the classical canon by German publishers, a revolutionary modernist by Russian composers, and a "drawing room" composer by English amateurs.[6] As these profiles show, nationality has strongly influenced Chopin reception. This is most evident in the case of Polish criticism, where the national aspect of Chopin's works has been always emphasized in spite of aesthetic and ideological shifts over past century and a half. However, nothing can compare to the manifestations of

[5] Chopin reception in nineteenth century Poland is discussed by Zofia Chechlińska in her essay "Chopin reception in nineteenth century Poland" (in The Cambridge Companion to Chopin, ed. Jim Samson, pp. 206-222); this nationalistic appropriation of Chopin is also presented in Paderewski's discourse quoted later in this chapter. With regard to communist appropriations of Chopin, I remember reading short stories of "Chopin, the folk composer" in primary school in Poland.

[6] Jim Samson, "Chopin reception: theory, history, analysis," pp. 1-17.

nationalistic fervor in Heinrich Schenker and Ignacy Jan Paderewski, two musicians born within eight years from each other, in the same region of Europe and educated in Vienna in the 1880s.[7] Motivating Chopin's adoption into German music canon, Schenker wrote:

> If the writer elevates the name of Frederic Chopin for inclusion in the roll of great German masters, this is because, despite the fact that his master-works do not stem directly from Germanity but are indirectly bound to it, he wishes them, too, to be accessible as a source of the highest operations of genius, and in this most exalted sense also to place them newly at the service of the German youth. . . . For the profundity with which nature has endowed him, Chopin belongs more to Germany than to Poland.[8]

Schenker's comments are countered by the equally strong, nationalistic arguments of Paderewski, who classified Chopin's music as purely Polish, if not anti-Germanic:

> The average Polish listener, unfamiliar with the art of music, hears the masterpieces of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven with indifference, at times even with impatience. . . . his attention wanders and strays amid the marble forms of beautiful but German Sonata; . . .
> But let Chopin's voice begin to speak and our Polish listener changes immediately. His hearing becomes keen, his attention concentrated; . . . Be it the dancing lilt of his native Mazurka, the Nocturne's melancholy, the crisp swing of the Krakówiak: be it the mystery of the Prelude, the majestic stride of a Polonaise: be it an Etude, vivid, surprising: a Ballade, epic and tumultuous: or a Sonata, noble and heroic: he understands all, feels all, because it is all his, all Polish . . . Once more his native air enfolds his being, and spread before him lies the landscape of his home . . .[9]

Paderewski's rhetoric is characteristic of the period of the creation of the myth of Chopin as a symbol of the nation in the Polish reception. More interestingly for present purposes however, is that these claims of Schenker and Paderewski confirm the theory of a complex of possible meanings. If it is possible to see the Mazurkas both as familiar and exotic, and Chopin as both Polish national hero and "belonging more to Germany than to Poland," or Chopin the salon composer and Chopin the folk composer, then it comes as

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[7] Schenker and Paderewski belonged to the same generation (Paderewski was born in 1860 and Schenker in 1868), and they were born in the same region of Europe (Paderewski in Kuryłówka in Podolia, Schenker in Podhajce in Galicia).

[8] As quoted by Jim Samson, in "Chopin reception: theory, history, analysis," p. 7.

[9] Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Chopin: A Discourse, translated from Polish by Laurence Alma Tadema (London: W. Adlington, 1911), pp. 16-18.

no surprise to encounter completely opposite readings of the *Ballades* in spite of their unchanging musical text. Within the reception of the *Ballades*, two Chopin archetypes are the most relevant: "Chopin the poet" and "Chopin the nationalist composer" (or "Chopin the patriot" whose music symbolizes "guns buried in flowers" for "the mighty autocrat of the North").[10] Both of these archetypes repeat themselves in most readings of the *Ballades*.

The following presentation of the reception of the *Ballades* is by no means exhaustive. I intend to show general trends regarding the understanding of the *Ballades* over the past hundred and fifty years rather than simply compile an anthology of critical writing. Even though nationalistic and archetypal interpretations of the *Ballades* are very interesting, I present this review of reception of the *Ballades* chronologically, in order to show the origins and evolution of concepts, as well as ideological changes characteristic of certain time periods and their influence on the understanding of the *Ballades*. Also, although it is very difficult to precisely identify major divisions in reception history, the main aesthetic shifts between Romantic, formalist and post-modernist approaches to art all manifest themselves in the reception of Chopin's works. During the course of this reception, the aesthetic evolution from the extensive use of programmatic signifiers in the Romantic and post-Romantic period gives place to de-contextualization and the analytical approach of the formalist era, and finally leads to the notion of multiple meanings in our own time.

The tone of the Romantic reception of the *Ballades* was created by Chopin's contemporaries--most notably Schumann, Liszt and the music critics of the *Gazette musicale de Paris*--and further established by Chopin's early biographers such as Kleczyński, Niecks, and Huneker. The Romantic reception was characterized by attempts to describe, and even explain musical works in terms of extra-musical associations. With respect to the *Ballades*, most authors classified them as "stories in sound" or "musical tales," thereby emphasizing the narrative quality of the music. The semantic content of

[10] Robert Schumann, On Music and Musicians, translated by Paul Rosenfeld (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952), p. 132.

these "tales" was often linked to poetry, national suffering, and, more specifically, to various poems of Mickiewicz's *Ballady*, which were cited as a source of Chopin's narrative with an increasing degree of authority by the Romantic writers (up to arbitrary statements by Huneker and Hadden). The nationalistic reception of the *Ballades* was established, also within the Romantic tradition, particularly in Poland, where they were considered to represent one the most nationally inflicted of Chopin's compositions (the tone of Paderewski's impassioned speech serves as a good example of this).

Chopin composed the *Ballades* in 1835, 1839, 1841, and 1842.[11] Two of the earliest reactions to the *Ballades* are contained in Schumann's writings: the first of these can be found in Schumann's diary entry of September 12, 1836,[12] following Chopin's visit to Schumann's house on that day, the second in Schumann's letter to Kappelmeister Heinrich Dorn in Riga written two days later.[13] During the meeting in Leipzig Chopin played a number of pieces for Schumann, which included some Mazurkas, some Etudes op.25, his *First Ballade* and an early version of the *Second Ballade.*[14] In his letter to Dorn, Schumann wrote of Chopin's visit:

> The day before yesterday, just after I had received your letter and was going to answer it, who should enter?--Chopin. This was a great pleasure. We passed a very happy day together and yesterday we held an after-celebration. ... I have a new *Ballade* by Chopin [in G minor, Op.23]. It appears to me the work which shows most genius; and I told him that I liked it the best of all his works. After

[11] These dates correspond to final versions of each work. The *First Ballade* (op.23), dedicated to baron de Stockhausen, was composed in 1831, revised and published in 1836 (by Schlesinger in Paris, by Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig, and by Wessel in London). The *Second Ballade* (op.38), dedicated to Robert Schumann, was composed in 1836, and revised and published in 1840 (by Troupenac in Paris, by Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig, and by Wessel in London). The *Third Ballade* (op.47), dedicated to Pauline de Noailles, was composed in 1841 and published in the same year by Schlesinger in Paris, and by Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig, and in 1842 by Wessel in London. The *Fourth Ballade* (op.52), dedicated to baroness de Rothschild, was composed in 1842 and published in 1843 by Schlesinger in Paris, and by Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig, and in 1845 by Wessel in London.

[12] This entry from Schumann's diary ("In the morning, Chopin...'His *Ballade* I like best of all.' I am very glad of that; I am very glad of that...") is quoted in Jean Jacques Eigeldinger's Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils, ed. Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 268.

[13] Apparently, it was during this visit that Chopin told Schumann that he was inspired to compose the *Ballades* by Mickiewicz's poems; this statement by Schumann is quoted by most of later authors and it is a source of all later theories as to the connection between Chopin's *Ballades* and Mickiewicz's poems.

[14] According to Zieliński (in Chopin: Życie i Droga Twórcza, p. 434), Chopin played only a sketch-like version of the Andantino section of the *Second Ballade* for Schumann on that day.

> long meditation, he said very feelingly: 'I am glad of that, for it is the one which I prefer also."[15]

Thus, from the very beginning the *First Ballade* met with admiration of a great contemporary Romantic, which was probably related to both the originality of the music as well as the novelty of the genre and its literary connotations. However, it was in his 1841 review of the *Second Ballade* that Schumann introduced his testimony of Chopin admitting to be inspired by Mickiewicz's poems in composing the *Ballades*. This statement of Schumann's is repeated by most of Chopin's early biographers, and it began a series of increasingly flowery and detailed descriptions of a relationship between the poems and piano pieces, which soon included specific titles of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and analyses of pictorial depiction of their contents in Chopin's music. In his review Schumann wrote:

> We must direct attention to the ballade as a most remarkable work. Chopin has already written one composition of the same name--one of his wildest and most original compositions; the new one is different, as a work of art inferior to the first, but equally fantastic and inventive. Its impassioned episodes seem to have been inserted afterwards. I recollect very well that when Chopin played the ballade here, it ended in F major; now it closes in A minor. At that time he also mentioned that certain poems of Mickiewicz had suggested his ballade to him. On the other hand, a poet might easily be inspired to find words to his music; it stirs one profoundly.[16]

Unfortunately, Schumann is somewhat vogue in that he gives us no more specific information than "some poems by Mickiewicz"; on the other hand, he authoritatively quotes Chopin as being inspired by Mickiewicz's poems.

Even without reference to Mickiewicz's poems, the *First Ballade* suggested some kind of underlying story to Gottfried Wilhelm Fink, the editor of the *Allgemeine*

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[15] As quoted by William Murdoch, in Chopin: His Life (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1971), p. 189.

[16] Robert Schumann, On Music and Musicians, p. 143. The key sentence of this excerpt, dealing with Mickiewicz's poems as inspiration for Chopin's *Ballades* is mistranslated here; in the original version of Schumann's review it reads *Er sprach damals auch davon, das er zu seinen Balladen durch einige Gedichte von Mickiewicz angeregt worden sei* (Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker, vol.II, p. 32), which should be translated as "...he was inspired to write his *Ballades* by some poems of Mickiewicz." This difference is of crucial importance, since it indicates that the *Ballades* in general (or at least the *First* and *Second Ballades* as the only compositions written up to date) were inspired by Mickiewicz's poetry instead of the *Second Ballade* only.

Musikalische Zeitung. In his January 1837 review of the *Ballade*, Fink noticed: "We have songs without words; why shouldn't we have ballads without words as well? Anyway, the newer music loves to compose stories in sound."[17] Fink's "stories in sound" were quickly related to some kind of a poetic content in French reviews of the *Ballades*; an anonymous critic of *La France musicale* wrote in 1842: "[he] is above all a poet, a sensitive poet who places poetry at the forefront of everything,"[18] while in the same year Maurice Bourges of *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* wrote of the *Third Ballade*:

> Here we find him giving vent to his unfettered imagination in an unusually grandiose way. An invigorating warmth, a rare vitality permeate the happy succession of phrases, as harmonious as they are melodious. It is poetry in translation, but a superior translation made through sound alone.[19]

Here the evolution of Romantic aesthetic lets Bourges not only align the *Ballade* with poetry, but to claim superiority of musical expression of "the poetic" above the means of literary expression.

Meanwhile, an open letter to Chopin by the French poet Félicien Mallefille, published in the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* of September 9, 1838, provides an early example of nationalist interpretation of the *Ballades*. Describing the reaction of Chopin's audience of selected friends listening to either *First* or *Second Ballade*,[20] Mallefille wrote:

> . . . we all fell into a profound daydream . . . What did we thus dream about, then, all together . . . ? I cannot say it; since everyone sees in the music, as in the clouds, different things. But seeing our friend the Sceptic [Delacroix?], . . . I have imagined that he must have daydreamed of murmuring streams and of gloomy farewells exchanged in dark tree-lined paths; while the old Believer [Mickiewicz?], whose evangelical words we listen to with such respectful admiration, . . . Seemed to interrogate Dante, his grandfather, about the secrets of heaven and the destinies of the world. As for me, . . . I wept following in thought the distressing images that you have made appear before me. On coming

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[17] As quoted by James Parakilas, in Ballads Without Words, p. 19.

[18] As quoted by Jim Samson, in Chopin: The Four Ballades (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 35.

[19] Ibid., p. 35.

[20] As Karol Berger observes in his essay "Chopin's Ballade Op.23 and The Revolution of the Intellectuals" since Mallefille refers to the work played as 'this Polish ballad we love so much,' he might be discussing either of these works. However, I agree with Berger that the question regarding specific work played is less important than imagery involved in Mallefille's interpretation.

> back home, I have attempted to render them in my own fashion in the following lines. Read them with indulgence, and, even if I have interpreted your ballad badly in them, accept their offering as a proof of my affection for you and of my sympathy for your heroic fatherland.[21]

This introduction is followed by Mallefilles' dramatic reading of the music in the best tradition of a Messianistic vision of Polish history and Poland's future, entitled "The Exiles.--A Path." It involves the characteristic imagery popular among the Polish émigrés in Paris (particularly the sleeping, or inattentive God, tombs of forefathers, and continuous sacrifice), full of their patriotic and nationalistic visions of Poland's tragedy and hopes for her rebirth. It is summarized by Karol Berger as follows:

> . . . the Chorus bids farewell to Poland, 'tomb of our forefathers, cradle of our children,' a Young Man asks his fellow exiles why they should continue to carry swords which had not succeeded in defending their fatherland from the enslavement; and an Old Man explains: 'We keep our weapons for the day of the resurrection.' The Young Man answers: 'Hope is dead and God is sleeping,' but the Old Man asks the young ones to keep their arms and hope: 'The future is rich; it gives to those who know how to wait.' The Young Man, in his despair, wants to kill himself. The Exiles leave him alone. A Passer-by tells him: 'Let them go; everyone for himself in this world. But you would be silly to kill yourself now . . . ,' and he argues him to go to a great city, to enrich himself promptly and to enjoy the pleasures of life, good table, beautiful women, horses, travel. The encounter is salutary. The Young Man, shocked to discover that anyone might want to leave his fatherland and paternal home of his own free will, realizes now where his duty lies and goes on to rejoin his fellow exiles in their common fate, so that they can sing together: 'To you, Poland! Saint Poland! Tomb of our forefathers! Cradle of our children, to you always!'[22]

The nationalistic content of Mallefille's interpretation was continued throughout the *Ballades*' reception in the nineteenth century, and its expressionistic imagery was reactivated seventy years later by a Polish poet Przybyszewski.[23] Meanwhile, by 1842 the leading notions of the *Ballades*' Romantic reception--those of story telling, literary and poetic inspiration, a nationalistic dimension, and a connection to Mickiewicz's poems--were already in place. And if personal agendas may be suspected in the case of French

[21] As quoted by Berger in "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 81.
[22] As summarized by Berger, in "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 82.
[23] In his essay "Chopin a naród" ["Chopin and the Nation"] of 1910.

critics[24] identifying elements of poetic expression in the *Ballades*, and even in case of Schumann remembering about "Mickiewicz's inspiration" for the purpose of his review, it is difficult to ascertain any personal reasons for Mallefille's nationalistic reading of the *Second Ballade*.

The critic of London *Examiner* of July 8, 1848, described the *Second Ballade* performed by Chopin during a London concert in this highly pictorial, albeit not poetic, way:

> Perhaps there is no one who at all knows the works of Chopin, but knows and loves the Ballade in F Major, Op.38. It opens with a tone repeated and swelled like a sound of nature--a breeze or a stream--out of which a song develops itself, as the witch of the Alps is shaped from the rainbow of the waterfall; but it still retains the character of a thing that grows up and is not made. It is short, simple, single; always fresh.[25]

This description can be considered as an example of Romantic programmatic interpretation, reflecting a trend of "explaining music" through extra-musical associations; it is also one of a very few interpretations which does not provide a nationalistic or poetic (literary) reading of the music.

Franz Liszt, in his Frederic Chopin (first published in 1852 and extensively revised by Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein in 1879), discussed at length the deeply Polish, patriotic characteristics of Chopin's music, as well as Chopin's relation to poetry, Mickiewicz, and Polish expatriates in Paris. I will analyze Liszt's opinions on these subjects in chapter two; his description of the *Ballades*, together with their supernatural characteristics in the Romantic tradition, need to be presented here:

> In most of Chopin's *Ballades, Valses,* and *Etudes*, . . . there lies embalmed the memory of an elusive poesy, and this he sometimes idealizes to the point of presenting its essence so diaphanous and fragile that it seems no longer to be of our world. It brings closer the realm of fairies and unveils to us unguarded secrets of the Peri, of Titanias or Ariels or Queen Mabs, of all the genii of water, air, and fire, who are also the victims of the most bitter frustrations and the most intolerable aversions.

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[24] As Samson observes, "the image of Chopin as a composer of deep feeling suited the purposes of the *Gazette*," in Chopin: The Four Ballades, p. 35.

[25] As quoted in William G. Atwood's Fryderyk Chopin: Pianist from Warsaw (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 248.

> At times these pieces are joyous and fanciful, like the gambolings of an amorous, mischievous sylph. At other times they are velvety and multicolored, like the dress of a salamander. Then they are deeply depressing, like souls in torment who find no prayer of mercy needed for their salvation. Again, these pieces are stamped with a despair so dismal and inconsolable that they bring to mind a tragedy of Byron, the scene of Jacopo Foscari's ultimate downfall and failure to survive his exile. There are some with spasms of choking sobs.[26]

Liszt's poetic description ties the *Ballades* with fairies and dream world, but with a dream world which evokes a nightmare rather than a pleasant dream--a world which includes pain, suffering, sobs, and torment. Liszt's association of the *Ballades* with the supernatural is of particular interest here, as it presents a new programmatic reading of the works (emphasizing the "enchanted" character of the music) and provides an aesthetic connection to the supernatural characteristics of the literary ballad. Liszt's biography of Chopin belongs to the most important and authoritative (although not always reliable) sources regarding Chopin's life, personality, convictions, and playing.

The programmatic interpretation of the *Ballades* was developed by Louis Ehlert, the German music critic and pupil of Schumann. Ehlert offered deeply Romantic and oft-quoted comments on Chopin's *Ballades* in his 1877 series of essays entitled From the Tone World:

> Chopin relates in them, not like one who communicates something really experienced; it is as though he told what never took place, but what has sprung up in his inmost soul, the anticipation of something longed-for. They may contain a strong element of national woe, much outwardly repressed and inwardly burning rage over the sufferings of his native land; yet they do not carry with a positive reality like that which, in a Beethoven Sonata, will often call words to our lips.[27]

In his analysis Ehlert invoked the notions of inner-expression and nationalistic suffering--two of the most prominent ideas in the reception of the *Ballades*. He also discussed the music of the *Second Ballade*, this time in truly Romantic fashion (bringing to mind the

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[26] Franz Liszt, Frederic Chopin, translated by Edward N. Waters (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 77-78.

[27] Louis Ehlert, "Frederic Chopin," in From the Tone World: A Series of Essays, translated by Helen D. Tretbar (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1973), pp. 279-280.

ubiquitous tale of a young Chopin calming down the boys in his father's home with his playing):

> Perhaps the most touching of all that Chopin has written is the tale in the F major Ballade. I have witnessed children lay aside their games to listen thereto. It appears like some fairy tale that has become music. The four-voiced part has such a clearness withal, it seems as if warm spring breezes were waving the lithe leaves of the palm-tree. How soft and sweet a breath steals over the senses and the heart![28]

Moritz Karasowski, one of the earliest Chopin's biographers (his Frederic Chopin: His Life and Letters was first published in 1879), concentrated on the composer's life. His biography begins the "fact gathering" stage of Chopin scholarship, culminating in a detailed study by Frederick Niecks. Thus, in terms of reception history, Karasowski's comments reflect the generally accepted views of the time rather than any new interpretations of the music. Karasowski gave only short descriptions of Chopin's works, which include these about the *Ballades*:

> The four Ballades (Op.23, 38, 47 and 52), are among the finest and most original of his works. They contain so much that is new and varied in form that critics long hesitated to what category they should assign them. Some regarded them as a variety of the rondo; others, with more accuracy, called them "poetical stories." Indeed, there is about them a certain narrative character which is particularly well rendered by the 6/4 and 6/8 time, and which makes them differ essentially from the traditional forms. Chopin himself said to Schumann, on the occasion of their meeting at Leipsic, that he had been inspired to the creation of the ballades by some poems of Mickiewicz.[29]

This account is followed by one sentence descriptions of each of the *Ballades*. Despite having little to say about the pieces, Karasowski argued for their narrative and poetic qualities, and associated the *Ballades* with Mickiewicz's poetry. The tone of his statement established the characteristic tone used by most of Chopin's Romantic biographers in describing the *Ballades*.

Frederick Niecks, in his authoritative biography of Chopin published in 1888, also emphasized the poetic characteristics of the *Ballades*, going so far as to refer to the

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[28] Ibid., p. 280.

[29] Moritz Karasowski, Frederic Chopin: His Life and Letters, translated by Emily Hill (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1970), p. 402.

compositions themselves as "poems."[30] Niecks quoted Schuamnn's statement on Mickiewicz's poems as Chopin's inspiration:

> None of Chopin's compositions surpass in masterliness of form and beauty and poetry of contents his ballades. In them he attains, I think, the acme of his power as an artist. It is much to be regretted that they are only four in number . . . Schumann relates also that the poems of Mickiewicz incited Chopin to write his ballades, which information he got from the Polish composer himself. He adds significantly: "A poet, again, might easily write words to them [Chopin's ballades]. They move the innermost depth of the soul."[31]

Then Niecks described each of the works, providing programmatic interpretations which were echoed by many later biographers and critics:

> Indeed, the *Ballade* (in G minor), Op.23, is all over quivering with intensest [*sic*] feeling, full of sighs, sobs, groans, and passionate ebullitions. The seven introductory bars (*Lento*) begin firm, ponderous, and loud, but gradually become looser, lighter, and softer, terminating with a dissonant chord . . . Yet this dissonant E flat may be said to be the emotional key-note of the whole poem. It is a questioning thought that, like a sudden pain, shoots through mind and body. And now the story-teller begins his simple but pathetic tale, having every now and then a sigh.[32]

Niecks continued his description of the *First Ballade*, using such strongly Romantic phrases as "uproar of the passions," "sea of passion," and "heavenly vision."[33] Through his highly descriptive and expressive interpretation, Niecks emphasized very important concepts of story-telling, emotional expression, and poetry that appear repeatedly in the reception history of the *Ballades*. Niecks also raised the interesting point of the Ballades' connection to folk tradition in his discussion of the *Second Ballade*: "The second ballade possesses beauties in no way inferior to those of the first. What can be finer than the simple strains of the opening section! They sound as if they had been drawn from the people's storehouse of song."[34] Here Niecks not only provided an extra-musical reference, but also linked the music to the ballad tradition. The phrase "people's storehouse of

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[30] Frederick Niecks, Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician (London: Novello, Ewer, 1888), Vol.2, p. 269.
[31] Ibid., p. 268.
[32] Ibid., pp. 268-69.
[33] Ibid., p. 269.
[34] Ibid., p. 269.

song" implies a connection to folk ballad; most of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* are based on folk tales.

The Russian pianist and composer Anton Rubinstein offered a different extra-musical interpretation of the *Ballades* in his "Conversations on Music" of 1891. A believer in the emotional content of music and its expression, Rubinstein came up with this highly pictorial program, which, without mentioning Mickiewicz's name, nonetheless evokes the world of his *Ballady*--a world immersed in nature and love scenes between rustic maidens and their knights:

> Is it possible, that the interpreter does not feel the necessity of representing to his audience a field-flower caught by a gust of wind, a caressing of the flower by the wind; the resistance of the flower, the stormy struggle of the wind; the entreaty of the flower, which at last lies there broken; and paraphrased--the field-flower a rustic maiden, the wind a knight.[35]

Keeping in touch with French tradition of associating the *Ballades* with the poetic, the writer André Gide also linked Chopin's works with poetry (although not specifically with Mickiewicz's poems) in his Notes on Chopin of 1892. Gide wrote:

> When, at the beginning of the *Ballade in G minor* and immediately after the opening, in order to introduce the major theme which he later takes up in different keys and with new sonorities, after a few indecisive measures in *F* where only the tonic and the fifth are given, Chopin unexpectedly sounds a deep *B flat* which suddenly alters the landscape like the stroke of an enchanter's wand, this incantatory boldness seems to me comparable to a surprising foreshortening by the poet of *Les Fleurs du Mal.*
>
> Moreover, it seems to me that, in the history of music, Chopin occupies, approximately, the place (and plays the role) of Baudelaire in the history of poetry . . .[36]

In this short comment Gide acknowledged the novelty and originality of the *Ballades*--characteristics most puzzling to twentieth century authors. Consequently, here "Chopin the poetic" becomes also "Chopin the progressive."

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[35] Anton Rubinstein, as quoted in G. C. Ashton Jonson's A Handbook to Chopin's Works, p. 211.

[36] André Gide, Notes on Chopin, translated by Bernard Frechtman (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), pp. 28-29.

The excessive side of Romantic reception is represented in the comments of James Huneker, an English pianist, music critic, and prolific writer.[37] Huneker devoted an entire chapter to the music of the *Ballades* in his Chopin: The Man and His Music of 1900. Huneker's book consists of a series of his own essays on Chopin written earlier, extensive quotations from other sources (usually undocumented), and flowery, distinctive interpretations of Chopin's works presented in the form of authoritative statements. Huneker's is the last truly Romantic interpretation of Chopin's music, complete with many stories coming straight from the author's imagination and presented, nonetheless, in the manner of a "revealed truth." Of the *Ballades* Huneker wrote:

> I am ever reminded of Andrew Lang's lines, "the thunder and surge of the Odyssey," when listening to the G minor Ballade, op.23. It is the Odyssey of Chopin's soul. That cello-like largo with its noiseless suspension stays us for a moment in the courtyard of Chopin's House Beautiful. Then, told in his most dreamy tones, the legend begins. As in some fabulous tales of the Genii this Ballade discloses surprising and delicious things. There is the tall lily in the fountain that nods to the sun. It drips in cadenced monotone and its song is repeated on the lips of the slender-hipped girl with the eyes of midnight--and so might I weave for you a story of what I see in the Ballade and you would be aghast or puzzled. With such a composition any programme could be sworn to, . . . That Chopin had a programme, a definite one, there can be no doubt; but he has, wise artist, left us no clue beyond Mickiewicz's, the Polish bard Lithuanian [*sic*] poems.[38]

Huneker then related Schumann's statement of Chopin admitting to be inspired to compose the *Ballades* by Mickiewicz's poetry, and quoted the interpretation of the *Ballades* by Louis Ehlert. In his further description of each *Ballade* Huneker authoritatively associated the first three with specific poems by Mickiewicz, introducing his wishful and erroneous theory to Chopin scholarship. Huneker simply wrote: "The G minor Ballade after 'Konrad Wallenrod,' is a logical, well-knit and largely planned composition,"[39] and continued with his plastic description of the music. Similarly, he easily decided the issue of the literary inspiration of the *Second Ballade*: "written, Chopin

[37] Huneker published twenty books between 1899 and 1920.
[38] James Huneker, Chopin: The Man and His Music (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), pp. 155-56.
[39] Ibid., p. 156.

admits [*sic*], under the direct inspiration of Adam Mickiewicz's 'Le Lac de Willis,'"[40] as well as the *Third Ballade*, of which Huneker wrote: "This Ballade, the 'Undine' [*sic*] of Mickiewicz, ... is too well known to analyze. It is the schoolgirls' delight, who familiarly toy with its demon, seeing only favor and prettiness in its elegant measures."[41] Unfortunately, Huneker's revelations in that regard are not documented at all. Moreover, his choices for Chopin's inspiration are questionable; there is no poem entitled "Undine" by Mickiewicz, while two of his *Ballady* describe the Lake of Wilno (*Świteź* and *Świtezianka*)--thus making it difficult to decide which of these poems Huneker considered to be a model for the *Second Ballade*. The effects of his imagination in regards to Mickiewicz's poems were soon manifested in later studies of Chopin.

An excellent example of Huneker's influence appeared in 1903 in form of Chopin's biography by J. Cuthbert Hadden. Hadden provided the following, non-nationalistic description of the *Ballades* in his Chopin:

> In the four Ballades of Chopin we see the composer at his best as an artist of the universal. He was the first to adapt the name to the form . . . But "what's in a name?" Chopin's Ballades have less of the Polish taint than anything else he wrote, though, strangely enough, more than one of them was suggested by the works of Mickiewicz, the Polish bard. Chopin told Schumann this--that he had been "incited to the creation of the Ballades by the poetry" of his fellow-countryman.[42]

Hadden then associated the *Ballades* with Mickiewicz's poems, but his knowledge of the subject seems to be superficial and he simply copied Huneker's observations. Hadden also discussed each of the *Ballades* and, like Huneker, included extensive quotations by Ehlert and Anton Rubinstein among the others (unfortunately, Hadden did not document his sources).

The Polish reception of Chopin in the second half of the nineteenth century centered around the nationalistic aspect of his works. In a politically non-existent country (Poland remained partitioned from Chopin's time until the end of World War I) Chopin the man was appropriated as a symbol of a nation, its suffering, endurance, and hopes for

[40] Ibid., p. 158.
[41] Ibid., p. 159.
[42] J. Cuthbert Hadden, Chopin (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1903), p. 233.

the future, while his music was granted a status of symbol--preserving the spirit and representing the soul of the nation. Chopin's anniversaries, particularly the centenary of his birth in 1910, were occasions for patriotic manifestations. That year brought two of the most nationalistic interpretations of Chopin's music--the speech given by Paderewski at the opening of the Chopin Centenary Festival in Lwow in October of 1910 and an essay "Chopin a naród" ["Chopin and the Nation"] by the leading Polish dramatist of the turn of the century, Stanisław Przybyszewski. The tone of Paderewski's speech serves as an excellent example of that nationalist rhetoric. In his speech Paderewski provided a poetic, emotional, and ultra-nationalistic description of Chopin's music:

> . . . to-day we bring thank-offerings of love and reverence to him by whom [our country] was enriched and marvelously beautified. We do this not only in remembrance of a dear past, not only in justifiable and conscious pride of race, not only because our bosoms are quick with sparks of that inextinguishable faith which was, is, and always will be the noblest part of ancestor-worship, but because we are deeply convinced that we shall go forth from these solemnities strengthened in spirit, re-inspired of heart.
>
> The Pole listens [to Chopin] and sheds tears, pure and abundant. We all listen so. For none could listen otherwise to him who, by the grace of God, was spokesman of the Polish race. . . . He was a smuggler who, in harmless rolls of music, carried contraband Polish patriotism to his brothers across the border; he was a priest who, to his fellows scattered far and wide about the world, brought the sacrament of their martyred home. . . . Chopin, perhaps did not know how great he was. But we know; we know too that he was great with our greatness, strong with our strength, beautiful with our beauty. He is ours, and we are his: the whole of our collective soul is in him made manifest.[43]

Thus sixty years after Chopin's death the composer himself had become a symbol of the Polish nation and its struggle for independence; he had been elevated to the status of myth.[44] In the same speech Paderewski mentioned the *Ballades*:

> The dance has ceased; and now an old man, long bearded, white haired, silver-voiced, tells some misty tale to the sound of bag-pipe, lute, and harp. He tells of Lech, Krak and Popiel, of Balladyna, Veneda, Grażyna[45] . . . he chants of lands beyond the seas, of Italian skies, of jousts and troubadours, he sings of the White

[43] Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Chopin: A Discourse, pp. 7, 25, 29-30.

[44] It is interesting to note that Paderewski speaks of Chopin here in terms reminding of Mickiewicz's biblical prose in Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego, discussed in chapter two of this study.

[45] These are the names of legendary Polish heroes and characters from poems of two Polish Romantic poets, Juliusz Słowacki and Adam Mickiewicz.

> Eagle, of Lithuania's Horseman, of victorious encounters and of battles lost, of vast immortal struggles, unended and unsolved . . . All listen and all understand . . .[46]

Paderewski invoked the connection of the *Ballades* to poetry, story telling, and bards. He also referred to the names of Polish legendary heroes, and their battles and struggles, thus again emphasizing the patriotic and nationalistic dimension of the genre--for these names and what they represent would be understood by all only in Chopin's homeland.

G. C. Ashton Jonson, in his Handbook to Chopin's Works of 1912, provided detailed commentaries to each of the *Ballades*. He quoted Chopin's early biographers (Liszt, Karasowski, Niecks, Kleczyński, Huneker), mentioned earlier comments by Anton Rubinstein and Louis Ehlert, and added the opinions of various music critics. Jonson compiled up-to-date interpretations of the *Ballades*, supplemented by his own comments, in what can be considered a review of Romantic reception, complete with programmatic descriptions, the notion of narration, and the expression of innermost feelings and national suffering. Of course, he included the Romantic tradition of connecting Mickiewicz's poems with Chopin's *Ballades*. Jonson introduced his discussion of the *Ballades* as follows:

> The four Ballades of Chopin are amongst his greatest works. As in the Scherzos we here see in him the creator of a new type. It is generally believed that Chopin owed the inspiration of these works to the poems of the Polish poet Mickiecwicz. [*sic*] . . . The kernel of each is distinctly a legend; there is a story, a narrative to be expressed, and more than one commentator has postulated as necessary that a performer must have a definite idea of the story he thinks the music conveys before he can give a clear and consistent rendering of it. . . . They are all in triple (6/4 or 6/8) time, which something in the nature of music seems to render inseparable from the idea of narration.[47]

Jonson then wrote of the *First Ballade*:

> At the *moderato* the legend begins in a beautifully undulatory melody. . . . Throughout the narrative and dramatic spirit is self-evident. The introduction seems to say, "listen, I will tell you how it happened." Then the various themes and interludes, recurring in fuller and more developed forms, seem to tell the story; one can almost follow the development of character from incident, and the

[46] Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Chopin: A Discourse, p. 21.
[47] G. C. Ashton Jonson, A Handbook to Chopin's Works (Boston: Longwood Press, 1978), pp. 142-43.

> *coda* seems to detail the inevitable catastrophe, which, however, does not appear wholly tragic for all concerned.[48]

In his presentation of the *Second Ballade* Jonson quoted Schumann's statement on Mickiewicz's poetry as an inspiration for this work, the opinions of other authors regarding the music, and provided his own deeply poetic account of the work:

> The first theme, Andantino, is described by all the comentators as "idyllic." Barbedette even says "pastoral," and undoubtedly this Ballade is a story of the country, a love tragedy, with a betrayal, and a terribly tragic ending.
>
> The theme dies away and we are left pondering on a softly reiterated A natural. Suddenly and without the slightest warning the storm bursts *ff, presto con fuoco*. Its first onslaught is, however, brief, and the first theme recurs. "But life is never the same again," and the innocent simplicity of the beginning never returns. Other moods follow in rapid succession, thoughtful, argumentative, passionate, and then once more the storm, but this time culminating with sullen rolling of thunder in the terrific shuddering catastrophe of the *coda*.
>
> An abrupt sudden pause like a catch of the breath, and then the sobbing broken reference to the first theme with its questioning close, and the deep, deep sigh of the closing bars--"But yet the pity of it, O, the pity of it."[49]

It is interesting, that Jonson's "program" for the *Second Ballade* perfectly fits Mickiewicz's *Świteź*, although he did not acknowledge it. Jonson also provided similar descriptions of the *Third* and *Fourth Ballades*, including various commentaries and attempts to interpret the music in terms of story telling. For instance, he wrote of the *Fourth Ballade*: "It is undoubtedly more introspective than the other Ballades. There is perhaps in it an almost personal note, as if Chopin had been reminded by something in the story of some event in his own life and had abandoned himself to the mood of the moment."[50]

A formalist approach found its way into the reception of the *Ballades* in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The new aesthetic, characterized by a belief in meaning expressed in the musical text itself, conveyed through form and structure and identified by music analysis, aimed primarily at the de-contextualization of musical works. In terms of the *Ballades* it meant disregarding nineteenth century criticism in

[48] Ibid., pp. 146-47.
[49] Ibid., pp. 211-12.
[50] Ibid., p. 239.

favor of objective formal analysis. The most important and influential analytical study of the *Ballades* was undertaken by Hugo Leichtentritt in 1921, but examples of the new aesthetic are already manifest in Chopin scholarship in the 1913 biography by Edgar Stillman Kelley.

In his book Chopin the Composer, Kelley found nothing more in the *Ballades* than imperfect examples of sonata form (rondo form in case of the *Fourth Ballade*). He wrote about the music in strictly analytical terms, without ever mentioning its extra-musical narrative characteristics. The following description of the *First Ballade* is representative of Kelly's style and analyses:

> In the G-minor Ballade a unique introduction dissolves into the main theme, followed by a sort of middle section or tributory theme, also in G-minor; a secondary subject running into a closing theme much on the order of the sonata appears, both being in Eb major. With the succeeding reappearances of the main theme in A minor (organ-point on E), a virtual working-out section begins, closing with an organ point on Bb, apparently to bring us to the reprise. But no! Quite new material in the key of Eb-major greets us, and, after more modulating, we meet the secondary theme also in Eb, as it appeared before with its closing theme. Obviously, this form is only slightly related to the sonata, but it has the *vital element*, the working-out section, as predicted, and also a coda that brings back the main theme in the tonic . . . That the new material in Eb was found in the working-out, or, if you choose, replaces the main theme, is merely one of those liberties which the composer allowed himself in these romantic forms.[51]

His is one of the earliest attempts to formalize the *Ballades*, disregarding context for a different kind of narrative emphasizing ever-ruling and universal form.

Nevertheless, the credit of formalizing Chopin belongs to Hugo Leichtentritt in his influential study of Chopin's compositions. Although Leichtentritt mentioned the possible influence of Mickiewicz's poems on Chopin's *Ballades* (and specifically of *Świtezianka* on the *Second Ballade*) in his 1904 biography of Chopin,[52] his detailed analytical study of Chopin's compositions entitled Analyse der Chopinschen Klavierwerke of 1921 is more famous. In this book Leichtentritt provided analyses of Chopin's all major compositions, including a chapter devoted to all four of the *Ballades*.

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[51] Edgar Stillman Kelley, Chopin the Composer (New York: G. Schirmer, 1913), pp. 116-17.
[52] Hugo Leichtentritt, Friedrich Chopin (Berlin: Schlefifche Verlagsanftalt, 1920), p. 108.

Leichtentritt's study reinforced the issue of sonata form as one of crucial importance in the reception of Chopin's *Ballades* (he considered the *First* and *Third Ballade* as an examples of that form).

From this point on, the reception of the *Ballades* in our century proceeded in two main directions. While 'serious' musicology preferred the analytical approach (at least until 1990s), studies of a more popular nature (often intended for performers and listeners) continued the Romantic tradition. This trend is best represented by Bartomeu Ferra's Chopin and George Sand in the Cartuja de Valldemosa of 1932. Ferra provided a highly romantic interpretation of Chopin's works composed in Majorca, the *Second Ballade* among them. He quoted Ehlert's comments on the *Second Ballade*, authoritatively named Mickiewicz's poems as an inspiration for the work, identified the specific poem which forms the "program" for the music as Mickiewicz's *Świteź* (although without documenting his sources), and even gave a summary of the poem:

> The fairy story that inspired Chopin is a poem by his friend Adam Mickiewicz in which the national poet of Poland recounts a legend of Świteź, the great lake of Lithuania, that gives the name to the poem. Be this as it may, should you go to the land of Nowogródek, among the mysterious forests of Płużyny, do not forget to check your horses to contemplate the Lake. There the "Świteź" spreads its fair, sea in form of a circle; --close and ancient woodlands surround its dark shores; --it is calm as an expanse of ice. Should you be there in the hours of night, and be led to the margin of the waters, you will see the stars above you head and not one moon but two. You may doubt whether it is the crystalline image that repeats itself, from your feet to the heavens, or that the heavens bend down to you their crystal vault, as your vision does not perceive the farther shore, nor penetrate the depths below the face of the waters, you seem to be suspended in space between the firmament and an enchanted abyss of azure wander. Thus, by night, be the weather fair, the scene will hold the enchantment of illusion. --But, going to the Lake by night, beware of man! For, what smugglers may be abroad; or what ghosts go raging! My very heart quails when the old folk tell these tales, and people tremble to recount them when night falls!
>
> Often, from the deeps of the waters, rises the roar of a great city; -fire breaks forth, and a great smoke rises, --and a tumult of fighting, and the shrieks of woman; --and the clang of funeral bells, and the iron ring of the armourers. Now, suddenly, the smoke vanishes; the clangour dies down; --On the lonely shores, only the sighing of the pines; --from within the waters, a low murmur of prayer, and the plaintive orisons of maidens. Know you the meaning of these stories?
>
> The poet then recounts how the Lord of Płużyny, wishing to solve the mystery of the lake, caused some great nets to be sunk into it, and they brought

> to the surface a maiden who revealed to him that these waters covered the city of Świteź, famed in the past for its valliant warriors and the beauty of its women. That city, when unable to defend itself against the armies of the Czar of Russia, made a prayer that God would let it be swallowed up in the earth rather than that it should fall into the hands of the enemy, so that the people might be saved from shame and slaughter. This told, the maiden withdrew and sank down into the lake, whilst the boats and the nets were engulphed in the waters; and, through the age-old trees of the forest, was heard a dull, moaning murmur.[53]

Meanwhile, the mainstream formalist approach was further developed; in Poland it found its best expression in Szymanowski's essay "Thoughts on Polish Criticism in Music Today," where the composer heralded Chopin as a "master of form."[54] In Germany it was manifested in Schenker's inclusion of Chopin's works in the German tradition, and his analyses of Chopin's compositions in Free Composition of 1935. Schenker's study of Chopin's music was strongly influential, as Jim Samson observes: "it was above all the adoption of Chopin by Heinrich Schenker which set the compass reading for a wealth of later analytical research, notably in Anglo-American scholarship since World War II."[55]

Gerald Abraham developed the formalist approach in his book on Chopin's music entitled Chopin's Musical Style of 1939. Consequently, Abraham's discussion of the *Ballades* is limited to formal considerations only, and, like Kelley, he is largely preoccupied with Chopin's inadequacies in implementing sonata form. Abraham's description of the *First Ballade* begins:

> Even the most enthusiastic admirers of Chopin would hardly claim that the F sharp Impromptu is a masterpiece of form. Or the G minor Ballade either. Yet the Ballade is recognizably a first and not unsuccessful experiment in a new and entirely individual form, a form that politely touches its hat to the superficial features of the classical 'first movement' but quietly ignores most of its underlying principles.[56]

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[53] Bartomeu Ferra, Chopin and George Sand in the Cartuja de Valldemosa, translated by James Webb (Palma de Mallorca, 1932), pp. 20-22.

[54] Published in The Warsaw New Literary Review in July, 1920. The same period brought analytical studies of Chopin in Poland by musicologists Ospieński and Jachimecki.

[55] Jim Samson, Chopin: The Four Ballades, p. 37.

[56] Gerald Abraham, Chopin's Musical Style (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 54-55.

Abraham then described the *Ballade* in terms of sonata form, and concluded, somewhat reassuringly, that "there are . . . signs that Chopin was beginning to understand something of the real essence of sonata form."[57] It is interesting to note that even "objective" analysis could lead Schenker and Abraham to contrary conclusions; where Schenker found "masterworks . . . bound indirectly to Germanity," Abraham finds "not unsuccessful experiments" and Chopin "beginning to understand" the essence of (German) sonata form. Nevertheless, although he ignored narrative characteristics of the music altogether, Abraham mentioned that the *Second Ballade* was "inspired by some poems of Mickiewicz"[58] (albeit without reference to Schumann as the source) and provided a rather lengthy footnote in which he discussed Huneker's associations between specific Mickiewicz's poems and *Ballades* and pointed out inaccuracies in Huneker's theory.[59]

Highly nationalistic and patriotic interpretations of Chopin's music again became relevant in the years of the Second World War--another trying period in Polish history. Antoni Gronowicz, in his book Chopin of 1943 intended for general public, gave a very literary and pictorial description of Chopin's *Ballades*, rooted again in the Romantic tradition:

> Chopin . . . to the musical ballad . . . gave life itself. . . . Everything that the ballad is in literature, Chopin made it in music. It bubbles with mischief and lilts with gaiety. It promises and gives a story, sometimes quaint, sometimes full of romantic wander, and sometimes dainty and whimsical and light as fairies dancing on midsummer's eve. As one hears the six-four or six-eight time, one gets a picture of a child listening intently to a wondrous tale falling, word by word, from a mother's lips. And sometimes, very often, in fact, there is a noble, patriotic quality in the music--marching feet--valiant resolve--undying devotion. Sadness, too, is in the ballad--sadness and resignation, and slow, unabating pain.
>
> One day Robert Schumann and Fryderyk Chopin were having a conversation about music, and Schumann asked, "Will you tell me, please, how you came on your original ballad composition? Was the idea yours, entirely, or did it come to you as an idea from the compositions of some other?"
>
> Without hesitation, Chopin answered, "I found inspiration in the poems of my compatriot, Adam Mickiewicz."[60]

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[57] Ibid., p. 56.
[58] Ibid., p. 57.
[59] Ibid., pp. 57-58.
[60] Antoni Gronowicz, Chopin (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1943), pp. 102-103.

Gronowicz's emotional interpretation, complete with "noble, patriotic quality in the music" and "undying devotion" resembles the rhetoric of the impassioned speech of Paderewski, although without its pathetic overtones. In addition, Gronowicz reinforced the nationalistic content of his reading of the *Ballades* by manufacturing the following conversation between Chopin and Mickiewicz:

> One day when the two were walking, Mickiewicz said suddenly, "I have been told that you have found much inspiration in my poetry, Fryderyk. Tell me, is it true?"
>
> "Yes, it is true," Chopin answered vigorously, "Not only your form but your subjects have given me inspiration. Your ballads are leading me to new form in music."
>
> And Chopin listed the particular ballads that he had been studying--"Świteź," "Pobutka," [*sic*] "Świtezianka," and "Co lubi" [*sic*]. With typical frankness, he added that every poem by Mickiewicz's that dealt with the life of Polish or Lithuanian people had been a source of inspiration.
>
> "I have called my compositions musical ballads," he said, "and have even given them the names of your poems."
>
> Mickiewicz's face shone with pleasure. This was a tribute he loved.
>
> "You are my master of poetry," Fryderyk continued, "and now, very soon, I mean to make a music ballad for your long poem, 'Konrad Wallenrod.'[61],[62]

Here Gronowicz introduced specific poems, but he did not align them with specific compositions. Although he introduced the titles of the poems, he did not represent them as literary "programs" intended for musical depiction. Nevertheless, quoting the titles of the *Ballady* Gronowicz tied the music to Polish poems, as though claiming the *Ballades* as the property of the Polish people.

An interesting anti-nationalistic and formalistic stand is represented by Lubov Keefer, in her 1946 article "The Influence of Adam Mickiewicz on the *Ballades* of Chopin."[63] Although she provided a review of "Mickiewicz's believers" and in spite of the title of her article, Keefer dismisses the possibility of Mickiewicz's influence upon the

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[61] *Konrad Wallenrod* is not a ballad in a formal sense; it does not belong to collection of Mickiewicz's *Ballady*. However, it is a long poem in what can be described as "ballad tradition," it features a formal ballad as its part, and it is often cited as a possible source for Chopin's *Second Ballade*.

[62] Antoni Gronowicz, Chopin, pp. 104-105.

[63] Lubov Keefer, "The Influence of Adam Mickiewicz on the *Ballades* of Chopin," American Slavic and East European Review Vol.5 (1946), pp. 38-50.

creation of the *Ballades* due to what she calls Chopin's "intellectual isolationism," the "onesidedness" of a person whose "readings began and ended with [George Sand's] works, Voltaire's *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, and a few Polish poems."[64] However, in the core of her article she brings an interesting review of opinions contrary to her own:

> By almost unanimous vote the *First Ballade* is said to have been sired by Mickiewicz's *Conrad Wallenrod*, . . . Perceptibly fewer ballots are cast in favor of the whimsically phosphorescent *Świtezianka* and the related [???] *Świteź*, flippant and arch, as patterns for the cataclysms unleashed respectively in the F and A flat Ballades. As to the colloquial, humorous *Pan Budri* [*sic*],[65] only the most credulous and staunch accept it as the source from which flow the miasmic depths of the F Minor.
>
> Readiest to endorse the ticket unreservedly are the virtuosi Cortot and Casadesus. But even among proverbially prudent musicologists deviations from this official roster . . . are rare enough to be cited. Huneker, for one, rhapsodizes about "thunder and surge, fabulous genii, tall fountain-lilies and slender-hipped maids," but seconds nevertheless the Wallenrod pedigree with its "well-knit logical sentence." Proceeding with all of a scholar's caution threading the footsteps of another (Hoesick), Hugo Leichtentritt reads into the F Minor the aspirations not of Mickiewicz but of a lesser bard of autonomous Poland, Słowacki. Farther removed from the sphere of all-consuming patriotism are isolated interpretations of the A Flat: again, Leichtentritt's, as an image of a cavorting timid colt and its coming of age to a fierce gallop, and Ehlert's (pupil of Schumann), as a dream-world of brilliantly lit ballrooms afloat with tender avowals and, tucked somewhere in this triviality, the "voice of the people." And both Berlioz and Heine have had something to say of the Ballades "singing of Ossianic loves and heroes, chivalric hopes and the past of the far-away country, ever eager for victory and ever beaten."
>
> These few dissenters are hardly sufficient to weight the scales against the Mickiewicz-legend. And if the Germans, notwithstanding an occasional excursion into nebulous hypothesis, are at pains against bracketing Chopin as photographer, among French colleagues sky alone is the limit in verbatim poems--music--maps. To what lengths of absurdity this teaming can aspire is shown by the magnum opus of one Jean Stan, modestly entitled *Les Ballades de Chopin*.[66]

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[64] Ibid., pp. 50, 49. Interestingly enough, Keefer's opinions here on Chopin's intellectual standing is exactly opposite to Berger's and Parakilas', who base their interpretations of the *Ballades* on Chopin's "historical consciousness" and his literary background, respectively.

[65] Keefer probably means Mickiewicz's Ballada *Trzech Budrysów* here.

[66] Lubov Keefer, "The Influence of Adam Mickiewicz on the *Ballades* of Chopin," pp. 38-39.

What follows is a rather lengthy quotation of Stan's interpretation of the *Ballade*, in Keefer's opinion "operating on the assumption that Wallenrod and Chopin are one."[67] Keefer is disturbed by nationalistic readings of the *Ballades* and dismisses any such interpretations so vehemently that it seems that she has a personal agenda against them. It is interesting that Keefer does not oppose the literary, or poetic, readings of the *Ballades*, but rather their nationalistic characteristics, or, as she describes it, their "all-consuming patriotism." Nevertheless, at the end of her article, she leads her claim of Chopin's "intellectual isolationism" to its logical culmination and concludes with a truly absolutist argument: "Let us cherish the Ballades, every note of them, as music, and start where Karasowski and Bronarski wisely had left off, viz., that it is 'foolhardy to seek here allegory, history, politics or philosophical deductions'."[68]

The issue of Mickiewicz's inspiration is brought back by Arthur Prudden Coleman and Marion Moore Coleman in their essay "Adam Mickiewicz and Music" of 1947.[69] They mention specific titles of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* as an inspiration for Chopin's *Ballades* and write of the *Second Ballade*:

> That Frederick Chopin . . . in his Second Ballade (in F-major) owed a debt of theme and mood to Mickiewicz most musicologists will agree. With its quiet, pastoral beginning, its mounting tension, its clashing denouement and tranquil close, the composition follows with complete fidelity the rise and fall of the dramatic ballad Świtezianka (The Siren of Lake Świteź) and is clearly a recapitulation in a new artistic medium of this popular ballad.[70]

This strongly worded statement is followed by a reference to the other *Ballades*:

> Whether, in addition, the other three Ballades of Chopin owe their inspiration to Mickiewicz, who can say? Claims have been advanced for and against. It has been contended that the three compositions derive from Konrad Wallenrod, Świteź, and Trzech Budrysów, respectively, in that order.[71]

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[67] Ibid., p. 39.
[68] Ibid., p. 50. (When verified, Keefer's page reference to Karasowski as a source of this quotation is inaccurate).
[69] This essay serves as an introduction to Arthur Prudden Coleman and Marion Moore Coleman's book Mickiewicz in Music (New York: Columbia University, Klub Polski, 1947); the book consists of a short study of musical uses of Mickiewicz's poems and a collection of songs written to his texts.
[70] Arthur p. Coleman and Marion M. Coleman, Mickiewicz in Music, p. 13.
[71] Ibid., p. 13.

It is interesting to note that they could say quite definitely that the *Second Ballade* was inspired by *Świtezianka*. However, since their book is devoted to musical settings of Mickiewicz's poetry, it is only fair that they mention Chopin's *Ballades* in relation to the *Ballady*. Moreover, although their claims seem extremely arbitrary, they document their sources extensively, thus providing a review of "Mickiewicz's believers" and their claims.[72]

Typical "biography format" of the descriptions of the *Ballades* is provided by Herbert Weinstock in his Chopin: The Man and His Music of 1949. Nevertheless, in his discussion of the works, Weinstock emphasizes the narrative qualities of the music, mentions Mickiewicz's poems as a possible source of narration, and writes about the "story" behind the music in his description of the *First Ballade*:

> Schumann heard him [Chopin] say that both this one and the second [*Ballade*] were brought to his mind by poems of the Polish patriot Adam Mitskyevich[sic]. This report has been connected--later, and on no dependable authority--with Mitskyevich's *Konrad Wallenrod* (1828), a poetic narration of battles between the pagan Lithuanians and the Christian Knights of the Teutonic Order. . . .
>
> The G-minor Ballade has always been one of the most widely popular of Chopin's compositions. It begins with seven wholly remarkable introductory measures. At first these speak with great assurance, as though a bard were decisively saying: "This is the way it was." But there is a pause followed by a softer section and another pause: "Well, perhaps I had better start the tale from its beginning." Then two last measures lead to that beginning, eagerly awaited, almost longed for by the moment of its arrival.[73]

Weinstock echoes his Romantic predecessors here--Niecks and particularly Jonson. He also mentions the association between Chopin's compositions and Mickiewicz's poems in regards to the *Second* and *Third Ballades:* "The belief that the F-major Ballade is program music grew out of a statement by Schumann that Chopin had told him of being inspired to

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[72] Thus the Colemans provide us with the names of the authors believing in each case; they mention Jean Stan and Lubov Keefer [*sic*] in relation to the *First Ballade* and *Konrad Wallenrod*, Gerald Abraham and Zdzisław Jachimecki in relation to *Second Ballade* and *Świtezianka*, and Jean Stan who believes that the *Second Ballade* was inspired by Mickiewicz's *Świteź*.

[73] Herbert Weinstock, Chopin: The Man and His Music (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 209.

write it by 'some poems of Mitskyevich,'"[74] and "Like its three companions, it [the *Third Ballade*] narrates a musical story, from a poem by Mitskyevich."[75]

Polish scholarship after World War II was influenced by the ideology of socialist realism, which manifested itself in Chopin studies through emphasis on composer's sociological and historical background, and in detecting folk influences in his music. This ideology, combined with the widespread formalist aesthetics of the time, brought many analytical studies devoted to specific aspects of Chopin's works. Krystyna Wilkowska, in her detailed study of emotional expression in Chopin's *Ballades* of 1949,[76] stresses the originality of the genre, its connection to literary inspiration (she mentions Mickiewicz's poetry as a possible source of that inspiration), and analyzes formal, melodic, rhythmic, and dynamic manifestations of "emotional expression" in the *Ballades*. Wilkowska writes:

> The Ballades occupy a distinctive place among Chopin's works. Like the Nocturnes, or especially Berceuse and Barcarole, they have titles which do not indicate purely musical characteristics of these masterpieces, but connect [them] to other arts and our lives in general. . . . from the very beginning [of their existence] the most fantastic interpretations of the content of the Ballades were produced. Because well suited background content was easily found in Mickiewicz's Ballady, it was attempted to show that specific poems inspired specific piano pieces. However, it was forgotten that in this case the abilities of emotional expression of poetry and music were placed in different dimensions, and that both of these arts use different materials and different means of expression. . . . Chopin undoubtedly admired Mickiewicz's works and thus the Ballady by our great poet could have inspired Chopin's works in this genre. However, Chopin's inspiration did not motivate him to create illustrations of specific poetic texts.[77]

A similar approach of acknowledging a certain connection between Chopin's *Ballades* and Mickiewicz's poems is also used by Jan Holcman in The Legacy of Chopin of 1954, although in general the author is against introducing extensive symbolism to

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[74] Ibid., p. 244.
[75] Ibid., p. 255.
[76] Krystyna Wilkowska, "Środki wyrazu emocjonalnego w Balladach Chopina" ["The Elements of Emotional Expression in Chopin's Ballades"], Kwartalnik Muzyczny October--December 1949: 156-185.
[77] Ibid., pp. 167-68. This quotation is presented here in my translation.

Chopin's music. Holcman writes: "The sphere of symbols is not limited only to natural phenomena and metaphysical concepts, it also includes literary works, poems, and composer's morale. Mickiewicz's *Ballads* are supposed to be the source of Chopin's *Ballades*."[78]

Meanwhile, interpretating the *Ballades* in nationalistic terms is further represented by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz in his popular 1955 biography of Chopin. Iwaszkiewicz constantly emphasizes the intellectual connection between Chopin and Mickiewicz,[79] discussing the relationship between the poet and composer, their common experiences, cultural background and similar reactions to contemporary events. However, Iwaszkiewicz writes of their "general" intellectual relationship, and sees it as an expression of "Polish Romanticism" in their works rather than in the examples of musical-literary collaboration or instances of musical depiction. Thus, although he mentions Chopin's admiration for Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and makes a connection between Mickiewicz's poems and Chopin's compositions, he does not link specific poems to specific *Ballades* nor consider the *Ballady* as a literary program illustrated in the *Ballades*. Iwaszkiewicz writes in his discussion of the *Larghetto* from Chopin's Concerto in E-minor:

> Chopin described the *Larghetto* of E-minor Concerto using the title "romance." It was not anything new, for Mozart indicated the slow movements of his d-minor and *Coronation* Concertos in the same way. However, what could have been a premonition or an antecedent in Mozart's case, was in Chopin's case a realization or, perhaps, a conscious reference to Mickiewicz and his *Romances*. *Ballady*[80] would come later. Chopin, the student of Elsner and Brodziński, the admirer of Mickiewicz, the friend of Bohdan Zaleski and Maurycy Mochnacki, consciously referred to literary Romanticism.[81]

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[78] Jan Holcman, The Legacy of Chopin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), p. 61.

[79] I will explore this relationship more closely in chapter 2.

[80] I would like to emphasize again, that in Polish the word *ballady* signifies both Mickiewicz's poems and Chopin's piano works; however, Iwaszkiewicz probably means here Chopin's compositions. Also, it is important to note that Ballady i Romanse was the title of a collection of Mickiewicz's poems (including his *Ballady*), which was published in 1822 and considered to be a manifesto of Polish literary Romanticism.

[81] Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Chopin (Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1984), pp. 104-5. This and the following quotations from Iwaszkiewicz's book are presented here in my translation.

Nevertheless, Iwaszkiewicz describes the *Ballades* as "exceeding the boundaries of music," thus acknowledging their extra-musical content. He writes: "Ballady, as though a romantic painting of Caspar David Friedrich, stand on the border line between a painting and a poem. Their content bursts the boundaries of musical perfection."[82] Iwaszkiewicz also provides the following interpretation of the *Second Ballade*:

> "Silence . . . might scream . . . still silence!"--this phrase may serve as an epigraph for the *Ballade* in F-major, finished and possibly composed in Majorca. It signifies an enormous struggle to break with a scream the monotonous, immobile within a closed circle, enchanted and soulless silence. This phrase would be echoed some day in Jasiek's call,[83] opposing the monotonous tramp of feet in a dance forced by the Chochol.[84]

This interpretation is strongly nationalistic; Jasiek's call symbolizes national revival and signals fight for national independence. Thus Iwaszkiewicz reads the *Second Ballade* almost as a call for national rebirth, while his emotional invocation of silence may be intended to represent powerlessness of Chopin's generation. Also, it is interesting to note that Iwaszkiewicz, himself a distinguished Polish poet, follows Paderewski's example and evokes characters from Polish literature in his discussion of the *Ballade*, making his interpretation virtually incomprehensible to non-Polish readers.

In The Chopin Companion of 1966 Alan Rawsthorne provides a very detailed discussion of the *Ballades*, representing the analytical approach in Chopin's reception. Although he concentrates on form rather than on narrative strategies, and his analysis is well structured and insightful, it is not limited to finding the elements of the sonata form in each *Ballade*, since he is also interested in generic characteristics of the works. Even while discussing formal procedures, Rawsthorne writes about musical events, patterns of behavior, and emotional content of the musical structures. For instance, of the opening of the *Second Ballade* he writes: "Some may object that so far we have had little else than a

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[82] Ibid., p. 210.

[83] In this sentence Iwaszkiewicz refers to Wyspiański's Wesele; people enchanted to move in monotonous dance by the Chochol (a character made of straw, similar to scare craw) symbolize Polish nation unable to act, locked in stagnation and frustrations of its own inaction; Jasiek's call is to wake them up from this magical and dangerous dance. This image belongs to most important allegories of Polish culture.

[84] Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Chopin, p. 186.

succession of cadences in the key of F major, but to me this is part of the strange hypnosis with which this section casts its spell."[85] Rawsthorne first discusses the *Ballades* in general, and then analyses each of the works. He emphasizes their originality, generic uniqueness, and narrative character:

> From some points of view they do not particularly resemble one another; there are many divergences of shape, of formal presentation, and sometimes of mood. . . . In spite of this seeming waywardness, however, these four pieces have a curious unity of purpose, a unity that pays little attention to uniformity of design, or even of scope, but which saturates their most disparate elements and gives them an unconscious cohesion. . . . They are ballades in as distinctive a sense as the scherzos are scherzos, or the mazurkas are mazurkas, although perhaps one could not answer the question 'What is a ballade?'
>
> Of course, it would be absurd to say that Chopin created a new 'form' in these pieces, either by accident or design. But he did manage to produce in them four works of art which, to say the least, have a family resemblance, and which are of a nature sufficiently idiosyncratic to justify a special title. Of this he must have been aware when he called them 'ballades'. Unquestionably they have a strange unity of style, and it is surely not to fanciful to call this style 'narrative.'[86]

Rawsthorne also mentions Mickiewicz's poems in his discussion of the *Ballades*, although he does not believe in any direct connection between them. But he mainly argues, from a formalist standpoint for the supreme aesthetic value of the musical structure:

> Schumann thought that Chopin was inspired or stimulated (*angeregt*) by the poems of Mickiewicz when composing this [First] Ballade. Such literary and pictorial associations, or even origins, were, of course, very much in vogue at the time. They were almost essential feature of the Romantic climate which Schumann himself had done much to bring about. Both Chopin and Mickiewicz were moving in this climate, which pervaded the intellectual life of Paris in those days. . . . Chopin, the émigré Pole living in France, was the son of an émigré Frenchman living in Poland, and he was fired by all the fervid patriotism common to such a situation. To link names of poet and musician was obvious, but to pin down the Ballade to a definite story is gratuitous and misleading, for in suggesting extra-musical connotations the attention is distracted from the purely musical scheme which is, . . . compelling in itself and completely satisfying.[87]

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[85] Alan Rawsthorne, The Chopin Companion: Profiles of the Man and the Musician, ed. by Alan Walker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), p. 51.
[86] Ibid., pp. 42-43.
[87] Ibid., p. 49.

Zofia Lissa, in her Studia nad twórczością Fryderyka Chopina published in 1970, does not find extra-musical connotations distracting and strongly argues for the nationalistic character of the *Ballades*. Lissa debates their connection to Polish Romantic literature (a historical background in terms of socialist realism) and particularly to Mickiewicz, although she does not consider the *Ballades* as depicting or illustrating specific poems. Lissa writes:

> Let us think which elements of national culture influenced Chopin's ballades. The title itself [of this genre] indicates, that these works were inspired by a different kind of art, that is, literature. It is difficult to imagine that Chopin was not influenced by all polemics and discussions about 'classical and romantic art' which dominated the society of Warsaw at the time. . . .
>
> Is it possible . . . to be surprised that the new Romantic literature best represented by Mickiewicz's *Romantyczność* and *Ballady i Romanse*, published in 1822, and thus familiar to Chopin in his adolescent years, played an important role in his works? . . .
>
> It is difficult to say how truthful are the claims of Chopin's biographers, that his *Ballades* show an immediate contextual relationship with Mickiewicz's *Ballady*. . . . We can assume that Chopin was inspired by the general characteristics of this poetic genre rather than by some specific contents. We can not find any specific examples of musical depiction, which was always opposed by Chopin, in any of Chopin's *Ballades*. Rather, only the character and mood of these piano poems, their epic character emphasized by long introductions, their free architectonic framework, thematic contrasts between the sections, broad phrases of tension and resolution etc., prove an internal relationship with this literary genre. This relationship becomes a background for Chopin's innovation, that is, an introduction of the ballade as a purely instrumental genre to European piano literature.[88]

Lissa then describes Chopin's use of folk material in the *Ballades* and relates it to the use of folk elements in Mickiewicz's *Ballady*. She limits their influence to the general mood of a "folk tale," and concludes that "Chopin created the ballade as an epic genre, and this [fact] connects ideologically and artistically the ballades of Chopin to those of Mickiewicz."[89]

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[88] Zofia Lissa, Studia nad twórczością Fryderyka Chopina (Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1970), pp. 77-79. This and the following quotation from Lissa's study is presented in my translation.
[89] Ibid., p. 80.

The analytical approach is represented further by Gunther Wagner, who, in the first part of his 1976 study of instrumental ballad entitled Die Klavierballde um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts, provides a detailed formal, harmonic, and stylistic analysis of Chopin's *Ballade op.23*. Wagner analyzes the *First Ballade* in terms of sonata form and mentions Chopin's other *Ballades*, although he does not analyze them. He also discusses the possibility of Mickiewicz's influence on Chopin's works in that genre.

A study of historical and sociological background and its influence on Chopin's works is also undertaken by Józef Chomiński in his 1978 biography of Chopin. Chomiński emphasizes Chopin's connection to Polish Romanticism, his formative years among Warsaw intellectuals, and his involvement with the Polish expatriate community in Paris following the 1830 Uprising. Chomiński links Chopin with Mickiewicz in terms of their experiences and the main characteristics of their works, but he does not specifically tie the *Ballades* with Mickiewicz's poems. Chomiński's biography is very far from what can be described as "romanticized" and he largely avoids any programmatic interpretations of the music in favor of analytical comments. However, he discusses the *Ballades* in a chapter entitled "Poetic inspirations--the Ballade," emphasizing the poetic and narrative characteristics of the music:

> It is difficult to imagine, that [the origins of] Chopin's Ballades were coincidental. Undoubtedly there had to be some literary inspiration. It was an era when all kinds of art were getting intertwined and were cross influenced by each other. Creation of a kind of genre which could be called a ballade was very useful for Chopin, . . . because he could choose a way of experimentation. The Ballade, as a fantastic genre, did not imply any formal boundaries. On the contrary, depending on one's mood and feelings, it allowed to create a form in a different way. The most important indication of artistic merit was an emotional experience. The Ballades were understood by their earliest listeners in this way. They felt the composer's subjectivism, when he related his secret suffering which moved the listeners to deep reflection and dreams. . . .
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> In spite of these limitations, the ballades are characterized by their own distinctiveness. The opening themes feature a characteristic mood, which is labeled by the historians of Romantic music, and particularly by the Germans, as "Balladenton." . . . Not only the two first Ballades, but also later works [in that genre], were introduced with the themes which can be called "storytelling." In Chopin's Ballades, these are the stories of cheerful, serious, and sad events, and

> the moods are deepening or changing completely when the scream of despair, inconsolable pain, and terror can be heard in an idyllic mood.[90]

A purely formalistic approach to the *Ballades* is developed by Michael Griffel in his article "The Sonata Design in Chopin's Ballades" of 1983. Ignoring any extra-musical associations of the music, Griffel reclaims the *Ballades* for the disciples of sonata form. Griffel includes himself (together with Leichtentritt and Gunther Wagner) in "the minority who see Chopin as a master architect within the sonata format."[91] Unfortunately, his attempts to clarify our understanding of these works are anything but clear; his arguments are stretched to the logical limit in his analysis of the *Second Ballade*. In his quest to find an example of sonata allegro in that composition, Griffel writes:

> When the tempest [the second theme] subsides, the original key of the first theme, F major, is restored. The listener most likely feels that the final A-section of an A B A composition has been reached, as in a nocturne. However, after six measures, the pastoral theme is cut off by rests and a fermata (m.87). An ellipsis eliminates most of the theme, which resumes (in m.88) with its closing portion. However, the awaited tonic cadence is thwarted, and Chopin begins a harmonically restless developmental treatment of the first theme. Intriguingly, a passage which at first appeared to be the final part of a large ternary form (F-major A-minor F-major) is overtaken by the development section of a sonata allegro movement. What really occurs at m.88 is the intrusion upon a reprise of a first theme by a development. In fact, this development separates the recapitulation of the first theme from that of the second theme (at m.140). . . . One finds, then, that in the Second Ballade the recapitulation of the first theme commences immediately after the conclusion of the exposition; that this reprise is interrupted by a development section; and that the recapitulation resumes with the second theme after the development.[92]

Griffel's absolutist approach, however, is balanced by most contemporary interpretations. Another shift in aesthetics, this time from formalism to post-modernism and its notion of contextual meaning, reclaimed the *Ballades* for historical and ideological

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[90] Józef Chomiński, Chopin (Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1978), pp. 112-13. This quotation is presented here in my translation.

[91] Michael Griffel, "The Sonata Design in Chopin's Ballades," Current Musicology Vol.36, 1983: 125-136, p. 126.

[92] Ibid., pp. 131-32, 134.

study. The notion of a possible complex of meanings in a composition opens room for relevance of context. Contextualized again---in relation to other genres, other arts, various ideologies, Chopin's life--the *Ballades* attracted new interest of music scholars within the last decade.

The strong connection between Chopin's music and literary genres is emphasized by Carl Dahlhaus in his Nineteenth-Century Music, where he discusses Chopin's use of the characteristics of literary genres to create a 'poetic tone' in his music. Of course this transformation of literary structures to produce new, original musical genres is nowhere more important than in the case of the *Ballades*, with their characteristic and unusual generic titles and extremely strong literary connotations. Addressing the issue of identity of Chopin's genres, Dahlhaus writes:

> Besides Chopin's idiosyncratic form, which is closely connected to his inimitable "tone," another element that makes up the "poetic" dimension of his music--as Schumann recognized as early as Chopin's Op.2--is his manner of transforming the functional and literary character of his genres, "character" being understood to mean the complex of features that define a ballad as a ballad, a nocturne as a nocturne, or a mazurka as a mazurka. Virtually the whole of Chopin's oeuvre thrives unmistakably on his practice of "interiorizing" the essential features of literary genres or functional music: the "change of tones" in the ballad; the serenade-like melodies of his nocturnes . . . ; or the rustic rhythmic and dynamic pattern of the mazurka, the rural counterpart to the aristocratic polonaise. As a result, his music exists in its own right as autonomous art, preserving the moods of the original literary or musical genres as reminiscences. The general and extrinsic has been subsumed in a "tone" that is Chopin's own.[93]

Dahlhaus also employs literary models in his discussion of the *First Ballade*, when he argues:

> The piece presumably owes its title to its "change of tones," its alternation of the lyric, epic, and dramatic, and Chopin was faced with the problem of establishing a formal equilibrium between narrative ballad, lyric cantabile, and an urgent virtuosity that appears with the effect of an explosion. The means he chose are more sophisticated than they seem at first glance. In principle, all the parts or elements of his form may change function: virtuosity may serve as a transition or as a conclusion, and the first theme may either come to a close or erupt into lyric

[93] Carl Dahlhaus, Nineteenth-Century Music, translated by J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 149.

> cantabile or even into virtuosity. The parts then, are recapitulated in substance but transformed in function; in this dialectic lies the structural and aesthetic point of the work . . .[94]

Thus for Dahlhaus the literary connection manifests itself in generic interchanges within the formal structure of the work, interchanges which are characteristic not only to the musical but also to the literary ballad.

Jim Samson acknowledges literary connotations evoked by Chopin's generic title and its influence on the listeners' responses in his book Chopin: The Four Ballades (1992).[95] Samson argues:

> The title 'ballade' signifies no particular programme, then, but it does invite the listener to interpret musical relationships at least partly in the terms of a literary narrative, even if this can only be at the level of metaphor. It is not so much the intrinsic qualities of the musical work which may suggest a narrative, but our predisposition--given the genre title--to construct a narrative from the various ways in which purely musical events are transformed through time.[96]

Samson further addresses the possibility of literary associations in the *Ballades* and significance of Chopin's title, although "he shared little of his fellow composers' knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, the other arts" (he does however acknowledge here Chopin's contacts with the Polish poets Cyprian Norwid and Adam Mickiewicz):[97]

> At the same time it would be misleading to suggest that Chopin's use of the title 'ballade' excluded its obvious literary associations. In the early nineteenth century the medieval and, mare particularly, folk genre had been effectively reinvented for romantic literature and its connotative values were specific and widely recognized. By describing Op.23 as a 'ballade' Chopin inevitably made a gesture in that direction, and in doing so he established some point of contact with the literary preoccupations of his contemporaries.[98]

Samson also discusses the issue of Mickiewicz's influence on Chopin's *Ballades*, and, although he is far from interpreting the music through the programmatic contents of the

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[94] Ibid., p. 149.

[95] In his book Samson addresses the issue of extra-musical content of the works as well as provides analyses of them. He also discusses the *Ballades* in an essay "Extended forms: the ballades, scherzos, and fantasies," in The Cambridge Companion to Chopin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), and in a book The Music of Chopin (Great Britain: T. J. Press, 1985, pp. 175-192).

[96] Jim Samson, Chopin: The Four Ballades, p .14.

[97] Ibid., p. 12.

[98] Ibid., p. 12.

poems, he acknowledges the connection made by so many authors throughout the reception history. Samson mentions the titles of particular poems associated with the *Ballades*,[99] but he argues the influence of ballade as a genre on Chopin's music. Instead, he proposes that:

> It is indeed distinctly possible that these poems may have played some part in Chopin's creative process, as Schumann reported. But they cannot be part of the aesthetic property of the music itself since no specific designate is part of its subject or content."[100]

But Samson seems to contradict himself in his discussion of the music; he admits "that the genre title encourages us to locate an unfolding story,"[101] and concludes his analysis by addressing the issue of narrative in music and the influence of a literary ballad in the *Ballades*:

> As in the folk ballad, or Mickiewicz's recreation of it, the characters (virtual agents) in the Chopin ballades act out their drama as projections of a narrating voice (virtual persona) which is discernible but unobtrusive, ready to step back and allow the drama to become immediate and real.
>
> Again as in the poetic ballad the 'plot' of the Chopin ballades invariably culminates in a moment of shattering climactic tension before any resolution is possible, and in the process the personalities of virtual agents are transformed and usually enlarged. Such analogies may be difficult to substantiate, fanciful even, but they are somehow compelling. And they can arguably invest Schumann's reporting with more significance than a search for specific poetic referents for each of the ballades in turn.[102]

A different contextual reading is presented by James Parakilas in his book Ballads Without Words: Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental *Ballade* of 1992, where he argues two fundamental issues regarding the *Ballades*. Parakilas believes in the nationalistic origins of Chopin's genre, and in both its semantic and syntactic roots in the European literary ballad tradition. Thus, Parakilas' interpretation of the *Ballades*

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[99] Samson mentions the link made by some between the *First Ballade* and *Konrad Wallenrod* (p.34), the *Second Ballade* and *Świteź* ("...tradition has it that the Second Ballade was inspired by Mickiewicz's ballad *Świteź*, which recounts how the maidens of a Polish village were besieged by Russian soldiers. ... It would be rather easy to map this plot on to the musical processes of the Ballade, if Chopin had legitimised such an exercise through a title or programme," p. 16) and also with *Świtezianka* (p.34), the *Third Ballade* with *Świtezianka* (p.34), and the *Fourth Ballade* with *Trzech Budrysów* (p.34).

[100] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[101] Ibid., p. 85.

[102] Ibid., pp. 86-87.

connects two of the themes in earlier reception of these works; the "nationalistic" and the "poetic." His understanding of the nationalistic origins of the genre itself is clear:

> Chopin might well have felt that dance music alone could not express all he wished to express as a Polish musician. . . . as a solution to the dilemma of a Polish nationalist seeking a European public for his music, the Ballade represented an improvement over the Scherzo. Its "text" was both national and cosmopolitan: Polish ballads, both folk and literary, belonged to larger European traditions; no matter what model Chopin had in mind as he composed, his title invited listeners in all countries to think of what ballads they knew. . . . the remarkable thing about the Ballade is precisely that its nationalism is not secret; every nineteenth-century European would have understood it.[103]

Parakilas acknowledges the various connections made by many critics, biographers, and scholars between works of Chopin and Mickiewicz:

> In the 1830s, then, when Chopin was trying in his music to embody his nationalist sentiments and yet to win the acclaim of a European public indifferent to the fate of Poland and to Polish culture, he would have been attracted to the ballad precisely because it had nationalist significance for nearly every European nation. His piano *ballade* could derive in some way from Polish tradition and still appeal to an international public ignorant of that tradition, so long as it somehow evoked the ballad as Europeans generally knew it.
> . . . Since ballads offered composers little to depict but the characters' words, the usual methods of musical representation were not well suited to the genre. Nonetheless, music scholars long maintained that Chopin worked by exactly those usual methods in his Ballades, recreating in each one the moods, the setting, the episodes of a single story and then keeping his model secret . . . A number of writers even proposed what they considered a likely models--usually poems chosen from the ballads of Mickiewicz--for each of Chopin's four Ballades.[104]

Parakilas also mentions Schumann's statement of his conversation with Chopin regarding Mickiewicz's inspiration, but dismisses it and concludes that "that much-cited sentence hardly sustains the meaning long derived from it" and "Since World War II most scholars have rejected the idea that any Chopin Ballade is modeled on the particulars of any one poem."[105] Parakilas understands the problem in this way:

> As we have seen, Chopin's European ambitions would not have been served by modeling his first Ballade on the particulars of the little-known and unidentified

[103] James Parakilas, Ballads Without Words, p. 23.
[104] Ibid., p. 26.
[105] Ibid., p. 26.

> Polish ballad. That is not to say that he could not have been thinking especially of one poem. But if he was to remind people throughout Europe of the ballads they knew, arousing in them some of the same feelings those ballads could arouse, he would have to draw on features that were common to many ballads. In effect, he would have to base his Ballade on an analysis of the ballad as a genre.[106]

Thus, being as far from connecting particular poems with specific piano pieces as possible within the "literary" reception of the works, Parakilas understands "the story" told in the music as a reflection of the generic characteristics of European ballads told in different times and in different languages. As he states, "[Chopin] was choosing to rely on the common features of many ballads to give his work the power and definition of a single ballad."[107]

Tadeusz A. Zieliński, in his 1993 biography of Chopin, also extensively discusses the relationship between Mickiewicz and Chopin, their common experiences, shared nostalgia, and certain analogies in their work. Zieliński continues the line of "cultural influence" established by Lissa and Chomiński, and believes in artistic influence of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* in creation of Chopin's *Ballades*:

> The new Romantic music, as imagined by Chopin, demanded not only new sonoristic effects, but also new forms. . . . [Chopin] was looking for new, different kinds of forms, more easily related to Romantic contents. He dreamed of the compositions in complex forms and constantly alternating emotional development, corresponding to the title, which--since his school years, when his fascination with Mickiewicz begun--for him was the most closely related and indicative of Romanticism: the ballade.[108]

However, Zieliński does not interpret the *Ballades* as illustrative, but rather writes about the general "ballade mood" in the music. In his highly descriptive discussions of the music he avoids any connections between the music and actual plots of Mickiewicz's

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[106] Ibid., p. 26.
[107] Ibid., p. 27.
[108] Tadeusz A. Zieliński, Chopin: Życie i droga twórcza (Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1993), p. 215. This and the following quotations from Zieliński's book are presented in my translation.

poems, concentrating only on the music, yet, he also discusses the music in terms of its dramatic development, tale telling, and narration. Of the *First Ballade* he writes:

> The *Ballade* in *g-minor*--composed from 1831 on--manifests Chopin's aesthetical edifice to enrich emotional contents of music in a way close to Romantic poetry, but without a literary program; it is also the first instrumental piece of this title, without not only the text, but also any concrete textual content, and yet ideally consistent with the title. It [the *Ballade*] contains not only tone, climate, "the ballad colour"--all that enchanted Chopin from his adolescence in Mickiewicz's *Ballady*--but also clearly developed content, a certain plot or story, which can be "related" only through music, not words.[109]

Zieliński's interpretations of the rest of the *Ballades* are in the same tone. He writes of the developments of the stories, complications of plots, acts of the drama in relation to musical themes, their development, and form. His descriptions can be best categorized as explaining the musical discourse. Zieliński interprets the *Second Ballade*:

> The musical story has less of the fantastic [elements] this time, but more of real, tough dramatism, although its catastrophic and "diabolical," uncanny closure remind one clearly of the "ballade" conventions. . . . The beginning (Andantino) introduces an epic, narrative mood, which is even presented in an aura of the past. A bit dreamy, monotonously rocking rhythm ... reminds of monotonous voice of the bard telling his story, and at the same time it appears to portray the object of the story--some pastoral scene, which is somehow melancholic and unsettled. . . . An extremely brutal contrast to this idyll is brought by the second plot--section Presto con fuoco in a-minor--entering with strong impetus, like a sudden storm. . . . The most emotional act of the work--great, richly expanded coda Agitato--is in reality a continuation of the development. . . . Stable texture and rhythm in both hands suggest, that something dangerous and irreversible is being fulfilled. Relentless movement leads to the catastrophe which is symbolized by chromatic and tonal confusion in mm.185-188. . . . But the climax is reached in a sudden pianissimo--a short return of a soft, slow, sad phrase in a-minor from the first plot [theme]. The work ends with a cadence in a-minor, without any attempts to come back to the warm, major key of the beginning, . . . which emphasizes the tragic conclusion of the story.[110]

One of the most fascinating contextual interpretations of the *Ballades* is formulated by Karol Berger in his 1994 essay "Chopin's Ballade Op.23 and The Revolution of the Intellectuals." Berger establishes a correlation between the narrative in

[109] Ibid., p. 318.
[110] Ibid., pp. 434-37.

the *Ballades* and a historical consciousness of Chopin's community--the Polish emigration of 1830s and 1840s in Paris. This notion is very interesting--it connects the narrative of the *Ballades* with nationalistic and poetic reception of Chopin's music without reference to a specific program or trivial musical depiction. Moreover, Berger's theory links the *Ballades* with Polish Romantic literature in general (through shared historical consciousness) and with Mickiewicz in particular (as a principal speaker of that consciousness) without invoking particular literary sources. In this truly post-modernist reading Berger argues:

> Personal and collective identities always have narrative structure: we identify ourselves by means of the stories we tell about ourselves, stories about where we have come from, and where we are going. The narrative that provided the community Chopin identified with most closely, the Polish emigration in Paris in the 1830s and 1840s, with their sense of who they were was the story of 'Exodus,' its fundamental structure of past enslavement, present exile and future rebirth preserved but modulated to stress the dimension of the future. . . . these Poles waited for a universal catastrophe which would bring the old order down to make room for a new one . . . Chopin's G minor Ballade (and, incidentally, most of his major narrative works, in particular the ballades and the Polonaise-Fantasy) is, as we have seen, a musical narrative which, from a weak beginning, accelerates to a strong and fiery ending, with a goal reached in an act of desperation and experienced as a tragedy rather than a triumph. The homology that I am positing between the temporal structures of Chopin's musical narrative and the historical narrative in terms of which the composer's contemporaries established their identity is based on the fact that both are future- or end-oriented, and in both the envisaged ending is fiery and tragic.[111]

Thus, according to Berger, "the image of the exiles on the path that would eventually lead to armed resurrection"[112] was central to both self-understanding of his community and the narrative in Chopin's music. Berger's "ideological" interpretation and his notion of historical narrative elevate context to the level of meaning. Berger also emphasizes the relative nature of his interpretation:

> It follows that the context of human concern that I have proposed for the G minor Ballade, the future-orientated revolutionary narrative that provided many European intellectuals, and in particular many Polish émigrés, of the period with a self-image and self-understanding, should not be taken as a 'private

[111] Karol Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 77.
[112] Ibid., p. 83.

> programme' which Chopin actually had in mind while composing but subsequently chose to suppress. It should, rather, be understood as one of those contexts the composer might recognize as relevant to his work.[113]

Jeremy Siepmann, in his 1995 biography of Chopin entitled Chopin: The Reluctant Romantic devotes a short chapter to a discussion of the *Ballades* and *Scherzos*. Siepmann addresses the narrative characteristics of the *Ballades'* music, mentions "the story" behind this narration and its folk elements, but he does not link this story to Mickiewicz or any other literary model (although he discusses Chopin's intense nostalgia, the nationalistic character of his music and Chopin's relationship with his compatriots in Paris in biographical part of his book). Siepmann writes of the *Ballades*:

> . . . But if we are to make any sense of Chopin's title, used here for the first time in the history of purely instrumental music, we must presume that he intended a specifically narrative (hence dynamic) form of musical continuity. Considering his sensitivity on the subject of titles generally, it seems safe to assume that the choice of 'ballad' was not taken lightly. What, then, were the definitive features of the word as Chopin understood it?
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> A ballad is a song or verse that tells a story, often of an epic character. It has its roots in the folk tradition, in which the history of a person, a family, a community or a people is relayed from generation to generation to emphasize the identity and continuity of those acts and values that give a society its cohesion. It tells a story, but is fundamentally a poetic medium. And poetry in the folk tradition is something more than art. It uses art as an aid to memory, as a means of engraving its sense and substance on the consciousness of its auditors. It has a mnemonic function, and thus a symbolic as well as an aesthetic dimension.[114]

Siepmann's emphasis on poetry's role in creating collective consciousness stresses the contextual meaning of the ballad genre. Siepmann then links the narrative of Chopin's *Ballades* to their metric structure, and proceeds to discuss the music of each *Ballade*. His short analysis of Chopin's understanding of the ballad genre includes "a story" of community's identity, rooted in folk tradition and expressed through poetic medium--all characteristic not only to Chopin's, but also to Mickiewicz's *Ballady*. Thus, although Siepmann does not bring up this connection, he nonetheless seems to acknowledge

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[113] Ibid., p. 80.

[114] Jeremy Siepmann, Chopin: The Reluctant Romantic (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995), pp. 169-170.

common elements between Chopin's and Mickiewicz's works. He also proposes a story of collective identity, reminiscent of Berger's theory, as the subject of the *Ballades*.

The reception history of the *Ballades* is extremely interesting on its own, as it reflects certain cultural changes of the past hundred and fifty years and different national approaches to Chopin and his music. It seems that with "new musicology" the reception of the *Ballades* comes almost full circle, from descriptive story telling of the Romantic era, through formalistic belief in power of musical text and analysis, to post-modernist attempts to account for the narrative of the music, to analyze both the musical text and its contexts. The evolution of aesthetics has led us through diverse, often contrasting, interpretations of the *Ballades*. As Samson observes, "the 'wordless narratives' of Chopin's age have become today's 'triumphs of architecture,'"[115] yet only six years after the publication of Samson's book, they became an expression of "collective historical consciousness." However, in spite of all their differences, almost all the authors emphasize the narrative and extra-musical (either literary or poetic) characteristics of Chopin's works, and most of them tie these characteristics to an expression of national suffering. In addition, many of the critics, biographers, and scholars link the narrative of the *Ballades* to Mickiewicz's poems. This connection influences our present understanding of the music and its meaning, and the nature of this connection deserves to be further explored.

[115] Jim Samson, Chopin: The Four Ballades, p. 38.

Chapter 2

Alienation and Powerlessness, and the Ideology of the Great Emigration

As my overview of their reception history shows, Chopin's *Ballades* told some kind of story to most of their listeners, even though the content of this story proves to be elusive and difficult to define. Even the most vigorously argued connections to Mickiewicz seem to be, at the very best, tenuous. Nevertheless, two of the most recent attempts to identify "the story" behind the music, by Karol Berger and James Parakilas, are especially interesting and imaginative. They tie the narrative of the *Ballades* to the self-understanding of Polish émigré society in Paris and to generic characteristics of the European ballad tradition respectively.[1] I think that both of these theories are valid and, although they represent different approaches to the narrative implications of this music, they can be synthesized to produce an even more complete conceptual model. My reading of the story of the *Ballades* combines elements of Berger's and Parakilas' arguments. I agree with Berger that the aspirations and struggles of Chopin's generation, its alienation and powerlessness, present a homology to the narrative shape of the *Ballades*. Further, it appears that, for Chopin, such feelings were best portrayed by Mickiewicz's poetry. Both Mickiewicz and Chopin belonged to the Great Emigration,[2] and its story--the experiences of an idealistic generation lost in the fixed world of European politics, condemned to exile by History--was their story. They each expressed

[1] Karol Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op.23 and the Revolution of the Intellectuals," pp. 73, 76-77; James Parakilas, Ballads Without Words: Chopin and the Tradition of instrumental *Ballade*, p. 26.

[2] Although not in the strictest sense; interestingly enough, both Chopin and Mickiewicz left Poland before the November Uprising and they did not take part in the actual fighting. However, they identified themselves with the Great Emigration and, judging from Chopin's letters and Mickiewicz's works, they always thought of themselves as a part of the Great Emigration and were seen as belonging to it by their compatriots.

it through their own mediums, in words or in tones, as a struggle played with a predestined outcome, leading to tragedy through suffering and pain. At the same time however, Berger's model is equally relevant to many of Chopin's narrative works,[3] and it does not account for the extremely unusual title of the *Ballades* (used by Chopin for the first time for purely instrumental works) with all of its generic and literary connotations. Considering Chopin's animosity toward programmatic titles, his conscious choice in the case of the *Ballades* is significant and cannot be disregarded. Chopin's title deliberately links these piano pieces with the literary ballad tradition. Contrary to Parakilas, however, I believe that the richest parallels between Chopin's works and literature may be drawn to Mickiewicz's *Ballady* rather than to a generic European paradigm; indeed, Chopin may even have been specifically inspired by the *Ballady*. Taking Chopin's linguistic and literary preferences into account,[4] it is probable that he was more familiar with

[3] This is also observed by Berger, in "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 77.

[4] This is not to say that I share Keefer's argument of Chopin's "intellectual inferiority." However, most of Chopin's letters written in French are very short and end with apologies regarding his style or spelling (for instance his letter to George Sand of December 5, 1844, or a letter to his friend Franchomme of August 6, 1848), which never occur in his letters written in Polish. In fact, some of Chopin's biographers mention his inadequacies in expressing himself in French. According to Liszt, Chopin avoided writing in French and preferred to speak Polish: "it is said that he departed from this habit [not writing notes to his friends] in favor of his lovely countrywomen, some of whom hold several notes in his hand, written in Polish. This breach of what could have been taken as a law with him is explainable by the pleasure he had in speaking that language. He used it by choice with his family and was happy in translating its most expressive phrases. He was highly skilled in French, . . . and because of his French origin it had been taught to him with special care. But he was prejudiced against it and criticized it for being displeasing to the ear and cold in essence." (Frederic Chopin, p. 122). Chopin's linguistic problems are also reported by his pupil Georges Mathias, who claimed that Chopin could not write well in French (in Mathias' letter to I. Philipp, quoted in A. Czartkowski and Z. Jeżewska's Fryderyk Chopin, p. 393). According to Niecks, Chopin spoke French with a foreign accent, and he quotes Chopin's pupil Gutmann who testified that Chopin "sometimes began a letter twenty times, and finally flung down the pen and said: 'I'll go and tell her [or 'him' as the case might be] myself'" (Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician, Vol.2, p. 173). According to Zieliński, Chopin not only spoke French with a strong Polish accent, but also with mistakes (Chopin: Życie i Droga Twórcza, p. 287). Also, as Parakilas observes, "in the two decades Chopin lived in France (from 1831 to his death in 1849), he never set a text in French" (Ballads Without Words, p. 22). In case of his literary tastes, according to Niecks, Chopin also preferred Polish literature: "if Chopin neglected French literature--not to speak of other ancient and modern literatures--he paid some attention to that of his native country; at any rate, new publications of Polish books were generally to be found on his table." (Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician, Vol.2, p. 164). Also Mathias testified that Chopin's favorite reading consisted of Polish poetry and that a volume of Mickiewicz's poetry was always present on Chopin's table (in a letter to I.Philipp, quoted in A.Czartkowski and Z.Jeżewska's Fryderyk Chopin, p. 393). In his letters Chopin mentions books of poetry three times: in his letter to Białobłocki of January 8, 1827 he writes about buying Mickiewicz's poetry, in his letter to Fontana of March 13, 1839 Chopin mentions receiving Mickiewicz's Forefather's Eve, and in an undated letter of summer 1841 to Fontana Chopin asks his friend to buy him Witwicki's Evenings of a Pilgrim. All of nineteen Chopin's songs are set to Polish poems: ten of them to

Mickiewicz's *Ballady* than with any other European ballads. Certainly Parakilas' argument is a valid one--Mickiewicz's *Ballady* do, after all, belong to the European tradition. Still, Chopin admired Mickiewicz's *Ballady* from his adolescent years; they were a manifesto of Polish Romanticism, and one of the defining works of his generation.[5] Also, if Chopin's *Ballades* had a nationalistic background, as both Parakilas and Berger claim, then to base the *Ballades* on the Polish ballad tradition would be Chopin's most logical choice.

The *Ballady*, although written and published before the November Uprising and the Great Emigration, may be considered to express its ideology in two respects. First, both the fixed world of the *Ballady* and the ideology of the Great Emigration are rooted in Romantic philosophy. In fact, key elements of the Great Emigration's ideology already appear in the plots of the *Ballady*, which contain images of alienation, nostalgia, powerlessness, orphanage, pilgrimage, and predestination. Second, the *Ballady* were written in partitioned Poland, in a political and cultural situation not dissimilar to that of the Great Emigration. Even though the *Ballady* were conceived in Vilno,[6] Mickiewicz too would have felt a sense of alienation since, by that time, Poland was partitioned between her neighboring states. The Polish national struggle was as important in 1822 as it was in 1831. Thus, my narrative model connects the story of the Great Emigration with the archetype behind the plots and characters of the *Ballady*, as well as associates Chopin's *Ballades* with decades of reception history which consistently align Mickiewicz's poems with Chopin's piano pieces.

In this chapter, I will suggest a narrative archetype for the *Ballades*, rooted in the ideology of the Great Emigration and manifest in Mickiewicz's *Ballady*. I will discuss

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texts by Witwicki, three to texts by Zaleski, two to texts by Mickiewicz, and the three remaining songs to texts by Krasiński, Osiński, and Wincenty Pol.

[5] Two of the earliest references to literary works in Chopin's correspondence are related to Mickiewicz's poetry. The first reference is contained in Chopin's letter to his friend Jan Białobłocki dated on January 8, 1827, in which Chopin mentions buying Mickiewicz's poetry (which at that time could only mean either Ballady i Romanse or Dziady Część II [Forefather's Eve, Part II]. The second reference comes from a letter to Białobłocki dated March 14, 1827. In it, describing a humorous misunderstanding, Chopin concludes "It's a pity Mickiewicz isn't here; he would have written a Ballad called 'The Cook'"[in Chopin's Letters, p. 35]. Consequently, there can be no doubt that Chopin knew Mickiewicz's *Ballady* by March 1827.

[6] Prior to the 1795 partition, Vilno was part of Poland.

the underlying ideology of the Great Emigration, Chopin's and Mickiewicz's roles within émigré society, and the striking similarities in the two artists' lives and works. The ideology of the Great Emigration will provide the most important characteristics for my narrative model--the story of a lost generation, its alienation, nostalgia, and powerlessness. Before discussing these issues in greater detail, I will briefly address Chopin's views on the expressive powers of music.

Chopin and Expression

Chopin's views on music, its meaning, and musical expression are very important to understanding the narrative implications of the *Ballades*. Chopin's music has always been described in terms of its emotional content. That his music expresses intense feelings is unquestionable to anyone who listens to it, although he never provided definitive programs for any of his works. Thus, his works are often classified as quasi absolute music simply because they are not strictly programmatic. Samson suggests this interpretation of Chopin's aesthetics:

> He shared none of the contemporary enthusiasm for the descriptive, denotative powers of music, remaining committed to so-called absolute music in an age dominated by programmes and descriptive titles. Yet he did register the romantic climate at the deeper level of an expressive aesthetic, were the musical work might become a 'fragment of autobiography'. In the early 1830s Chopin's music acquired an intensity, a passion, at times a terrifying power, which can rather easily suggest an inner life whose turmoils were lived out in music.[7]

Berger offers a similar interpretation, when he states that "for the 1830s and 1840s the distinction between programme and absolute music should not be drawn too sharply."[8]

Unfortunately, unlike most Romantics, Chopin never articulated his aesthetic *credo* nor extensively discussed his music in his letters. Most of the evidence regarding his artistic views comes from secondary sources, most notably from Liszt, George Sand, and Chopin's pupils. Of course, it is very significant that Chopin failed to discuss art, but

[7] Jim Samson, Chopin: The Four Ballades, p. 4.
[8] Karol Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 77.

this does not mean that his conception of art was "unromantic" or that he had nothing to say; it may simply mean he did not believe in the necessity of explaining music verbally. This understanding of music--as being able to express distinctive emotions without naming them in titles or in programs--seems to be Chopin's concept of art. It lets us believe Chopin when he said "I indicate, . . . it's up to the listener to complete the picture,"[9] and when he wrote of the publisher Wessel " . . . if he has lost on my compositions, it is doubtless because of the *silly titles* which he has given them without my consent."[10] George Sand described Chopin's musical understanding as one in which music was able to "speak" the contents of the composer's heart by expressing emotions but not their causes. She commented on Chopin's aesthetics:

> The master [Chopin] knows very well what he is doing. He laughs at those who claim to make beings and things speak by means of imitative harmony. This silliness is not for him. He knows that music is a human impression and human manifestation. It is the human mind that thinks, it is a human voice that expresses itself. It is man in the presence of the emotions he experiences, translating them by the feeling he has of them, without trying to reproduce their causes by the sound. Music would not know how to specify those causes; it should not attempt to do it. There is its greatness, it would not be able to speak in prose.
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> . . . Where the instruments alone take charge of translating it, the musical drama flies on its own wings and does not claim to be translated by the listener. It expresses itself by the state of mind it induces in you by force or gently.[11]

As Berger observes, it is "the listener's, or critic's, task to connect the music with an appropriate context of human values and interests."[12] Interestingly enough, if this artistic doctrine presented by George Sand is indeed Chopin's, Chopin invited "imaginative readings" of his works and simultaneously emphasized the importance of "acquired meanings" offered by the reception of the music. The validity of George Sand's reading of Chopin's musical understanding is confirmed by its similarity to a rather flowery account by Liszt:

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[9] As reported by Chopin's pupil Wilhelm von Lenz, quoted from Berger's "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 80.
[10] Fryderyk Chopin, letter to Julian Fontana dated on October 10, 1841. In Chopin's Letters, translated by E. L. Voynich (Desmond Harmsworth, 1932), p. 248.
[11] George Sand, *Impressions et souvenirs* (Paris 1873), as quoted in Karol Berger's "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 78.
[12] Karol Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 80.

> He unburdened his soul in composition as others do in prayer, pouring out those effusions of the heart, those unexpressed sorrows, those indescribable griefs that devout souls spill in their talks with God. He told in his works what they tell only on bended knee: those mysteries of passion and pain which man has been permitted to understand without words because he cannot express them in words.[13]

Even though it is difficult to say how much of Liszt's own artistic *credo* determines his understanding of Chopin's, the key elements attributed to Chopin's aesthetics by George Sand (expression of innermost feelings and emotions inexpressible in words) are repeated here by Liszt, thus lending credibility to both accounts. Liszt elaborated further and attempted to identify the sources of Chopin's expression as a national version of the universal--that is, an expression of his country's pain and suffering, and of his nation's soul; as well as Chopin's own subjective feelings. Thus Liszt stated:

> Many a time has a poet or an artist appeared who embodies in himself a people and a period, and he unequivocally represents in his creations the types they strive for and would like to realize. Chopin was the poet for his land and for the period that saw his birth. He embodied in his imagination, he represented through his genius the poetic feeling then most widespread and most deeply implanted in his country.[14]

Liszt also interpreted Chopin's music as a personal expression of pain and suffering, and linked the composer's innermost feelings to those of his nation's:

> His [works] . . . breathe the same type of sensibility expressed in varying degrees, modified and varied in a thousand ways, but always one and unchanging. An eminently subjective composer, Chopin gave to all his works the same vital spark, and he inspirited all of his creations by his own life. Thus all of his works are bound together by a unity, whence it happens that their beauties, like their defects, are always the result of the same order of emotion and a single manner of feeling, a poet's basic requirement for his songs to stir all the hearts of his country to tremble in unison.[15]

Both Liszt and George Sand agreed that Chopin's music expressed the composer's own feelings and emotions in addition to those of his nation. Consequently,

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[13] Franz Liszt, Frederic Chopin, p. 108.
[14] Ibid., p. 139.
[15] Ibid., p. 142.

although the affect of any given work remains constant, its causes are subject to multiple readings. As Berger claims, the listener may provide "appropriate exemplifications, the kind of stories this music might illustrate if it were to illustrate any particular story at all."[16] Thus the "story" behind the music of the *Ballades* will be one of the possible contexts, or causes, for the emotions expressed in the music of the *Ballades*. Berger stresses that his reading of the story, as the self-understanding of Polish expatriate society in Paris, should "be understood as one of those contexts the composer might recognize as relevant to his work" and that it "should not be taken as a 'private programme' which Chopin actually had in mind while composing."[17] However, it is very possible that this might have been a story, or a part of a story, which Chopin had in mind while composing the *Ballades*. After all, although Chopin was always ready to protest against programs, descriptive titles, and overly imaginative interpretations of his compositions, he did not react against Schumann's review of the *Second Ballade* and claim that he was inspired by Mickiewicz's poems. To associate the *Ballades* with Mickiewicz's poems combines Samson's concept of musical work as a 'fragment of autobiography' with Liszt's notion of Chopin's personal and national expression. In the case of the *Ballades*, Chopin's feelings of alienation and nostalgia personify the feelings of the Great Emigration. To let Liszt conclude: "Like true national poets, he sung without fixed plan, without predetermined choice, whatever inspiration most spontaneously dictated. And in this way, easily and effortlessly, the most idealized form of emotion appeared in his songs."[18]

The Ideology of the Great Emigration

The Great Emigration followed the 1831 collapse of an anti-Russian insurrection.[19] Thousands of Poles--members of the government, aristocracy and gentry, intelligentsia and army--were forced to leave their homeland to avoid Russian

[16] Karol Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 80.
[17] Ibid., p. 80.
[18] Franz Liszt, Frederic Chopin, p. 140.
[19] This Insurrection, known also as November Uprising because it was begun in November of 1830, was the first in a series of Polish uprisings in a fight for national liberation following the partitions of Poland between Prussia, Austria, and Russia at the end of the eighteenth century (the last partition took place in 1795).

repression.[20] In the autumn of 1831, approximately 50,000 Polish soldiers crossed the borders to Prussia and Austria, but following an amnesty offered by the Tsar, most of them returned home and only a few thousand (mostly officers) condemned themselves to exile. According to Lewis Namier, the total emigration is estimated at almost 10,000 people, seventy-five percent of whom belonged to the educated class.[21] Most of them left through Germany and settled in France, with smaller groups settling in Great Britain, Spain, and America.[22] This emigration came to be known as the Great Emigration not because of its numbers, but rather due to its cultural significance. It was an emigration of artists, writers, and scientists--an emigration of intellectuals.[23] The greatest masterpieces of Polish Romantic literature were written in exile, and, as Namier argues, "seldom if ever has there been such an exodus of a nation's *elite*, and for the next fifteen years the centre of Polish intellectual life and political activities shifted abroad."[24]

The Great Emigration was divided politically and socially. The strongest debates among the émigrés concerned the causes of the collapse of the Insurrection and methods of the future fight for national independence. Two approaches to these issues were represented by the right wing Hotel Lambert (led by prince Adam Czartoryski) and by the left wing Democratic Society (founded by Joachim Lelewel).[25] Yet Polish society remained unified through schools, newspapers, publishers, libraries, and cultural societies such as the Polish Literary Society founded in 1832 by Czartoryski (of which Chopin was a member). All of this led Paris to be described as the cultural capital of Poland in the 1830s and 1840s.

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[20] Examples of this repression included death penalties or exile to Siberia for any members of the Polish independent government from the time of the insurrection; abandonment of the Polish constitution, parliament, and army; the closure of Warsaw University, Music Conservatory, scientific organizations; and intense censorship.

[21] Lewis Namier, 1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1964), p. 53.

[22] For the exact distribution of the 1831 emigration, see Namier's 1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals, p. 53.

[23] The Great Emigration included members of the National Government Adam Czartoryski, Joachim Lelewel, Bonawentura Niemojowski, Teodor Morawski; generals Józef Bem and Skrzynecki; politicians and writers Maurycy Mochnacki, Andrzej Plichta, Ludwik Plater; writers Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, Stefan Witwicki, Bohdan Zaleski (the last two were Chopin's friends from Warsaw).

[24] Lewis Namier, 1848: the Revolution of the Intellectuals, p. 52.

[25] The main question facing the politicians was their stand in regards to serfdom, for if the peasants were given lands, they would probably join the gentry in their fight against Russians.

In spite of their political differences, all émigrés recognized the necessity to fight for national liberation and believed in its positive outcome. They also shared a "mentality of the exiled," which was comprised of intense feelings of alienation, uprootedness, powerlessness, and nostalgia. These common feelings facilitate a discussion of the Great Emigration's ideology, which was as distinctive as the émigrés' language, literature, and customs. Of course any description of a common ideology behind such a diverse group as the Great Emigration requires some generalization, but nonetheless, there are certain common characteristics that may be attributed to all of its members.

The émigrés shared the same pivotal life experiences: they were forced to leave their country, they lived in exile, and they hoped to return to independent Poland. Thus they lived "Polish lives" abroad, looking at reality--politics, history, and arts--through their relevance to the "Polish question." As Namier states, "these émigrés did not forsake their country but carried it with them. They did not leave in opposition to any part of their own people, but as its true spokesmen."[26] They saw themselves as lonely and alienated in personal and political domains. They were exiles and soldiers of a Polish insurrection that collapsed because no European country would support it.[27] They were powerless as exiles forced away against their will, and they were equally powerless against the *Realpolitik* of European powers. They saw themselves as pilgrims, hoping that someday they would return home, and as orphans, left alone and far from their homeland. And they longed for their country, describing it with nostalgia, idealizing its natural beauty and history, culture and language, traditions and customs. These feelings were strongly present in the émigrés' diaries and memoirs. For instance, on September 25, 1834 Konarski wrote: "I sit indoors, muse, dream, sometimes play the flute, and sigh for home. . . . I eat, sleep, and work like an ox, but the human side of life has been taken from us." [28] His compatriot Wielogłowski exclaimed "God and our people will have mercy upon us, and forgive us our shortcomings, because of our great sufferings and our longing for home, which very nearly drove us mad."[29] All of these feelings had personal

[26] Lewis Namier, 1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals, p. 52.
[27] The National Government particularly counted on France's support, which never materialized.
[28] As quoted in Lewis Namier's 1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals, p. 56.
[29] Ibid., p. 56.

and political dimensions--they described psychological states of the émigrés and at the same time they represented their political situation and beliefs.

The émigrés also did not believe that their emigration would last for a long time, and waited for a European war which would bring back an independent Poland. As Namier suggests:

> . . . the great mass of the Polish emigration was opposed to frittering away forces, and awaited the time for direct action in the very heart of Europe. They developed a creed, by no means free of exaltation and of illusions, yet based on premises which were sound though postulating things not easy of realization. They saw that Poland's resurrection could only come through a war between the Partitioning Powers, and the defeat of all three (as happened in 1918); that this presupposed a general upheaval, a world war or a world revolution; that the July Monarchy, which was steadily moving to the Right, offered no base against the Powers of the Holy Alliance; and that a new revolution was needed, to mobilize popular forces in France and give the signal to Europe. They waited for 1848.[30]

These beliefs found their philosophical expression in the Romantic Messianism of the 1830s and 1840s, which, as professed by Mickiewicz,[31] became the most frequently articulated version of the ideology of the Great Emigration. Polish Romantic Messianism may be characterized as a belief in Poland as a Messiah of nations--their redeemer, whose sufferings would bring salvation and a new age for mankind. Not that Messianism *was* the ideology of the Great Emigration. Rather it was its philosophical manifestation.[32]

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[30] Ibid., p. 57.

[31] Particularly in his Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego [the Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrims] written in 1832, and also in his Dziady Część III [The Forefather's Eve, Part III], written in 1831.

[32] Thus, although Chopin and many members of the Great Emigration were not Messianists, they were still influenced by the ideology of the émigré circles. That is, they felt alienated and powerless in an existential sense, and they believed in necessity of pan-European war to bring the liberation of Poland. As Berger claims, "they all shared with the European revolutionary intellectuals of the period a common vision of history and of their place in it, a vision--driven by the ideology of national sovereignty--of the coming pan-European revolution and war" ("Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 76). Chopin mentions Messianism in three of his letters; in a letter to Fontana of September 13, 1841, referring to the most fiery believers of Messianism, he wrote: "Shall we ever get back to our own land!!! Have they gone quite mad?! I'm not afraid for Mickiewicz and Sobański; they're solid heads, they can stand exile, they won't lose either their senses or their energy" (Chopin's Letters, p. 239). The other two references to Messianism can be found in Chopin's undated letter of September 1841 to Fontana (Chopin's Letters, p. 240), and in his letter of March 1845 (indicated as Easter 1845) to Witwicki, where Chopin writes: "Mickiewicz is not in the same relations with Towiański [a religious mystic and founder of Messianistic sect, to which Mickiewicz belonged and later

According to Andrzej Walicki,[33] Messianism was rooted in European Romanticism, in the recent collapse of the November Uprising, and in the experiences of the Great Emigration. The émigrés needed to find some explanation of their faith and some purpose for their suffering:

> Polish romantic Messianism was a product of a national catastrophe of 1831--of the defeat of the insurrection against Russia--and of the tragedy of the political emigration which followed. We may define it in more general terms as a hope born out of despair; as a result of multiple deprivation; as an expression of an increased feeling of self-importance combined with a sense of enforced rootlessness and isolation in an alien world (emigration); as an ardent search for religious consolation combined with a bitter sense of having been let down by the traditional religious authority.[34]

Walicki also mentions the influence of French social utopianism on the origins of Messianism, claiming that "the Polish exiles reached France at a time . . . when a religious regeneration of mankind was believed to be round the corner"[35] as well as that the

> principal ideas of Polish Messianism were in fact Polish reinterpretations of similar ideas in French thought. This applies particularly to the idea of expiation--of the purifying, redemptive force of suffering, and to the idea of the 'new revelation' which would bring about the Christianization of social life and the rule of moral principles in international relations.[36]

Thus Messianism was a belief in the sacred mission of Poland. According to its followers, suffering through national crucifixion would bring salvation to the world. Believers developed their own catastrophic vision of history which would lead to the regeneration of mankind and in which "the unilinear Enlightenment conception of progress was replaced . . . by a vision of history as a series of descents, followed by sudden upward surges which were achieved by means of sacrifice and regenerative

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abandoned] as before. Towiański declares that they have *overwighted* the thing, that they have gone too far. In a word: disputes; so no doubt it will come to a melancholy end." (Chopin's Letters, p. 281).

[33] Andrzej Walicki, Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 242.

[34] Ibid., p. 242.

[35] Ibid., p. 243.

[36] Ibid., p. 244.

grace."[37] But most of all, Messianism, with its strong emphasis on the redemptive force of suffering, was rooted in Romantic ideology, particularly in the familiar notion of a lonely, alienated individual misunderstood by society (or a group of individuals--the émigrés--misunderstood by larger society, and a nation--Poles--misunderstood by other nations) but nonetheless suffering for its salvation. Messianism was also influenced by the Romantic conception of nationalism. Herder's concept of nationality as defined by language became a European concept of nationality, thus making nationalism a part of universal Romantic tradition. As Parakilas writes, "the new nationalism made the culture of the common people the politically significant culture," while Romantic "nationalism was itself a product of European culture as a whole, not an idea developed differently in each nation."[38] But Polish Romantic nationalism, Herderian in its origins (with its characteristic study of folklore and interest in the common people), developed into a separate ideology full of Messianistic elements (due to the peculiar situation of a partitioned country without political existence). It is summarized by Walicki in four points, which represent the main features of this ideology:

> First, the idea of a universal historical progress inextricably involved in the conception of the nation as the individualization of mankind and the principal agent of progress; secondly, the idea of a national mission and a conviction that it is this mission, and not inherited traditions, which constitutes the true essence of the nation . . . ; thirdly, the ethos of activism and moral perfectionism, the recognition of the 'spirit of sacrifice' as the highest national virtue; and, finally, a belief in the active brotherhood of nations, an indignant condemnation of the egoistic principle of non-intervention.[39]

It is quite clear that this conception of nationalism, combined with the Poles' recent misfortunes, could very easily lead alienated exiles to the exaltation of Messianistic thought; it provided purpose to their suffering, and it gave them hope for the future. The correlation between nationalism and ideology of the exiled intellectuals is also stressed by Berger, who argues:

> Nationalism is a peculiarly modern way of legitimizing political power as exercised in the name of a nation which, in East-central Europe at least, was

[37] Ibid., p. 248.
[38] James Parakilas, Ballads Without Words, p. 24.
[39] Andrzej Walicki, Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism, pp. 76-77.

> usually defined in terms of its culture. Since culture is the intellectuals' domain, nationalism confers on this group the enviable role of the legitimizing priesthood, the successors of earlier priesthoods which legitimized the God-derived powers of pre-modern rulers.[40]

Thus intellectuals, preservers and creators of culture, saw themselves as possessing special powers.

Chopin and Mickiewicz: Affinities

The ideology of the Great Emigration influenced the lives and works of both Chopin and Mickiewicz. The collapse of the November Uprising was a defining moment of their generation--it was the reason for their exile and it was a cornerstone of their ideology, whose aim was to find sense and purpose in the tragedy of the Insurrection. The collapse of the Uprising had additional meanings, and this is especially true in Chopin's case. First, the events and emotions of the fall 1831 profoundly affected the character of Chopin's music;[41] as Samson observes: "the added depth and richness of the works whose inception dates from the year in Vienna, together with their tragic, passionate tone, reflect at least in part a new commitment to express Poland's tragedy in his music."[42] This claim is developed by Siepmann to include Chopin's later works:

> The fall of Warsaw effected a sea change, not only in Chopin's perceptions of himself but of the world around him. It brought his consciousness of personal identity and his now consuming sense of mission into sharper relief than ever before, and the change was soon reflected in his music. Above all, it gave him searingly intensified awareness of Poland and the centrality of his own, deep-rooted Polishness."[43]

Second, the Stuttgart Diary contains expressions of Chopin's innermost feelings to a degree which was never surpassed in his later writings. It is the only document with such emotional content coming from Chopin himself. Although Chopin's feelings are a matter

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[40] Karol Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 74.
[41] This fact is emphasized by most of Chopin's biographers, including Iwaszkiewicz, Chomiński, Siepmann, Samson, Murdoch, and Zieliński.
[42] Jim Samson, The Music of Chopin, pp. 12-13.
[43] Jeremy Siepmann, Chopin: The Reluctant Romantic, pp. 81-82.

of speculation most of the time,[44] here they are presented clearly, and they shed much needed light on his emotional life, beliefs, and convictions. As Siepmann observes, ". . . if Chopin after Stuttgart placed an even greater premium on control, it was in tacit acknowledgment of emotions that *needed* controlling."[45]

Chopin and Mickiewicz did not belong to the Great Emigration in the strictest sense, since they did not leave Poland following the collapse of the November Uprising. However, both of these great artists not only considered themselves to be a part of their compatriots' society, but they were also seen by other émigrés as their most important representatives. Chopin was one of the most important members of the Great Emigration; Mickiewicz, with his moral and patriotic authority, was one of its most articulate and influential leaders. When they reached Paris, both Chopin and Mickiewicz made contacts with their compatriots--other Polish exiles, some of whom were Chopin's friends from Warsaw (Julian Fontana, Alexander Orłowski, and aristocratic families of the Czartoryskis, the Platers, and the Wodzińskis).[46] Chopin always identified himself as a Pole, and, in spite of his name, he was seen as such by Parisian society, both Polish and French;[47] he never even attempted to meet his father's family in France.[48] Chopin gave a testimony to his feelings in a letter to Tytus Wojciechowski of December 25, 1831, where he wrote: "I am gay on the outside, especially among my own folk (I count Poles my

[44] As they are described by other people, mostly Liszt and George Sand.

[45] Jeremy Siepmann, Chopin: The Reluctant Romantic, p. 81.

[46] Chopin's closest friends in Paris included also Jan Matuszyński, Wojciech Grzymała, and Antoni Wodziński. Poles also were Chopin's first audience in Paris; according to Atwood, at Chopin's first concert in Paris on February 26, 1832 "Most of those present were members of the Polish diaspora" (in Fryderyk Chopin: Pianist from Warsaw, p. 60).

[47] According to Niecks, ". . . his most intimate friends were Poles, and this was so in the aristocratic as well as in the conventionally less elevated circles. However pleasant his relations with the Rothschilds may have been . . . --they can have been but of small significance in comparison with almost passionate attachment he had to Prince Alexander Czartoryski and his wife the Princess Marcelline," "Chopin often accorded to persons of his own country what he would not accord to anyone else--namely, the right of disturbing his habits; . . . he would sacrifice his time, money, and comfort to people who were perhaps unknown to him the day before" and "indeed, anything Polish had an especial charm and value for Chopin. Absence from his native country so far from diminishing increased his love for it"; in Frederick Chopin, p. 165, p. 164.

[48] According to Zieliński, Chopin's two aunts (his father's sisters) lived in Marainville, in Chopin: Życie i Droga Twórcza, p. 287.

own); but inside something gnaws at me."[49] The same sentiments on Chopin's part are emphasized by Liszt:

> He saw many young Poles: Fontana, Orda, . . . Counts Plater, Grzymała, Ostrowski, . . . and others. Polish families subsequently coming to Paris were eager to know him, and by preference he regularly associated with a group predominantly consisting of his compatriots. Through them he remained informed about all that was happening in his country and in addition maintained a kind of musical correspondence therewith. . . . His patriotism was revealed in the direction his talent followed, in his choice of friends, in his preference for pupils, in the frequent and considerable services that he liked to render his compatriots.[50]

Together with his friends--the poets Zaleski and Witwicki, Chopin belonged to the cultural elite of the emigration,[51] while Mickiewicz was its intellectual leader unquestionably. Both Chopin and Mickiewicz belonged to the Polish Literary Society and other émigré organizations,[52] which Chopin often assisted financially.[53] Upon hearing of his admittance to the Literary Society, Chopin expressed his feelings in a letter of January 16, 1833: "The privilege of belonging to the Society will induce me to produce works according to the Society's purpose, which I hope to serve with my all energy."[54] Chopin's contacts with Mickiewicz were not limited to frequent social occasions. In 1840, Chopin attended some of Mickiewicz's lectures on Slavic Literature at the *College*

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[49] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 166.

[50] Franz Liszt, Frederic Chopin, p. 148, p. 113.

[51] Chopin often met the generals Dwernicki and Bem, he met the poet Słowacki, often visited Prince Czartoryski (the political leader of the emigration), and attended Polish Club in Paris.

[52] Such as the Polish Polytechnic Society, established in 1835; according to Chomiński (in Chopin, p. 82). Although it seems unusual that the composer would belong to a scientific society, Chopin seemed to be genuinely interested in scientific discoveries. In his letter of October 11, 1846 to his family, he mentions the discovery of the planet Neptune, with a comment "What a triumph for science, to be able to arrive at such a discovery by means of calculation," the invention of guncotton, and the construction of Euphonia--"a very ingenious automaton, which . . . pronounces fairly clearly not one or two words, but long sentences" (in Chopin's Letters, p. 308).

[53] According to Niecks (Frederick Chopin, p. 165), Chopin's pupil Georges Mathias (in his letter to I. Philipp of February 12, 1897), Chomiński (Chopin, p. 83) and Zieliński (Chopin: Życie i Droga Twórcza, p. 286). Chopin also gave benefit concerts for Polish exiles; in Paris on April 4, 1835, and in London on November 16, 1848 (Chopin's last public concert).

[54] Chopin's letter, as quoted in Zieliński's Chopin: Życie i Droga Twórcza, p. 286; it is presented here in my translation.

de France,[55] and he possibly translated Mickiewicz's poetry for George Sand.[56] Thus, Chopin and Mickiewicz not only experienced the Great Emigration, but were among its most important members, helping to define it.[57] While discussing the analogies between Chopin and Mickiewicz, it is worth noting some other similarities: both Chopin and Mickiewicz strongly valued their youthful friendships with male friends; both Chopin and Mickiewicz were noted as geniuses of improvisation;[58] Chopin's music was always described as poetic, while Mickiewicz's poetry is full of references to music.

Nonetheless, in terms of their characters, the national mystic Mickiewicz and Chopin, who was generally uncomfortable with grand philosophical concepts, had little in common, as Iwaszkiewicz describes:

> Chopin often meets Mickiewicz. But it is difficult to find bigger contrasts [between personalities]. The great Lithuanian [Mickiewicz] cannot understand

[55] Mickiewicz was the chairman of Slavonic Literature at the *College de France* in Paris from 1840-44. Chopin attended Mickiewicz's lectures accompanied by George Sand.

[56] According to Chomiński (Chopin, p. 120, p. 132), Chopin translated Mickiewicz's poetry for George Sand on some occasions. In 1839 Chopin translated Dziady impromptu for her study on Goethe, Byron, and Mickiewicz (entitled *Essai sur le drame fantastique: Goethe, Byron et Mickiewicz*, and published on December 1, 1839 in *Revue des Deux Mondes*), and in 1840 he translated some poetry for Sand's article on Mickiewicz. Chopin refers to George Sand's article in three of his letters to Grzymała: in a letter dated March 27, 1839 (in which he describes George Sand's essay and hopes it will influence dissemination of Mickiewicz's poetry), in a letter of April 16, 1839, and in a letter dated September 4, 1848. However, although in his letters Chopin discusses George Sand's study with great admiration, he does not mention translating Mickiewicz's drama (in fact, in a letter of March 27, 1839, he asks Grzymała who translated Dziady to French). Nonetheless, it is possible that Chopin was looking for proper French translation even though he translated the drama for George Sand's article. Otherwise either Chomiński is mistaken here, or he had access to more specific sources. In her essay George Sand praised Mickiewicz's Dziady and equated the drama with Faust and Manfred.

[57] The understanding of Chopin's role by the émigrés may be illustrated by their repeated requests for Chopin to compose a national opera (which was repeatedly argued by Elsner, Mickiewicz, and Witwicki among others). Chopin never composed an opera, but his opera plans went as far as asking Polish poet Stanisław Koźmian to write a libretto based on facts from Polish history.

[58] Chopin's skills in the art of improvisation are noted by most of his biographers and critics. For instance, see Siepmann, in Chopin: The Reluctant Romantic, p. 108, p. 115. However, the most interesting accounts come from Chopin's contemporaries: Eugeniusz Skrodzki, Chopin's adolescent acquaintance, notes in his memoirs that Chopin preferred to improvise in the darkness (quoted in Fryderyk Chopin by Adam Czartkowski and Zofia Jeżewska, p. 70) while George Sand in her *Impressions et souvenirs* describes a compelling story of Mickiewicz listening to Chopin's improvisation (quoted in A. Czartkowski and Z. Jeżewska's Fryderyk Chopin, p. 352). According to the poet Zaleski and George Sand, Chopin's improvisations often included patriotic tunes (in his diary Zaleski mentions Chopin using the tune of Polish national anthem in his improvisation, while George Sand describes Chopin portraying "a prayer of suffering Poles"; quoted in Korespondencja Chopina z George Sand i jej Dziećmi, p. 67, p. 78). Mickiewicz's skills in that regard are described by Welsh, in Adam Mickiewicz, p. 85.

> the young artist from the Kingdom.[59] He is repelled by Chopin's snobbery and his artistic limitation to music. Although Chopin admired the author of *Ballady i Romanse* since his Warsaw days, he is not a romantic in his everyday life. He is afraid of the uncompromising greatness of Mickiewicz, and of his craving for absolute power. . . . Mickiewicz [is] not musical enough to comprehend Chopin's greatness; Chopin [is] too proper, too upright to understand all of the impetuosity and fire in Mickiewicz.[60]

In fact, their personalities and beliefs were largely opposite: Mickiewicz was a Romantic, Chopin a realist; Mickiewicz was a progressive democrat, Chopin was a conservative. As Berger observes, they were two "people of very different temperaments, interests, and convictions."[61] And yet, in spite of all of these personal differences, there are striking similarities in Mickiewicz's and Chopin's reactions to contemporary events. These analogies may be best explained by their common experiences and shared ideology of the exiled, accomplished by juxtaposing Chopin's letters and diaries with Mickiewicz's poetry.

Their road to emigration was similar: Chopin left Poland on November 2, 1830 (only four weeks before the November Insurrection),[62] for an artistic trip to Vienna, while Mickiewicz left Russia in mid-May of 1829 for a trip to Germany and Italy.[63] Both artists left with legal Russian passports, and never suspected that they would not return to their homeland again.[64] News of the Uprising reached Chopin in Vienna in early December, and Mickiewicz in Rome in mid December of 1830. They both declared their intentions

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[59] The part of Poland under Russian partition, which prior to the November Uprising enjoyed limited political and cultural autonomy under Russian rule.

[60] Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Chopin, pp. 151-52.

[61] Karol Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 76.

[62] The November Uprising begun in Warsaw the night of November 29, 1830.

[63] Mickiewicz was deported to Russia from Lithuania after spending one and a half years in prison following his involvement with youth clandestine organizations. He owed his permission to leave Russia for his 1829 trip to Western Europe to his friend Pushkin's help. During this trip to Germany Mickiewicz attended Hegel's lectures and met Goethe and Schlegel.

[64] This is not to say that I believe that Chopin would have stayed in Poland. Warsaw had little to offer him in terms of artistic development and he probably would have left Poland in the future. But he would have probably visit his family and friends were it not for political reasons. Also, his nostalgia must have been intensified by the fact that he could not go back to his homeland, not to mention continuous relations with other émigrés in Paris, who, were it not for the collapse of the Uprising, would not have been there. In fact, the existence of the Great Emigration, although providing Chopin with cultural and ideological background, in some ways intensified his isolation in Paris--otherwise perhaps he might have become more of an international artist. The fact remains that leaving Poland in November 1830 Chopin did not expect never to return.

to take part in the fighting, and, while Chopin's exclamations seem at the very least overstated and difficult to take seriously, Mickiewicz's seem more sincere.[65] In his letter of January 1, 1831 Chopin wrote to his friend Jan Matuszyński (who joined the insurrection army), describing his own inaction and his emotions:

> My Best Friend in the world, you have what you wanted. I don't know what I am doing. I love you more than my life. Write to me. You in the army! Is she in Radom? Have you dug trenches? Our poor parents. What are my friends doing? I live with you all. I would die for you, for all of you. Why am I so alone? Is it only you who can be together at so fearful a moment? . . . Today is New Year, --how sadly I begin it! Perhaps I shall not end it. Embrace me. You are going to the war. Come back a colonel. Good luck to you all. Why can't I even beat the drum![66]

While this emotional outburst indicates that Chopin at least considered joining the Insurrection, more importantly, in this and other letters of the winter of 1830/31, Chopin began to express feelings of the exile--loneliness and alienation intensified by his own inaction. For his own part, Mickiewicz did not reach Poland in time to take part in the Uprising.[67] Instead, he moved to German Poland in the summer of 1831, to Dresden in March of 1832 and subsequently to Paris in July of 1832. Chopin left Vienna in July of 1831 for Munich and Stuttgart, and reached Paris in November of that year. Although both Mickiewicz and Chopin had not done anything illegal in the eyes of the Russian government up to this point, they decided not to return and declared themselves exiles.[68]

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[65] According to one of Chopin's legends, Chopin's friend Tytus Wojciechowski, who was in Vienna with Chopin, convinced the composer (who was ready to leave Vienna for Poland) that he would better serve the Polish cause through his music. Wojciechowski returned to Poland and joined the Insurrection, leaving Chopin unhappy and alone in Vienna.

[66] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, pp. 135-36.

[67] According to Julian Krzyżanowski ["Adam Mickiewicz," in Literatura Polska: Przewodnik Encyklopedyczny (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), pp. 663-64], Mickiewicz left Rome in the Spring of 1831 and reached the German part of Poland (Western Poland under German partition) in August of that year. He tried to reach Congress Kingdom (the part of Poland under Russian partition, where the Uprising took place) but he did not make it in time--the collapse of the Insurrection was already apparent. Thus Mickiewicz stayed in German Poland writing patriotic poems, until March of 1832 when he moved to Dresden.

[68] Mickiewicz renounced his Russian passport as soon as he heard about the suppression of the Uprising and therefore could not return to Poland (according to David Welsh, in Adam Mickiewicz, p. 111), while Chopin entered into conflict with Russian authorities through obtaining a residence permit in Paris, thus, according to Siepmann, "effectively condemn[ing] him to a life of exile" (Jeremy Siepmann, Chopin: The Reluctant Romantic, p. 83). The same argument is presented by Atwood (in Fryderyk Chopin: Pianist from Warsaw, p. 55). Chopin experienced his initial difficulties with Russian authorities in Vienna, where his

During the lonely and tragic winter of 1831, striking similarities appear between Chopin's letters, compositions, and diary entries and Mickiewicz's poetry. On Christmas day 1830 Chopin wrote to Jan Matuszyński:

> Vienna. Christmas Day, Sunday morning. Last year at this hour I was with the Bernardines. Today I am sitting alone . . . [on Christmas Eve] I strolled along slowly alone, and at midnight went into St. Stephen's. When I entered there was no one there. Not to hear the mass, but just to look at the huge building at that hour, I got into the darkest corner at the foot of a Gothic pillar. I can't describe the greatness, the magnificence of those huge arches. It was quiet; now and then the footsteps of a sacristan lighting candles at the back of the sanctuary, would break in on my lethargy. A coffin behind me, a coffin under me; --only the coffin above me was lacking. A mournful harmony all around[69] --I never felt my loneliness so clearly . . .[70]

It is difficult to find any more convincing, or more Romantic, expression of loneliness and desperation. This letter is often linked to the origins of Chopin's *Scherzo* in B-minor, with its emotional outbursts and tranquil, almost ethereal quotation of the Polish Christmas Carol *Lulajże Jezuniu* in the middle section.[71] Chopin continued his letter to Matuszyński by expressing the indecisiveness of his Viennese days. He did not know whether he should go--"To Paris? Here they advise me to wait. Return home? Stay here? --Kill myself?"[72]

It was the collapse of the Insurrection which caused Chopin and Mickiewicz to express their innermost feelings; their loneliness gave way to despair and anger. Upon learning of the fall of Warsaw during the Uprising,[73] Chopin wrote in his diary in Stuttgart in September of 1831:

> The suburbs are destroyed, burned. --Jaś, Wiluś probably dead in the trenches. I see Marcel a prisoner![74] That good fellow Sowiński[75] in the hands of those

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passport was impounded and permission to leave to London denied before he finally obtained permission to go to Paris [according to Mieczysław Tomaszewski, in "Chopin," Encyklopedia Muzyczna (Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1984), Vol.2, p. 114].

[69] In the original Polish version of Chopin's letter he writes here "I thought of mournful harmonies."

[70] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 131.

[71] Iwaszkiewicz links the emotional content of *Scherzo* in B-minor with Mickiewicz's Dziady Część III (in Chopin, p. 135).

[72] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 132.

[73] On September 8, 1831.

[74] These are probably the names of Chopin's friends; Jaś is probably Jan Matuszyński.

> brutes! Paszkiewicz! --Some dog from Mohilov holds the seat of the first monarchs of Europe. Moscow rules the world![76] Oh God, do You exist? You're there, and You don't avenge it--how many more Russian crimes do You want--or--or are You a Russian too!!?[77]

At the same time Mickiewicz's alter ego protagonist Konrad, the hero of his Dziady Część III (written in Dresden in spring 1832),[78] personifies all of his nation through a spiritual rebirth (for the English translation of Konrad's Improvisation see Appendix 1). Konrad challenges God for supreme power and in his last, final struggle, cries:

> Speak, or thunder forth, and if I can
> Not shatter nature into shards, yet all thy plan
> Of wheeling worlds and planets, every star,
> Shall rock, as I proclaim to all creation
> From generation unto generation
> That thou art not the father--
>
> *Voice of the Devil.* But the tsar!
> *(Konrad stands for a moment, then totters and falls)*[79]

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[75] Sowiński was a general of Polish army, Paszkiewicz a Russian general; they took part in battle of Warsaw in September 1831.

[76] This sentence is mistranslated here: Chopin uses the word "Moskal," which means Russian, or, literally, the inhabitant of Moscow--thus, it should be read "Russians, or Muscovites, rule the world." Also, in Polish version of the Diary, as presented by Zieliński in Chopin: Życie i droga twórcza (p.236), this portion is followed by "They burned the city!! Ah, why couldn't I kill at least one Russian?," omitted in the English version as translated by Voynich.

[77] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 149.

[78] This drama was written by Mickiewicz in Dresden in Spring of 1832, and published after his arrival in Paris in Summer of that year. It consists of a prologue, nine scenes, and a sequence of six poems. The drama tells the story of a metamorphosis of Romantic hero Gustav into Konrad, the embodiment of his nation's martyrdom and the champion of its freedom, set against background of contemporary Polish history. According to Krzyżanowski, "the loose structure of this dramatic poem, in which some saw a revival of the traditional mediaeval miracle plays, makes possible the linking of a dozen or so pictures, scenes with individual characters and above all collective scenes, both realistic and fantastic, which despite appearances go to make up one uniform whole, for all of them are associated directly or at least indirectly with the story of Conrad" and it is "the moving masterpiece, immediately recognized as the greatest achievement of Polish poetry"; in History of Polish Literature (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1978), pp. 242-43.

[79] Adam Mickiewicz, Dziady Część III, in Selected poetry and Prose, translated by Dorothea Prall Radin, p. 105. This and the following quotations come from Konrad's Great Improvisation--the esoteric and highly symbolic poetic expression of his spiritual struggle and rebirth. The Great Improvisation is generally considered one of the greatest works of Polish literature, and it forms Scene 2 of the first act of Dziady Część III [Forefathers' Eve Part III]. This analogy between Chopin's Diary and Konrad's monologue is also noted by Berger in his essay "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 76.

Both the poet and the composer express their pain upon hearing of the tragedy of the insurrection using the same images: their despair leads them to blasphemy, they fight with the world and with destiny. Moreover, the battle for supreme power of Konrad (who is also a poet) personifies the power struggle of intellectuals as guardians and creators of culture (and thus nationalism). Konrad, for whom the world of imagination created by an artist is no lesser than the real world created by God, equates his powers with God's:

> My song is worthy God and nature; great
> It is, it also doth create;
> Such song is power and deathless energy.
> Such song is immortality.
> Yes, I have made this immortality I feel:
> What greater deed, O God, canst thou reveal?[80]

and then Konrad explains his urgent necessity for supreme power--a mystic power to govern people by act of his will--for he personifies his nation:

> I love a nation, and my wide embrace
> Presses the past and future of the race
> To my deep breast.
> Both friend and lover, spouse and father, I;
> And I would raise my country high
> Upon the crest
> Of joy, for all the world to glorify.
> . . .
> Now is my soul incarnate in my country
> And in my body dwells her soul;
> My fatherland and I are one great whole.
> My name is million, for I love as millions:
> Their pain and suffering I feel;
> I gaze upon my country fallen on days
> Of torment, as a son would gaze
> Upon his father broken on the wheel.
> I feel within myself my country's massacre
> Even as a mother feels within her womb
> The travail of the children whom
> She bears . . .[81]

[80] Adam Mickiewicz, Dziady Część III, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 99.
[81] Ibid., pp. 100, 103-104.

Thus Konrad, the Poet, in his monologue challenges the Deity for power over the world and other people:

> Give me the rule of souls! This lifeless building
> That common people call the world, and praise,
> I so despise that I have never tasted
> Whether my word has not the power to raise
> And ruin it.
> . . .
> Give me the power I seek, or tell me how
> To gain it. I have heard of prophets who
> Could reign o'er spirits, and so can I, too.
> I would have power o'er souls no less
> Than thou in heaven dost possess,
> To rule them as dost thou.[82]

While Mickiewicz contemplates ruining the world and challenges God for "the rule of souls" over mankind,[83] Chopin directly asks God for vengeance; he wrote in his Stuttgart Diary: "Sometimes I can only groan, and suffer, and pour down my despair at the piano! --God, shake the earth, let is swallow up the men of this age, let the heaviest chastisement fall on France, that would not come to help us--."[84] An even stronger plea for God's vengeance is made by Mickiewicz in his 1832 Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego [The Books of Polish Nation and Polish Pilgrimage], where the poet professes his Messianistic message in the typical Biblical language of the Księgi:

> Rulers of France and ye men of France who call yourselves wise, ye who talk of freedom and serve despotism, ye shall lie between your people and foreign despotism as a tire of cold iron between the hammer and the anvil.
> . . .
> And ye shall cry out to the hammer, to your people: "O people, forgive thou and cease, for we have talked of freedom." And the hammer shall say:

[82] Ibid., p. 102.
[83] In Dziady Część III Konrad personifies Mickiewicz himself. The drama alludes to Mickiewicz's trial and imprisonment in November of 1823 (until May of 1824, followed by his banishment to central Russia) for his involvement in youth clandestine organizations. According to Helszetyński, "Konrad stands for the poet himself, who, in a powerful outburst of patriotism wrangles with God for the sake of Poland, crushed by the Russian army in the uprising of 1830" (Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 190).
[84] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 149.

> "Thou didst talk in one wise, but thou didst avt in another." And it shall fall with new force upon the tire.[85]

Thus, in their reaction to the Uprising both Mickiewicz and Chopin outpour their innermost emotions and turn the expression of their feelings to God. Chopin continued his monologue in the Stuttgart Diary, questioning the sense of existence:

> --The bed I go to--perhaps corpses have lain on it, lain long--yet today that does not sicken me. Is a corpse any worse than I? A corpse knows nothing of father, of mother, or sisters, of Tytus; a corpse has no beloved, it's tongue can hold no converse with those who surround it--a corpse is as colourless as I, as cold, as I am cold to everything now--
>
> The clocks in the towers of Stuttgart strike the hours of the night.[86] How many new corpses is this minute making in the world? Mothers losing children, children losing mothers--So much grief over the dead, and so much delight! A vile corpse and a decent one--virtues and vice are all one, they are sisters when they are corpses. Evidently, then, death is the best act of man--And what is the worst? Birth; it is direct opposition to the best thing. I am right to be angry that I came into the world--What use is my existence to anyone? I am not fit for human beings, for I have neither snout nor calves to my legs; and does a corpse have them?[87]

Chopin's cries of senselessness of existence are echoed by Konrad/Mickiewicz:

> What is the love I feel for man?
> Only a gleam!
> What is my life and its brief span?
> A moment of time!
> And the lightnings of tomorrow, what are they today?
> Only a gleam!
> And the storied ages coursing on their endless way?
> A moment of time!
> Whence came this little world that maketh our mankind?
> From an instant's gleam!
> And what is death that wastes the reaches of the mind?
> A moment of time! . . .[88]

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[85] Adam Mickiewicz, Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego, translated by Monica M. Gardner, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 114.

[86] It is interesting to note that among other similarities, both Chopin's Stuttgart Diary and Mickiewicz's Great Improvisation were written at night. According to the legend, Mickiewicz wrote the Great Improvisation during one night, finished it and collapsed of exhaustion at sunrise.

[87] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, pp. 149-50.

[88] Adam Mickiewicz, Dziady Część III, in Selected Poetry and Prose, pp. 102-103.

Thus the tragedy of their nation overshadowed the existence of both composer and poet, suggesting the senselessness of everyday life. Chopin's outpourings continue in the Stuttgart Diary. In his monologue, which almost reaches the disorderiness of Konrad's mystic outcries, Chopin described his conflicting emotions and his intense feeling of alienation:

> Father! Mother! Where are you? Corpses? Perhaps some Russian has played tricks--oh wait-wait--But tears--they have not flowed for so long--oh, so long, so long I could not weep--how glad--how wretched--Glad and wretched--If I'm wretched, I can't be glad--and yet it is sweet--This is a strange state--but that is so with a corpse; it's well and not well with it at the same moment. It is transferred to a happier life, and is glad, it regrets the life it is leaving and is sad. It must feel what I felt when I left off weeping. It was like some momentary death of feeling; for a moment I died in my heart; no, my heart died in me for a moment. Ah, why not for always! --Perhaps it would be more endurable then--Alone! Alone! --There are no words for my misery; how can I bear this feeling--[89]

It is no surprise that Konrad begins his Great Improvisation describing his loneliness:

> Alone! Ah, man! And who of you, divining
> My spirit, grasps the meaning of its song?
> Whose eye will see the radiance of its shining?
> Alas, who toils to sing for men, toils long![90]

Konrad is not only alone like Chopin; his Promethean struggle with God, like Chopin's struggle with his emotions, takes place at night. Konrad, comparing his supernatural creative power to that of "poets and prophets, wise man of past days,"[91] admits:

> Still never would you fill your happiness and might
> As I feel mine, here in the lonely night,
> Singing unheard, alone,
> Singing unto myself, alone.[92]

Moreover, Konrad has just gone through his spiritual rebirth. In the Prologue to the drama the Prisoner in the Basilian monastery in Vilno is transformed from the self-

[89] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 150.
[90] Adam Mickiewicz, Dziady Część III, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 98.
[91] Ibid., p. 99.
[92] Ibid., p. 99.

centered tragic romantic hero Gustav into Konrad, the suffering embodiment of his nation.[93] The Prologue culminates when the Prisoner inscribes on the prison wall:

D. O. M
GUSTAVUS
OBIT M.D. CCC. XXIII. CALENDIS NOVEMBRIS

(*On the other side*)

HIC NATUS EST
CONRADUS
M.D. CCC. XXIII. CALENDIS NOVEMBRIS[94]

This metamorphosis of Gustav into Konrad brings to mind Chopin's exclamations in his Stuttgart Diary--"for a moment I died in my heart; no, my heart died in me for a moment." Once again, Chopin and Mickiewicz use the same imagery of spiritual death and rebirth, of spiritual transformation, to describe their feelings. Also, Chopin's conflicting emotions ("--how glad--how wretched--Glad and wretched--If I'm wretched I can't be glad--and yet it is sweet") are echoed in Konrad's esoteric outpourings. Konrad feels his superior power and asks for superior power: he challenges God, he equates himself with God, and asks God to grant him the "rule of souls"; he loves for millions and suffers for millions.

Chopin's and Mickiewicz's reactions to the collapse of the Uprising are not limited to existential demagogy and rhetorical questions, as both "feel their country's massacre." Chopin vividly described the images of Warsaw under siege:

> My poor Father! The dear old man may be starving, my mother not able to buy bread? Perhaps my sisters have succumbed to the ferocity of Muscovite soldiery let loose! Oh Father, what a comfort for your old age! Mother! Poor suffering Mother, have you borne a daughter to see a Russian violate her very bones! -- Mockery! Has even her grave been respected? Trampled, thousands of other corpses are over her grave--What has happened to her? --Where is she? Poor girl, probably in some Russian's hands--a Russian strangling her, killing, murdering! Ah, my Life, I'm here alone; come to me, I'll wipe away your tears, I'll heal the wounds of the present, remind you of the past. . . . perhaps I have no

[93] Gustav is a hero of Dziady Część IV [Forefathers' Eve Part IV] published in 1823. He is a self-dramatizing Romantic hero, totally immersed in his personal suffering caused by unhappy love.
[94] "Gustav died November 1823," "Konrad born here, November 1823." In Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 95.

> mother, perhaps some Russian has killed her, murdered--My sisters, raving, resist--father in despair, nothing he can do--and I here, useless! And I here with empty hands![95]

Similar intense and dramatic visions of national struggle, including killing and torture, can be found in Mickiewicz's poetry. Realistic parts of Dziady Część III include three narrative accounts of imprisonment, torture, and murder.[96] In the last of them, Mme. Rollison, a blind mother of a Russian prisoner, comes to plead for Novotsiltsov's[97] forgiveness for her son, and later, upon learning of his death, cries:

> Where are you? I will find you, I shall smash your brains out
> on the pavement--
> Like my son's! Ha, you tyrant! My son, my son is dead!
> They hurled him from a window. . .
> I felt his blood on the pavement--by the Living God
> I sense it here--the same blood, my son's blood,
> Someone here is bespattered with blood--his executioner is here
> is here![98]

Mickiewicz also gives a poetic account of the fights in Warsaw during the collapse of the 1830 Insurrection in his 1832 narrative poem "Reduta Ordona" ["Ordon's Entrenchment"],[99] full of realistic images of fighting, suffering, and death:

> There the flying bullet threatens, roars, yells from afar
> Roars like a bull before a fight, tosses, roots the earth;-
> It has reached; like a snake it curls among columns
> Fires by its breath, tears by its tooth, kills by its breath.
> The most terrible cannot be seen, but its noise can be heard,
> Through collapsing corpses, through moans of the wounded:
> When it drills through the column from the beginning to its end
> As if through the ranks walked the angel of death.[100]

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[95] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 149.

[96] As a monologue of Jan Sobolewski in Act 1, Scene 1; as a testimony of Adolf Januszkiewicz in Act 1, Scene 7 [entitled "A Warsaw Drawing Room"]; and in an encounter with Madame Rollison in Act 1, Scene 8 [entitled "His Excellency the Senator"].

[97] Russian Governor-General of Lithuania, executor of Tsar's political repressions.

[98] Adam Mickiewicz, Dziady Część III, translated by David Welsh, in Adam Mickiewicz, p. 102.

[99] This poem, according to Krzyżanowski ("Adam Mickiewicz," in Literatura Polska - Przewodnik Encyklopedyczny, p. 664), was written in German Poland in the winter of 1831/32, before Mickiewicz moved to Dresden in March of 1832. Thus, it was written earlier than Dziady Część III.

[100] Adam Mickiewicz, "Reduta Ordona," in Dzieła Poetyckie (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983) Vol.1, pp. 302-303. This fragment of the poem is presented here in my translation.

Such examples of similarities between Chopin's and Mickiewicz's reactions to the collapse of the Insurrection may be multiplied. They show how alike the two could be, not only in their feelings, but even the images they chose to express their emotions.

Mickiewicz wrote Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego--in which he presents his understanding of the mission of Poland and of the exiles--in order to reunite various groups of the émigrés, who were already engaged in political conflicts among themselves. Thus Księgi Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego open with the unquestionable statement "The Polish Pilgrims are the Soul of Polish Nation."[101] All of the Księgi, written in biblical prophetic style, also contain the most complete expression of Mickiewicz's Messianism. Mickiewicz presents history in terms of fall, redemption, and salvation, in which the suffering of Poland was meant to destroy immoral contemporary politics:

> The mission of the Poles--the nation whose political crucifixion, like the crucifixion of Christ, was in fact the fulfillment of the providential plan of salvation--was seen in the overthrow of the 'pagan idols' of European politics (Domination, Honour, Commerce, welfare, etc.), in the regeneration of the spirit of faith and sacrifice, and, finally, in the Christianization of political life.[102]

Thus Mickiewicz gives to his fellow exiles not only an explanation for their personal and collective suffering; he gives them purpose for that suffering and hope for the future. This future was to be fulfilled in a pan-European war leading to establishment of a new order. Since the Poles in Paris, like all other exiles since the beginning of time, hoped that their exile would end soon, the Księgi end with *Pilgrim's Litany*:

> By the wounds, tears and sufferings of all the Polish prisoners,
> exiles, and pilgrims,
> Deliver us, oh Lord.
> For a universal war for the freedom of the nations,
> We beseech Thee, oh Lord.
> . . .
> For the independence, integrity and freedom of our country
> We beseech Thee, oh Lord.[103]

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[101] Adam Mickiewicz, Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 113.
[102] Andrzej Walicki, Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism, pp. 248-249.
[103] Adam Mickiewicz, Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 116.

As Namier observes, Mickiewicz is waiting for the year 1848.[104] So too the conservative, mature Chopin: the composer supplied Fontana in April of that year with a description of pre-Revolutionary political unrest in Europe and added:

> . . . there will be no lack of *frightful* things; but at the end of it all is Poland, splendid, great; in a word, Poland. Therefore, however impatient we may be, let us wait till the cards have been well shuffled, that we may not waste our strength, which will be so needed at the right moment. That moment is near, but it is not today. Perhaps in a month, perhaps in a year. All here are convinced that our affairs will be decided before autumn.[105]

In this letter Chopin again let his emotions rise to surface, and once again they are very similar to Mickiewicz's *credo*.

The Themes of the Ideology of the Exiled

The ideology of the Great Emigration, as expressed by Chopin, Mickiewicz, and other great poets of Polish Romanticism,[106] can be defined through certain images which the exiles used repeatedly when identifying themselves. These images, as described by Berger, include alienation, uprootedness and homelessness, orphanage, and morbidity (termed by Krasiński 'a monomania of death').[107] I would like to expand this definition to include powerlessness, nostalgia, and pilgrimage, as all of these images were central to both Chopin's and Mickiewicz's self-understanding. These themes manifested themselves in the previously discussed writings of Chopin and Mickiewicz, full of the most compelling expressions of alienation, homelessness, and morbidity. Nonetheless,

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[104] Lewis Namier, 1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals, p. 57.
[105] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's letter of April 4, 1848; in Chopin's Letters, p. 350.
[106] Particularly Juliusz Słowacki and Zygmunt Krasiński.
[107] Berger adapts these elements of their self-understanding from an essay by Maria Janion and Maria Żmigrodzka entitled "*Frederic Chopin parmi les heros de l'existence du romantisme polonais.*" In "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," pp. 82-83.

the prominence and significance of these images deserves to be further emphasized, again by juxtaposing Chopin's letters and diaries with Mickiewicz's poetry.[108]

Possibly the best poetic expression of the ideology of the Great Emigration, is offered by Konrad/Mickiewicz in Prologue to Dziady Część III:

> The exiled singer shall be free to go
> Through lands of hostile tongue. Howe'er sublime
> My song, 'twill sound an uncouth, idle chime,
> Wretches! They leave me with my sword, 'tis true,
> But first they break its shining blade in two;
> Living I shall be dead to these dear lands,
> And all I think shall lie within my soul,
> A diamond locked within its shell of coal.[109]

Konrad tells it all here--he, like all of the exiles, is condemned to be homeless, misunderstood and alienated in "lands of hostile tongue."[110] The same profound feeling of loneliness was expressed by Chopin throughout his life, his isolation was intensified by being misunderstood, and consequently, he was often alienated from those around him. Already in Vienna in Spring of 1831 Chopin wrote in his notebook:

> Today it was beautiful on the Prater. Crowds of people with whom I have nothing to do. . . . What used to seem great, today seems common; what I used to think common is now incomparable, too great, too high. The people here are not my people; they're kind, but kind from habit; they do everything too respectably, flatly, moderately. I don't want even to think of moderation.
>
> I'm puzzled, I'm melancholy, I don't know what to do with myself; I wish I weren't alone!--[111]

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[108] The following analogies between Mickiewicz's poetry and Chopin's letters are examples of their shared ideology and of existence of the images characteristic to this ideology in their consciousness. The analogies will be limited to Mickiewicz's poetry and Chopin's letters here, as I will address the question of existence of these images in Chopin's music in Chapter 3.

[109] Adam Mickiewicz, Dziady Część III, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 94.

[110] This quotation may be understood in two ways: Mickiewicz's "song"--his poetry--is misunderstood in exile because its medium is language; Chopin's "song"--his music--is not limited by ramifications of language (according to Parakilas, Chopin's choice to compose *Ballades* was an attempt to "embody his nationalist sentiments and yet to win the acclaim of a European public indifferent to the fate of Poland and to Polish culture" and to "evoke, without language, a nationalism defined by language"; in Ballads Without Words, pp. 26-27). Still, even Chopin's music was described in Paris as foreign and exotic. Moreover, both artists were alienated and misunderstood in an existential sense--their "songs" were too national for audience in exile to understand.

[111] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 148.

Chopin's feelings are echoed by Mickiewicz in his poem "Pieśń Pielgrzyma" [The Pilgrim's Song] of 1832:

> Before my house in the gray twilight
> Musicians are singing a sweet refrain
> The notes of guitars, the languid night
> Bring lonely tears to my eyes again.
>
> They are in love, those minstrels gay;
> They sing their songs to a lady fair:
> To me they bring no joy by their lay-
> With whom can I the music share?[112]

After almost fifteen years in Paris, Chopin wrote to his family in December 1845, clearly from a foreigner's point of view:

> Today is Christmas Eve (Our Lady of the Star). They don't know that here. They eat dinner at the usual hour: 6, 7, or 8, and only a few foreign families keep up those customs. . . . All the protestant [*sic*] families keep Christmas Eve, but most Parisians make no difference between today and yesterday.[113]

This letter immediately brings to mind Chopin's description of his loneliness during Christmas in 1830--his first Christmas away from home; fifteen years later Chopin still missed customs of his homeland. Mickiewicz also reacts to his everyday existence in Paris with contempt (which sometimes leads to almost xenophobia). In a prologue to his epic poem Pan Tadeusz [Master Thaddeus] of 1834, he wrote:

> What can be my thoughts, here on the streets of Paris, when I bring home from the city ears filled with noise, with curses and lies, with untimely plans, belated regrets, and hellish quarrels?
> Alas for us deserters, that in time of pestilence, timid souls, we fled to foreign lands! For wherever we trod, terror went before us, and in every neighbour we found an enemy; . . .[114]

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[112] Adam Mickiewicz, "Pieśń Pielgrzyma," translated by George Rapall Noyes and Doris Durst, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 88.
[113] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 303.
[114] Adam Mickiewicz, Pan Tadeusz, *Prologue* adopted from Polish verse into English prose by George Rapall Noyes, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 119.

Chopin, on the other hand, in his letter to Grzymała from Scotland dated September 4, 1848, complained in a more personal way: "I am cross and depressed, and people bore me with their excessive attentions. I can't breathe, I can't work. I feel alone, alone, alone, though I am surrounded."[115] Chopin's feelings seem to reflect the same loneliness of Mickiewicz's pilgrim:

> Fair words and fairer thoughts are mine;
> Much do I feel, writing early and late;
> My soul like a widow's must still repine--
> To whom my songs shall I dedicate?
> . . .
> Winter and spring will pass away,
> Fair weather will pass as the storms are blown;
> But grief in the pilgrim's heart will stay,
> For he is a widower and alone.[116]

These images of loneliness and alienation are closely related to feelings of uprootedness, homelessness, and existential orphanage expressed by the exiles. According to Liszt, after years of living in France, Chopin would say "I am only passing through."[117] Liszt also wrote: "He ended his days in a foreign land which was never his adopted country; he was faithful to the eternal widowhood of his own. He was the poet of the stricken soul, with its secrets, silences, and sorrowing fears."[118] Liszt's testimony is confirmed by the composer himself. In a letter to Fontana of April 4, 1848, Chopin hoped that his friend still loved him, and concluded: "And perhaps that is even more now, since we have lost Wodziński, and Witwicki, and the Platers, and Sobański, and are both left orphaned Poles."[119] At the same time, the image of homelessness and orphanage is prominent in Mickiewicz's poetry.[120] In "Pieśń Pielgrzyma" the hero twice employs the image of orphanage in order to identify himself:

> Why do I stand by thoughts bemused

[115] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 383.
[116] Adam Mickiewicz, "Pieśń Pielgrzyma," in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 88.
[117] According to Liszt, Chopin would quote the sign in his passport, intended for trip to London, which said "passing through Paris"; in Frederic Chopin, p. 147.
[118] Franz Liszt, Frederic Chopin, p. 182.
[119] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 349.
[120] Many of Mickiewicz's characters are either orphans or homeless: Gustav and Konrad of Dziady are homeless, while Tadeusz and Zosia, the main characters of Pan Tadeusz, are introduced as orphans (the identity of Tadeusz's father is revealed at the end of the poem).

And find no joy in the lengthening days?
Because my heart is orphaned, confused--
With whom shall I share the flowery days?
. . .
To thoughts and words I give birth each day--
Why do they not my sorrow appease?
Because my soul is a widow gray
And only many orphans sees.[121]

Chopin, one of these orphans, in a tragic letter of November 1848 to Grzymała, expressed both his uprootedness and homelessness;

> . . . I don't think at all of a wife, but of home, of my Mother, my Sisters. May God keep them in his good thoughts. Meanwhile, what has become of my art? And my heart, where have I wasted it? [crossed out] I scarcely remember any more, how they sing at home. That world slips away from me somehow; I forget, I have no more strength [crossed out]; if I rise a little, I fall again, lower than ever.[122]

This existential alienation of the exiled expressed itself in anxiety which led to morbidity, and an almost inescapable preoccupation with death. Chopin's letters and Stuttgart Diary are full of references to death. Already in his letter of December 1830 to Matuszyński from Vienna Chopin wrote expressing his indecisiveness: "[Shall I] Return home? Stay here? --Kill myself?"[123] A couple of months later, in Spring of 1831, he elaborated, also emphasizing his alienation and nostalgia:

> . . . I laugh, and in my heart, as I write this, some horrible presentiment torments me. I keep thinking that it's a dream or hallucination,[124] that I am with all of you; the voices I hear, to which my soul is not accustomed, make no other impression on me than the rattling of carriages in the street or any other casual

[121] Adam Mickiewicz, "Pieśń Pielgrzyma," in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 88.
[122] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 397.
[123] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 132.
[124] It is interesting to note how often both Chopin and Mickiewicz refer to dreams and dream-like states. Chopin mentions dreams repeatedly in his letters (an interesting example is his letter to Fontana of August 11, 1841, where Chopin actually mentions dreaming of dying: "I once dreamed that I had died in a hospital; and it stuck so fast in my head that it seems to me like yesterday. If you outlive me, you will know whether to believe in dreams; a few years ago I dreamed of other things, but my dreams did not come true. And now I dream awake"; in Chopin's Letters, p. 231), while Konrad's revelation of being freed from the prison comes in a dream; he also considers the nature of dreams: "But dreams? --Ah, that silent, speechless, mysterious world,/ The life of the soul--is not that worthy of man's inquiry?" (translated by David Welsh, in Adam Mickiewicz, p. 78) and compares them to memories.

> noise. Your voice or that of Tytus would rouse me from this dead state of indifference. To live or to die seems all one to me today. . .[125]

And in his diary written at that time he noted: ". . . I got melancholy; --why? I don't care for even music today; . . . I don't know what is wrong with me. . . . I wish I were dead."[126] Chopin expressed the same emotions--anxiety, fear, morbidity--after his arrival in Paris. In a letter to Tytus Wojciechowski of December 25, 1831, the twenty-one year old composer wrote:

> . . .we shall not meet, then, till later; and perhaps not at all, for, seriously, my health is bad. I am gay on the outside . . . but inside something gnaws at me; some presentiment, anxiety, dreams--or sleeplessness,--melancholy, indifference, --desire for life, and the next instant, desire for death: some kind of sweet peace, some kind of numbness, absent-mindedness; and sometimes definite memories worry me. My mind is sour, bitter, salt; some hideous jumble of feelings shakes me![127]

Mickiewicz's Dziady Część III are characterized by constant references to death in both realistic and fantastic scenes. The protagonists suffer and die, and, moreover, the drama is dominated by visions, nightmares, spirits, ghosts, angels, and devils (the last scene takes place at cemetery and Konrad appears as a ghost)--all being attributed of death. Even Mickiewicz's pilgrim cannot escape longing for death, which echoes some of Chopin's outpourings:

> I have felt so much and suffered so long,
> And yet I shall never return to my home.
> To whom can I tell the tale of my wrong?
> In my silent grave I shall cease to roam.[128]

This morbid anxiety was rooted in an intense feeling of powerlessness shared by the exiles: they were forced into emigration by powers of Destiny or History, they were powerless to liberate their country, and they were powerless to even change their own existence. These emotions are most strongly expressed by Chopin in the Stuttgart Diary,

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[125] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 139. This quotation is taken from Chopin's letter to Matuszyński, dated Spring 1831.
[126] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 148.
[127] Ibid., p. 166.
[128] Adam Mickiewicz, "Pieśń Pielgrzyma," in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 88.

but they are also echoed by him years later: "I want to do the best, and I am sure I shall do the worst. But that is my fate. No one can escape his destiny."[129] This sentence could be written by any (and all) exiles. Mickiewicz's Konrad is often powerless: at the beginning of the drama, Konrad is imprisoned; at the end of the Prologue, he already knows that he will be powerless to express his poetry in exile--in "lands of hostile tongue"; even at the end of his great struggle with God, all powerful Konrad "stands for a moment, then totters and falls."[130]

The feelings of powerlessness and homelessness culminate in nostalgia, shared by the members of the émigré society and often expressed by both Chopin and Mickiewicz. This nostalgia, manifest through an idealized vision of their homeland and its past, takes various forms. It exists as longing towards people left behind, towards various places called "home" or the entire homeland, and towards distant, idyllic past when everything was familiar and so much better than the present. Chopin's letters are, of course, full of his expressions of affection and longing towards his family and friends. For instance, in his letter to Matuszyński of December, 1830, Chopin wrote: "I come back, play, weep, read, look, laugh, go to bed, put the light out, and always dream about some of you."[131] Moreover, they also contain expressions of his nostalgia for his homeland or for the past. He noted in his diary: "Everything I have seen abroad until now seems to me old and hateful, and just makes me sigh for home, for those blessed moments that I didn't know how to value. What used to seem great today seems common; what I used to think common is now incomparable, too great, too high."[132] In a letter to Fontana of August 18, 1848 (one of his last letters) the composer clearly departed to a world of their past, vividly living in his memory: "you . . . will remain above my gravestone, like our willow trees, do you remember? That show bare tops--I don't know why poor Jasio and Antek come into my thoughts now, and Witwicki, and Sobański! Those with whom I was in the

[129] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 393. This quotation is taken from Chopin's letter to Mlle de Rozieres, dated October 20, 1848.
[130] Adam Mickiewicz, Dziady Część III, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 105. There are other powerless characters in Dziady, for instance Mme. Rollison who is powerless to save her son, Sobolewski who is powerless to help children condemned to Russian exile, and Januszkiewicz who is powerless to force Cichowski into telling the history of his imprisonment.
[131] Fryderyk Chopin, Chopin's Letters, p. 135. This letter is dated December 26, 1830.

closest harmony have also died for me . . ."[133] Mickiewicz's expression of nostalgia is embodied in his long epic poem Pan Tadeusz,[134] with its florid descriptions of nature, psychology of the characters, and an emphasis on tradition, ceremony, and ritual. Pan Tadeusz is a portrait of both Mickiewicz's homeland and its idyllic past. According to the poet himself, for the émigrés

> One happiness remains: when in a gray hour you sit by the fireside with a few of your friends and lock the door against the uproar of Europe, and escape in thought to happier times, and muse and dream of your own land. . . . To-day, for us, unbidden guests in the world, in all the past and in all the future--to-day there is but one region in which there is a crumb of happiness for a Pole: the land of his childhood! That land will ever remain holy and pure as first love; undisturbed by the remembrance of errors, not undermined by the deceitfulness of hopes, and unchanged by the stream of events.[135]

These feelings are personified throughout Pan Tadeusz, but their clearest expression comes from the very beginning of the poem, where Mickiewicz becomes the Narrator:

> Litva![136] My country, like art thou to health,
> For how to prize thee he alone can tell
> Who has lost thee. I behold thy beauty now
> In full adornment, and I sing of it
> Because I long for thee.[137]

Finally, another prominent theme the exiles identified with--pilgrimage--is one of the most important images in Mickiewicz's poetry. Of course, the importance of pilgrimage, one of the most significant archetypes of Romanticism,[138] rooted in the existential conception of human life as a journey of self improvement through suffering

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[132] Ibid., p. 148. This quotation is taken from Chopin's notebook, dated in Spring 1831.
[133] Ibid., p. 367.
[134] The poem was written in 1834 in Paris and it consists of twelve Books.
[135] Adam Mickiewicz, Pan Tadeusz, *Prologue*, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 119, p. 120.
[136] Mickiewicz refers here to Lithuania, his native region (he was a Pole born at Lithuania, which, since 1384 until the partition of 1795, formed a political confederation with the Kingdom of Poland).
[137] Adam Mickiewicz, Pan Tadeusz, translated by Maude Ashurst, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 122.
[138] And indeed, of all times. The Romantic notion of pilgrimage originated in Romantic philosophy (the concept of divided and alienated man) as well as in the Platonian conception of life as eternal circular procession from and towards the One (metaphysical unity identified with Goodness) and in the Christian conception of life as a linear journey identified by division from God through sin, redemption, and reintegration. Various manifestations of these archetypes include the myths of Odysseus, Orfeo, and Hercules; Biblical stories of the exodus and the prodigal son; the myth of the Wandering Jew, and the legends of the wandering knights of the Middle Ages.

or moral betterment,[139] was not limited to Polish émigrés in Paris. However, for Polish exiles this image had additional value--it described their real life situation. They were wanderers not only in an existential, but also in a very real sense. Thus Mickiewicz chose to address his fellow exiles in Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego, and he constantly referred to the exile as pilgrimage. In 1833 he was also an editor of the periodical for Polish émigrés in Paris, entitled, not surprisingly, Pielgrzym Polski [The Polish Pilgrim].[140] In this light it is interesting that one of Chopin's *Ballades* was referred to by Mallefille as the "Polish Ballade,"[141] and that the *Second Ballade* was referred to by Chopin's publisher Probst as the "Pilgrim's Ballade."[142] The significance of the image of pilgrimage for Chopin, Mickiewicz, and other Romantics is also emphasized by Liszt, who wrote, describing an evening in Paris:

> Assembled around the piano in the lighted area were several figures of brilliant renown: Heine, saddest of humorists, listening with the interest of a compatriot to the tales that Chopin told him, tales about the mysterious land that also haunted his airy fancy since he had explored its most delightful parts. By mere suggestion of word and tone he and Chopin understood each other, and the musician answered with surprising phrases the questions that the poet softly asked about those unknown regions. . . . [Heine] would ask "if the roses there still glowed with so proud a flame? If the trees there still sang so harmoniously in the moonlight?" Chopin would reply, and both, after talking long and intimately of the charms of that aerial country, would fall silent in the throes of nostalgia. This affected Heine so when he compared himself to that Dutch captain of the *phantom ship*, with his crew eternally tossed on the chilling waves and "vainly sighing '*Amsterdam! Amsterdam! When shall we again see Amsterdam!*'". . .[143]

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[139] The Romantic conception of pilgrimage was particularly formulated by German philosophers Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Progressive self-improvement, as postulated by Mickiewicz towards exiles, is discussed by Hegel in his Phenomenology of the Spirit. Some of the most prominent Romantic personifications of the wanderer/pilgrim archetype include Byron's Child Harold and Giaur, to some degree Goethe's Faust, and Wagner's heroes such as the Flying Dutchman, Tannhauser, Lohengrin, and Parsifal.

[140] An image of pilgrim and pilgrimage appear in many of Mickiewicz's poems, such as "The Pilgrim's Song," "Petersburg," and the pilgrim as the narrator of "Crimean Sonnets."

[141] According to Berger, Mallefille referred to either the *First* or the *Second Ballade*; in "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 81.

[142] Probst's letter is quoted by Kallberg in his essay "Chopin in the Marketplace: Aspects of the International Music Publishing Industry in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," Notes 39 (1982/83), p. 812.

[143] Franz Liszt, Frederic Chopin, pp. 91-92.

Thus, Chopin's nostalgic description of his homeland induced Heine to think of another, mythical wanderer--the Flying Dutchman.

The key elements of the ideology of the exiled, as a part of larger nationalistic and Romantic ideology, are already present in Mickiewicz's earlier works, particularly in his collection Ballady i Romanse [Ballads and Romances]. Mickiewicz's *Ballady* are signaled by Schumann as a source of Chopin's inspiration in composing his *Ballades*, and they emphasize the analogy between the generic titles of Mickiewicz's poems and Chopin's piano works. It is now time to turn to Mickiewicz's use of the themes of alienation, homelessness, morbidity, powerlessness, nostalgia, and pilgrimage in the *Ballady*.

Chapter 3

Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and Musical Discourse in Chopin's *Second Ballade*

Chopin's nostalgia, ever present in his letters, as we have seen in Chapter 2, might have found perfect representation in the collection of Mickiewicz's *Ballady*. Like all other émigrés, Chopin "the nostalgic exile" would sometimes probably engage in psychological 'journeys' to his homeland and idyllic past.[1] There, among his memories, he would have encountered the world of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and the literary controversy stirred by their publication in 1822.[2] As the most important literary event in the Warsaw of Chopin's youth, the *Ballady* could have represented to Chopin everything he longed for--is worry free years with his family and friends, his adolescence, and his homeland--a perfect time and a perfect place. With their emphasis on the distant past and uncomplicated world of simple values, for the lonely Chopin of the 1830s the *Ballady* might have symbolized an innocent world before the fall. This meaning of the *Ballady* may be easily connected to the ideology of the exiled, where the destruction of this idyllic world was encapsulated by the collapse of the November Uprising, and followed by the suffering of the exiles and hope for redemption embodied in national liberation. This understanding of the *Ballady* is manifest on the level of Chopin's personal life (with the

[1] As Liszt testified in an account cited previously in Chapter 2, p. 79.

[2] The publication of Mickiewicz's first collection of poems (which included Ballady i Romanse, considered a manifesto of Polish Romanticism) in 1822 stirred a fiery debate between the writers of the older generation and classical orientation (represented by Kazimierz Brodziński and Jan Śniadecki) and the young Romantics (Mickiewicz, Stefan Witwicki, Adam Zaleski among others). As Zofia Lissa observes, this aesthetic debate of 1820s coincided with Chopin formative years. According to Lissa, Chopin knew the *Ballady* since his adolescence, he was involved in literary discussions (his personal friends included Witwicki and Zaleski, while Brodziński was a friend of Chopin's father and a frequent guest in Chopin's home) and attended Brodziński's lectures in aesthetics and Polish literature in 1826. Moreover, Lissa claims that Warsaw society of that time (with daily discussions in the cafés and over twenty literary periodicals published regularly) had a decisive influence on Chopin's views on literature in general and on his creation of piano ballad genre in particular (in Studia nad Twórczością Fryderyka Chopina, pp. 77-80).

Ballady as a symbol of his 'perfect' youth years in his homeland, the tragedy of the Uprising as the fall, and the loneliness of his emigration years as the process of redemption) and on the universal level of the history of his nation (with *Ballady* denoting a perfect, distant past of the entire nation, followed by the fall exemplified by the collapse of November Uprising, and by the redemptive suffering of the exiles of the Great Emigration). If this emotional value of the *Ballady* as a symbol of the perfect world before the fall, rooted in Chopin's nostalgia, is connected to his desire to create new, deeper music--embodied in new genres and new forms--in the 1830s (for which the generic characteristics of literary ballads with their narrative qualities and mixture of epic, dramatic and lyric elements would prove an ideal medium), one might hypothesize that Chopin may well have been inspired to compose his most original piano works by Mickiewicz's *Ballady*.

Moreover, if indeed Chopin intended to create a nationalistic genre in his *Ballades*, Mickiewicz's *Ballady* would be the most probable source of his inspiration for two obvious reasons: the poems were Polish, and the genre itself was considered nationalistic by many in the Romantic generation. The *Ballady* for Chopin were not only associated with nostalgia--with an idyllic past (either his own or his nation's) and his homeland--but also with nationalism and the story of a lost--Chopin's own--generation.[3] Romantic notions of nationalism underpin both Mickiewicz's interest in the ballad genre in the 1820s and the ideology of the exiled in 1830s. Thus, the key elements of the ideology of the exiled--the images of loneliness and alienation, homelessness and orphanage, anxiety and morbidity, powerlessness, nostalgia, and pilgrimage--as a part of larger nationalistic and Romantic ideology, are already present in *Ballady* of Mickiewicz's 1822 collection Ballady i Romanse [Ballads and Romances]. After all, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, Polish nationalism of the early nineteenth century was rooted in the Herderian concept of a nation whose purest attributes--language and customs--are represented by the common folk; all definitions of ballads qualify them as a

[3] Nationalistic aspects of ballads in general are argued by James Parakilas in Ballads Without Words, p. 26, while nationalistic elements of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* are also emhasized by David Welsh in Adam Mickiewicz, p. 20.

narrative folk songs. Therefore it is not surprising that Mickiewicz in his Preface to *Ballady* quoted Herder, offered a survey of folk ballads, and emphasized that his ballads were modeled on genuine folk tradition rather then on the sentimental literary ballads of the eighteenth century.[4] As David Welsh observes, the Romantic poets, including Mickiewicz, "believed that the primitive simplicity of genuine ballads was valuable for its own sake, and that the more primitive people were, the more genuine their poetry. Poetry . . . would be closer to Truth if it avoided contact with artificial civilization."[5] Welsh also elaborates on the nationalistic aspects of ballad genre:

> Mickiewicz's . . . urge to return to the common folk as a source of linguistic inspiration was strengthened by a patriotic motive. Folk poetry was believed to be the truest source of national poetry as contrasted to cosmopolitan (French) poetry. The cult of the vernacular language was intensified in Poland of the early nineteenth century because of the political disasters of the Partitions, which threatened the very existence of Polish culture, tradition, and literature.[6]

Thus the *Ballady*, with their strong nationalistic overtones, associations with Chopin's past and homeland, possible embodiment of his nostalgia, presence of the most important elements of the ideology of the exiled, and structural characteristics which can be translated into purely instrumental music, must be considered (in both semantic and syntactic sense) as a very close relative to Chopin's *Ballades* in the cultural web of the 1820s and 1830s, if not actually a direct influence. In this chapter I will analyze Mickiewicz's *Ballady* in terms of the general characteristics of the genre, plots, and manifestations of the recurring themes of the ideology of the exiled. I will follow this discussion of the narrative of alienation and powerlessness as presented in the *Ballady* with a short analysis of the poems' structure. I will conclude with a discussion of manifestations of semantic content of the *Ballady* in the musical discourse of the *Second Ballade* and of the possible influence of the poems' structure on its musical form.

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[4] According to Welsh, in Adam Mickiewicz, p. 19.
[5] Ibid., p. 19.
[6] Ibid., p. 20.

Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and the Themes of the Ideology of the Emigration

The literary ballad is defined in the Encyclopedia Britannica as a short narrative folk song which

> tells a compact tale in a style that achieves bold, sensational effects through deliberate starkness and abruptness. Despite a rigid economy of narrative, it employs a variety of devices to prolong highly charged moments in the story and to thicken the emotional atmosphere, the most common being a frequent repetition of some key word, line, or phrase. Any consequent bareness of texture finds ample compensation in this dramatic rhetoric.[7]

In his description of the genre, Walsh notes that "the narrator submerges his own personality and tells the tale in spare, often colorless, words" and that "the poetic effects . . . are produced in indirect, less obvious ways--by hints and suggestions, by imagery, rhythm, and refrain."[8] Mickiewicz's *Ballady*--his poetic recreations of a folk genre--conform to these general characteristics (for English translations of *Romantyczność*, *Świtezianka*, and *Lilije* see Appendix 2).[9] In addition, their conception was based on Mickiewicz's understanding of the role of folk culture--its language, songs, beliefs, values, traditions, and customs--in defining and preserving national identity. This belief in the essential nationalistic value of artistic endeavors of the common people is best described by the poet himself. Consider the following, from the *Pieśń Wajdeloty* [Song of the Wajdelote]:

> O native song! Between the elder day,
> Ark of the Covenant, and younger times,
> Wherein their heroes' swords the people lay,
> Their flowers of thought--and web of native rhymes.

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[7] "Ballad" in Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol.1, p. 837.

[8] David Welsh, Adam Mickiewicz, pp. 18-19.

[9] Mickiewicz's collection Ballady i Romanse of 1822 includes nine ballads: *Romantyczność* [Romanticism], *Świteź* [Świteź Lake], *Świtezianka* [Naiad of Świteź, sometimes translated as The Nixie], *Rybka* [The Fish], *Powrót Taty* [Father's Return], *To Lubię* [This I Like], *Pani Twardowska* [Mrs. Twardowska, sometimes translated as Twardowski's Wife], *Tukaj albo Próby przyjaźni* [Tukaj or the Tests of Friendship], and *Lilije* [The Lilies]. My discussion of *Ballady* will be largely based in these ballads, since this collection was most popular, stirred artistic debates in Chopin's youth, and some of these poems are quoted as "programs" for Chopin's *Ballades* in reception history. However, Mickiewicz also included a formal ballad [entitled

Thou ark! No stroke can break thee or subdue,
While thine own people hold thee not debased.
O native song! Thou art as guardian placed.
Defending memories of a nation's word.

The Archangel's wings are thine, his voice thine too,
And often wieldest thou Archangel's sword.
The flame devoureth story's pictured words,
And thieves with steel will scatter treasured hoards.
But scatheless is the song the poet sings.
And should vile spirits still refuse to give
Sorrow and hope, whereby the song may live,
Upward she flieth and the ruin clings,
And thence relateth ancient histories.[10]

Thus the *Ballady* for Mickiewicz were not only an aesthetic exercise in recreating the artistic version of an ancient folk genre, they also had the function of defining and preserving folk tales and language. This role of the poems was particularly important in partitioned Poland, at a time when the very existence of Polish language and culture was threatened. Poland's peculiar political situation in the nineteenth century strengthened even more the nationalistic dimension of Mickiewicz's collection for the poet himself and for his audience.

This strongly nationalistic role of the *Ballady* for generations of Polish audiences differentiates Mickiewicz's poems from other ballads of the European tradition. However, other elements of the poems conform to that tradition, and particularly to its Nordic stream.[11] Mickiewicz's *Ballady* feature impersonal, most often unidentified, and usually omniscient Narrators, who relate their story without unnecessary details or emotions.[12] This impersonality is best illustrated in instances when the Narrator

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Alpuhara's Song] in his narrative poem *Konrad Wallenrod* of 1828 and wrote two other ballads in the same year: *Czaty* [The Guards] and *Trzech Budrysów* [The Three Sons of Budrys].

[10] Adam Mickiewicz, *Pieśń Wajdeloty*, translated by Maude Ashurst Biggs, in Selected Poetry and Prose, pp. 77-78. *Pieśń Wajdeloty* is a part of *Konrad Wallenrod* of 1828.

[11] William J. Entwistle, in European Balladry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), classifies Polish as well as Lithuanian ballads as belonging to a group of Nordic ballads. An imaginative discussion of the characteristics of Nordic ballads is provided by James Parakilas in Ballads Without Words, pp. 31-48.

[12] The *Ballady* feature some exceptions to this rule; in *Romantyczność* and *To Lubię* the Narrator can be identified with the poet himself, in *Powrót Taty* the Narrator can be identified as the children's mother,

describes death, murder, or madness. For instance, in *Tukaj* the Narrator simply relates that the protagonist "Tukaj, among complaints and groans/ Saying farewell for eternity/ Closed his waning eyes," while in the *Lilije* the Narrator impartially describes a murder at the beginning of the poem, remaining uninvolved:

> Monstrous deed: A lady bright
> Slays her own, her wedded knight;
> Buries him beside a brook
> In a grove where none will look.[13]

This concentration on pure facts without any consideration for their emotional impact on the Narrator's part is one of the most striking features of the ballad genre. Also, the Narrator introduces other characters and circumstances of the story,[14] stimulates the audience's curiosity, and has the privilege of concluding the ballad by recounting a resolution of the struggle within the plot. Accordingly, it is the all-knowing Narrator of the *ballada Romantyczność* who delivers Mickiewicz's Romantic manifesto, which takes aim at the rationalism of the Enlightenment:

> I answer modestly: "The maid can feel,
> The common people to their faith are true:
> Feeling and faith to me far more reveal
> Than eyes and spectacles, though learned, do.
>
> "You delve among dead truths, to man unknown,
> The world you see in dust and specks of light;
> But Truth you know not, miracles disown--
> Look in your heart, that still may see aright!"[15]

The Narrator's knowledge of the outcome of the plot contributes to his impersonal and often detached role within the poems. Also, it is connected to another important characteristic of the *Ballady*, which usually relate a pre-destined drama played within the boundaries of an unchanging world, a drama whose outcome is rooted in its origins.

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while in *Świteź* the first Narrator is substituted by Tuhan's daughter relating her tale. In addition, in *To Lubię* the Narrator describes his skepticism and then his fear thus breaking the rule of impersonality.

[13] Adam Mickiewicz, *Lilije*, translated by Dorothea Prall Radin, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 37.

[14] The exception here is *Romantyczność*, where ballad opens in present tense with the Narrator talking to the Girl.

[15] Adam Mickiewicz, *Romantyczność*, translated by George Rapall Noyes and Jewell Parish, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 28.

Therefore the Narrator's opening lines, while introducing the plot and the characters, usually also hint at their destruction (or salvation, which happens less often). In *Świtezianka* the Narrator concludes his description of the Youth's oath of fidelity to his beloved with an ominous question, and follows it with a warning:

> Then the youth knelt down and with sand in his palm
> He called on the powers of hell,
> He swore by the moon so holy and calm--
> Will he hold to his oath so well?
>
> "I counsel you, hunter, to keep your oath
> And the promise that here you swore;
> For woe to the man, who shall break it, both
> While he lives and forevermore."[16]

At this point the reader knows that the Youth will not be able to "hold to his oath," and that something terrible is going to happen to him. Thus, no matter what the Youth's actions will be, with his simple question and admonition the Narrator lets us know that the outcome of this drama has been already decided. In *Świteź*, when the Narrator relates that prince Tuhan regrets leaving his city and women undefended, the reader knows that his fears are valid, that the city will be attacked and its inhabitants will be in danger. In *Lilije*, when the Narrator concentrates on flowers planted by the murderous wife on her husband's grave just after describing the murder itself, we know that the flowers will probably bring her downfall. The static nature of the ballad world is also emphasized by Parakilas, who writes:

> It is a given that whatever the protagonist defies . . . is immutable and unyielding. The world is presented in ballads as an unchanging and unchangeable place, and that view of the world could be considered simply to reflect the beliefs of people living in the isolated, peasant "ballad society" where folk ballads developed.[17]

This pre-destined nature of the narratives in the *Ballady* does not preclude action and dialogue within each of the poems, but rather it is related to the final outcome of the plot;

[16] Adam Mickiewicz, *Świtezianka*, translated by Dorothea Prall Radin, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 30.
[17] James Parakilas, Ballads Without Words, p. 36.

it is not that the protagonists cannot act, but that the results of their actions are already decided and known to the Narrator.

If all of the *Ballady* feature one common theme, it is the protagonists' conflict with commonly held, basic values.[18] These values include beliefs (the mad girl in *Romantyczność*, the rational traveler in *To Lubię*), social structure (the love between a peasant girl and her lord in *Rybka*), laws between people (the unfaithful lover in *Świtezianka*, the robbers in *Powrót Taty*, the murderous wife in *Lilije*) or between nations (Russians attacking a defenseless city in *Świteź).* This basic conflict structure can be mapped on to Parakilas' interesting definition of a narrative model of the ballad, which he terms *ballad process*. In his discussion of ballad themes, Parakilas notes:

> The process, in the first place, centers on one character, though that character interacts with others who are necessary to the process. . . . the process is marked by a single change in that principal character's role: from being an *agent*, an actor, she or he turns into a *patient*, someone passive or acted upon. The process, furthermore, is self-contained: it is initiated by an act of the principal character and completed by the response to that act. In ballads of our special repertory [Nordic ballads], the same kind of act and the same kind of response appear over and over again: the act is the defiance of the nature of things, and the response is the reckoning for that act of defiance.[19]

Parakilas' model corresponds to general structure of conflict in the *Ballady*, where acts of defiance are pre-destined to bring the final reckoning to the protagonist, but do not change the world around them. Parakilas differentiates between two kinds of reckoning: revelation followed by retribution, and return or restoration.[20] In the case of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* reckoning almost always takes form of retribution.[21] The only three instances where revelation brings return or restoration are in two 'belief ballads'

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[18] According to Parakilas, it is the "defiance of the nature of things," which includes authority, truth, and the laws of family and social life (in Ballads Without Words, pp. 35, 36).

[19] Parakilas defines here a general narrative model for all ballads of Nordic tradition, not only Mickiewicz's *Ballady*. In his Ballads Without Words, p. 35.

[20] Here again Parakilas makes a general statement in relation to the ballads of Nordic tradition, in Ballads Without Words, p. 36.

[21] In *Świteź* the Russians die when they try to touch flower-women of the sunken city; the unfaithful Youth of *Świtezianka* dies and is condemned to a thousand years of suffering; the lusty Lord in *Rybka* is changed, together with his wife, into a stone; Tukaj, the protagonist of the ballad *Tukaj*, is outwitted by the Devil and instead of eternal life, is condemned to hell; the murderous wife of *Lilije* is taken by her husband to the grave.

Romantyczność and *To Lubię* where rational protagonists must realize that the feeling and faith of the common people are closer to the Truth than their knowledge, and in *Powrót Taty* where the prayers of innocent children save their father from robbers. In other ballads, the protagonists' defiance ends in final retribution, usually in the form of death and eternal damnation. This retribution, however, takes the form of punishment to the act of defiance and relates to the protagonists only--the world around them does not change. Thus even retribution ballads end with some kind of restoration, after the main characters have been punished.

This 'crime and punishment' outcome of the ballad contributes to the moral dimension of the genre. In each of the *Ballady* Mickiewicz's Narrator provides simple, universal rules of right and wrong in the form of short, almost educational epigrams (in *To Lubię* the ghost of a insensitive girl introduces her tale with "I will tell you, and you as a warning/ Tell my story to the others").[22] These rules reflect simple values of the folk, such as holding to one's oath (*Świtezianka*), the futility of revolt against death (*Tukaj*), the necessity for compassion and feeling (*Romantyczność, To Lubię*), and the sanctity of life (*Lilije*). These short moral comments, providing 'simple truths' of the common people in each ballad, emphasize the importance of folk values--values for which the Romantics constructed the true essence of the nation.

Mickiewicz's use of folk material in the *Ballady* is not limited to the presentation of simple folk values. Most of the tales in the collection have a folk background,[23] feature peasant characters,[24] and are set in real places from the Lithuanian countryside. In light of the characteristic brevity of the ballad genre, it is surprising that Mickiewicz

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[22] Adam Mickiewicz, *To Lubię*, in Dzieła Poetyckie Vol.I, p. 59. Some of these epigrammatic verses (such as "Look in your heart, that still may see aright" from *Romantyczność*) belong to the most often quoted in Polish language. Some have truly universal meaning (such as "no crime/ But is punished in due time" and "Virtue's path is slippery" from *Lilije*, and "woe to the man who has broken his oath" from *Świtezianka*).

[23] Mickiewicz himself designated *Rybka* and *Lilije* as "ballads from folk songs"; Wanda Humiecka and Helena Kapelus trace the folk backgrounds of each ballad in Ludowość u Mickiewicza (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1958), pp. 131-176. They describe Lithuanian, Polish and Ukrainian folk tales and fairy tales related to the *Ballady*, Polish legends related to *Świteź*, and European Faustian legends in relation to *Tukaj* and *Pani Twardowska*.

[24] Only *Świteź, Tukaj*, and *Lilije* feature mostly upper class characters (the owners of the lands, prince Tuhaj and his daughter). Other ballads feature peasant girls (*Romantyczność, Rybka*) and youths (*Świtezianka*), servants (*Rybka, Tukaj*), a merchant and robbers (*Powrót Taty*).

included detailed descriptions of actual places in some of his short poems;[25] in *Świteź* and *Świtezianka* the poet describes lake Świteź near Płużyny (with plastic, long descriptions of the landscape: "Świteź stretches its bright bosom,/ In the form of a great curve,/ Blackened its shores by dense forest,/ And smooth as a sheet of ice"),[26] while in *To Lubię* the poet describes a road in proximity to Ruta (including a valley, stream, bridge, church, and graveyard).[27] Detailed descriptions of scenery and nature characterize all of the *Ballady*, emphasizing the close relationship of the common people with nature. Also, the important presence of the supernatural in the *Ballady* may be connected to folk beliefs in ghosts and devils, and their interactions with the world of the living. With the exception of *Powrót Taty*, all of the *Ballady* feature some supernatural being--ghosts of dead lovers (*Romantyczność, To Lubię, Lilije*), nymphs (*Świteź, Świtezianka, Rybka*), or devils (*Tukaj, Pani Twardowska*).

The folk background of the genre may also influence two seemingly contradicting characteristics: omission of irrelevant information on the one hand and the provision of exact, detailed information on the other. Irrelevant information usually pertains to the reasons behind the characters' actions, thus we never learn why prince Tuhan felt compelled to help Mendog[28] and leave his country undefended, why the nymph of *Świtezianka* tested faithfulness of her lover, or why the girl of *Romantyczność* has gone mad.[29] Usually we do not know who the Narrator is, and most of the time we do not even know the names of the characters. On the other hand, however, we know that the lovers of *Świtezianka* met in the moonlight, and that the water of the lake was storming, swelling, and foaming, we know how many robbers attacked the merchant in *Powrót Taty*, and we learn how the flowers grew on the grave of the slaughtered husband in *Lilije*. Thus, the plots concentrate on the information relevant to the development of

[25] These descriptions were probably particularly important ten years after the publication of the poems for nostalgic émigrés in Paris and everywhere else.
[26] Adam Mickiewicz, *Świteź*, translated by David Welsh, in Adam Mickiewicz, p. 23.
[27] These were Lithuanian villages known to Mickiewicz.
[28] A legendary Lithuanian prince of the early Middle Ages.
[29] David Welsh also argues (in Adam Mickiewicz, p. 26) that we do not know why the wife in *Lilije* killed her husband, and that we do not know her name; he is wrong in both accounts, for we learn that she was unfaithful to her husband during his absence and afraid to face his wrath, and we learn that her name is Hanka (although it is mentioned only once in the ballad).

events rather than to the psychological drama--the scenery and action are described in detail, while the protagonists' feelings and reasons for their actions are implied only or omitted altogether. This thematic concentration on particulars of the story contributes to dramatic the dimension of the genre, and balances the Narrator's retrospective knowledge.

The plots of the *Ballady*, as well as the general characteristics of the genre itself, can also be related to the images used by the émigré society in Paris in 1830s to identify itself. Thus the themes of alienation and loneliness, homelessness and orphanage, morbidity, powerlessness, nostalgia, and pilgrimage manifest themselves on generic and thematic levels in the poems of Mickiewicz's collection. The theme of alienation is expressed very strongly in the *Ballady* on three levels, which I propose to label as generic, thematic, and plot alienation. Generic alienation manifests itself in the character of the Narrator, who usually remains detached from the development of events and interactions with other characters.[30] The Narrator stands on his own, alienated from others by his knowledge of the outcome of ballad story. The Narrator's alienation is intensified by his concealed identity and impartiality to the events he is relating, thus making him the truly alienated figure from both the audience (he remains unidentified) and other characters (he does not get involved in their struggle). Thematic alienation is related to Parakilas' *ballad process*, and describes the main protagonists' alienation when they commit their acts of defiance, contradicting generally accepted values. Through that act of defiance they alienate themselves from society whose rules they defied, and remain separated from that society (represented by other characters). The protagonists are also alienated by their power to act (at least in the first part of the *ballad process*), which differentiates them from other characters and, more importantly, from the Narrator. This kind of alienation may be illustrated by loneliness of the youth in *Świtezianka*; as soon as he proclaims his ominous oath of faithfulness to his beloved, he finds himself deserted:

> . . .
> She has waved him good-by from afar and now
> She is over the field and away.

[30] The two exceptions in the *Ballady* are the second Narrator of *Świteź* (Tuhan's daughter), and the Narrator of *To Lubię*, who relate their own stories.

Vainly the hunter increases his speed,
For her fleetness outmatches his own;
She has vanished as light as the wind on the mead,
He is left on the shore alone.

Alone he returns on the desolate ground
Where the marshlands heave and quake
And the air is silent--the only sound
When the dry twigs rustle and break.[31]

Plot alienation refers to the situation of particular characters in the *Ballady*, who are separated from the others by their supernatural nature (ghosts in *Romantyczność, To Lubię*, and *Lilije*; nymphs in *Świteź* and *Świtezianka*; a siren in *Rybka*), madness (Karusia in *Romantyczność*), or crime and guilt (the wife in *Lilije*). They are usually misunderstood or feared by other characters, and their alienation is irreconcilable. This kind of alienation may be illustrated by loneliness of Karusia, the mad girl of the ballad *Romantyczność*, described by both the Narrator and the girl herself:

Maiden, hark to what I say!
--She will not hear you.--
This is the town! This is broad day!
No living soul stands there so near you:
What do you pluck at with your hands?
Your speech, your smile, who understands?
--She will not hear you.
. . .
"Wretched am I amid the spiteful herd:
I weep--they jeer at me;
I speak--they cannot understand a word;
I see--they do not see!"
. . .
Thus with endearing words, caresses vain,
The maiden stumbles; pleads and cries aloud:
Seeing her fall, hearing her voice of pain,
Gathers the curious crowd.[32]

[31] Adam Mickiewicz, *Świtezianka*, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 30.
[32] Adam Mickiewicz, *Romantyczność*, in Selected Poetry and Prose, pp. 27, 28.

The images of uprootedness, homelessness, and orphanage, although not as prominent as alienation, are also present in Mickiewicz's *Ballady*. The stories include all kinds of homeless and uprooted characters: the robber in *Powrót Taty* misses his home and family, the ghost of insensitive girl in *To Lubię* is condemned to existence "between heaven and earth" and longs for eternal peace, while the mysterious origins of his beloved perplex the Hunter of *Świtezianka* and are admitted by the Narrator:

> Who is the lad so comely and young
> And who is the maid at his side . . .?
> . . .
> The youth hunts here in the forest land,
> But the maiden is strange to me.
>
> You may ask in vain whence she comes and where
> She vanishes: no one knows.
> Like the crowfoot's moist bloom on the marsh, she is there--
> Like the will-o'-the-wisp, she goes.
>
> "Beautiful maid, whom I love so well,
> Wherefore this secrecy?
> Where do your father and mother dwell,
> By what road do you come to me?[33]

Morbidity is ever present in the *Ballady*. It manifests itself in themes of murder and suicide in relation to 'real' characters, and in longing for death on the part of supernatural characters (usually suffering ghosts), who are condemned to damnation. Death takes the form of crime (the wife in *Lilije*, the robbers in *Powrót Taty*) or punishment for some crime committed earlier (the Hunter in *Świtezianka* dies because he could not keep his word; the wife in *Lilije* is taken to the grave by her slaughtered husband; the Lord and his wife in *Rybka* are changed into stone because he left the peasant girl Krysia and their child to marry a noble woman; the Russians in *Świteź* die when they touch the flower-women of the lake because they were the reasons for the women's death). Suicide is usually committed by unhappy lovers (Jasio in *Romantyczność*, Jozio in *To Lubię*, Krysia in *Rybka*), who, in turn, leave their beloved to

[33] Adam Mickiewicz, *Świtezianka*, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 29.

be punished by madness (Karusia in *Romantyczność*), death (the Lord in *Rybka*), or a hundred years of suffering (the ghost of insensitive girl in *To Lubię*). Suicide may be also committed for pride, faith and love for one's country--in *Świteź* the women of the city would rather die than live as Russian slaves. The images of death and morbid anxiety are very vivid in the *Ballady*: the audience is often not spared gruesome details. In *Romantyczność* the mad girl speaks to the ghost of her beloved and longs for death:

> "Surely 'tis cold, there in the grave to lie!
> You have been dead for--yes, these two years past;
> Ah, take me there! Beside you I will die,
> The world escaped at last."[34]

In *Świtezianka* the wrath of the Nymph goes to death and beyond as she kills the unfaithful Hunter without mercy:

> "Not for you is the silvery whirlpool's cup
> Nor the gulfs where the clear sea lies,
> But the harsh earth shall swallow your body up
> And the gravel shall put out your eyes.
>
> "For a thousand years shall your spirit wait
> By the side of this witnessing tree,
> And the fires of hell that never abate
> Shall burn you unceasingly.[35]

The same attention to detail is given to description of murder in *Lilije*, complete with the wife rushing through the night "dabbled with blood," and admitting to the Hermit "See the blood upon this blade!/ He is silenced and laid low!"[36] Her appearance and terror are described, here again, with extreme accuracy:

> Blue her lips and wild her eyes,
> White her face as linen thread;
> Shivering, the lady cries,
> "Oh, my husband! He lies dead!"
> . . .
> "Tell me that I hear the dead!
> Whir! It holds a knife in air,
> Wet with blood, above me there.

[34] Adam Mickiewicz, *Romantyczność*, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 27.
[35] Adam Mickiewicz, *Świtezianka*, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 32.
[36] Adam Mickiewicz, *Lilije*, in Selected Poetry and Prose, pp. 37, 38.

From its mouth the sparks fly free
And it pulls and pinches me."[37]

Powerlessness is another important theme in the *Ballady*, and like alienation, it manifests itself on different levels. Generic powerlessness in the *Ballady* is determined by the pre-destined nature of ballad stories. The outcome of each tale is decided when, or before, the conflict takes place, and thus the protagonists, although strong enough to act, are at the same time powerless to change their fate. The characters' ability to act provides the development of the story in a series of events, but all of these events serve to bring their downfall--the true outcome of the tale--and their punishment for defying "the nature of things" in Parakilas' terms. Parakilas brings this argument further when he writes that in ballads, powerlessness defines guilt: "a ballad story has the structure of a proof that a guilty conscience gives itself of its own guilt: the exercise of will is determined by the very forces that render the will powerless."[38] Plot powerlessness touches the protagonists in specific stories, when they find themselves powerless to obtain their goals (the robbers cannot attack the merchant in *Powrót Taty*, the Hunter cannot live with his beloved in *Świtezianka*, the mad girl cannot convince others to see the ghost in *Romantyczność*), end their suffering (the ghost of insensitive girl cannot stop hunting the cemetery in *To Lubię*, the wife cannot escape her own guilt and terror in *Lilije*), or stop their final retribution (the Hunter in *Świtezianka* cannot escape being swallowed by the waters of the lake, the wife in *Lilije* is buried with her husband under ruins of the church, and the Russians in *Świteź* die when they touch the flowers in the lake). The *Ballady* contain many examples of the characters' powerlessness, none of which is more compelling than the situation of the Hunter in *Świtezianka* and the wife in *Lilije*. The Hunter is first powerless to keep his oath (he is drawn by the beauty of the mysterious nymph), then he is powerless to avoid his death:

[The wave] lures caressingly over the sand
Till his heart melts away in his breast,
As when a chaste maid softly presses the hand

[37] Ibid., pp. 37, 41-42.
[38] James Parakilas, Ballads Without Words, p. 37.

Of the youth whom she loves the best.

No longer he thinks of his own fair maid
And the vow that he swore he would keep;
By another enchantress his senses are swayed
And he runs to his death in the deep.
. . .
[The waters] seethe to their depths and the circling tide
Of the whirlpool snatches them down
Through its open jaws as the seas divide:
So the youth and the maiden drown.[39]

The wife of *Lilije* is powerless to escape her terror and guilt no matter how hard she tries, and is powerless to escape her own death:

But the lady finds it hard
To forget her guilty act;
From her lips the smiles are barred,
And her heart is ever racked.
Sleep will close her eyes no more;
For at night when all is dark
Something knocks upon the door,
Something walks the courtyard . . .
. . .
"Wife and brothers, you shall go
With me to the world below!"

Thereupon the church foundation
Shook. The walls and arches slipped
From their lofty elevation,
Sinking down beneath the crypt.
All lie buried underground,
Lilies blossom on the mound,
And the flowers grow as high
As the dead man deep did lie.[40]

Nostalgia is also a very important aspect of the *Ballady*. First, the genre itself, with its Medieval origins, brings nostalgic connotations towards old, idyllic times. Second, the *Ballady* feature thematic nostalgia; the tale usually relates past events (sometimes from distant past; both *Świteź* and *Lilije* describe events which took place in

[39] Adam Mickiewicz, *Świtezianka*, in Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 31, 32.
[40] Adam Mickiewicz, *Lilije*, in Selected Poetry and Prose, pp. 39, 44.

the distant Middle Ages) in a world inhabited by supernatural creatures (nymphs, ghosts) usually associated with past, pagan beliefs. Intense emphasis is placed on nature and scenery, with detailed descriptions of its originality and beauty, which also contribute to the nostalgic aura of the *Ballady*. This type of longing, towards place rather than time, was particularly important for émigré society in the 1830s.

Similarly, the image of pilgrimage and wandering is important in the *Ballady* in both the generic and thematic sense. The dissemination of ballads is associated with bards and minstrels wandering through the countryside, and Mickiewicz provides a compelling description of an old bard in the character of Halban in *Konrad Wallenrod*. In a thematic sense the *Ballady* feature images of wandering and pilgrimage, which are usually associated with punishment and suffering (the Hunter in *Świtezianka* wanders in the forest trying to find his beloved, while his ghost is condemned to wandering around the lake for a thousand years; the ghost of the insensitive girl in *To Lubię* must wander close to the cemetery) or redemption (the wife in *Lilije* offers to go on a pilgrimage in order to escape her guilt). These notions of wandering as a manifestation of suffering and the redemptive value of pilgrimage are deeply rooted in Romantic ideology.

The structure of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* reflects the general characteristics of the ballad genre. The poems feature single stories, usually developing towards a final revelation at the end. They also exhibit a mixture of dramatic (concentration on action and events, preoccupation with details), lyric (descriptions of nature and scenery), and epic (references to legendary past, pre-destined world, and the all knowing Narrator) elements. The poems are also characterized by a mixture of past and present tenses. While the past tense usually signifies a distant, archaic past (for instance the remote Middle Ages in *Świteź* and *Lilije*), frequent use of present tense, dialogue, and direct speech (employed in all of the *Ballady*) emphasize the dramatic actuality of the events taking place. All but one of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* are in stanzaic form,[41] with mostly four line stanzas[42] containing regular line length and alternating rhymes (for a description

[41] The only exception is *Tukaj*.
[42] The exceptions here are *Romantyczność* and *Lilije*, which feature stanzas of irregular and varied length.

of the structure of the poems see Table 1).[43] This regularity of rhyme and rhythm contributes to the tale-telling effect of the poems. However, within these regular structures Mickiewicz often employs distinctive patterns of repetition and variation.[44] These may include framing the poem with similar stanzas at the beginning and end (*Świtezianka*), framing the middle narrative with another narrative (*Świteź*), or slightly varied repeated lines (a technique used most extensively in *Lilije*). The characteristics of rhythm, rhyme, repetition, and variation in the ballad genre have extremely strong musical connotations, and, as Parakilas observes, they are "musical features of ballad narration" easy to translate to "analogous musical techniques."[45]

Form and Musical Discourse in Chopin's *Second Ballade*

The themes of alienation and powerlessness can be expressed through words or music, in dramatic plots or musical discourse. In the remaining part of this chapter I will discuss the manifestations of these themes in the musical discourse of Chopin's *Second Ballade*. I will precede this analysis by a discussion of the influence of the *Ballady*'s syntax on the form of the *Second Ballade*.

Although even the *Second Ballade* has not escaped attempts to classify it as sonata form,[46] it is the most removed from the sonata form archetype of all Chopin's *Ballades*. The *Second Ballade* shares with sonata form the presentation and development of two contrasting themes, but that is all. If analyzed in this way, the piece is indeed an

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[43] Mickiewicz most often used alternating lines of eleven and eight syllables per line (in *Świteź, Powrót Taty, To Lubię*). In *Świtezianka* he used a pattern of alternating ten and eight syllables per line, in *Czaty* and *Trzech Budrysów* a pattern of alternating fourteen and ten syllables per line, and regular eight syllables per line in *Rybka* and *Pani Twardowska*.

[44] James Parakilas provides a review of various pattern structures found in European ballads in his Ballads Without Words, pp. 46-47. These patterns, according to Parakilas, include two-part structures (related to contrasts) based on balances, antitheses, appositions and parallelisms; three-part structures (related to repetitions and varied repetitions); and symmetrical structures (including framing techniques and building a ballad around central line or stanza).

[45] James Parakilas, Ballads Without Words, p. 47.

[46] For instance, see Michael Griffel's article "The Sonata Design In Chopin's Ballades," Current Musicology Vol. 36, 1983: 125-36.

title	number of stanzas	number of lines per stanza	number of syllables per line	rhyme
Romantyczność	16	irregular (12 stanzas are 4 lines long, 2 stanzas are 6 lines long, one stanza is 2 lines long and one is 7 lines long)	irregular	irregular, mostly abab
Świteź	48	4	alternating 11 and 8	abab
Świtezianka	38	4	alternating 10 and 8	abab
Rybka	35	4	8	abab
Powrót Taty	21	4	alternating 11 and 8	abab
To Lubię	35	4	alternating 11 and 8	abab
Pani Twardowska	31	4	8	abab
Tukaj	longer parts	irregular	8	abba
Lilije	40	irregular	7	aabb
Czaty	14	4	alternating 14 and 10	abcb
Trzech Budrysów	12	4	alternating 14 and 10	abcb

Table 1

Line and stanza structure in Mickiewicz's *Ballady*

example of a very unusual sonata form. According to Michael Griffel in his article "The Sonata Design In Chopin's *Ballades*," it is a sonata form in which recapitulation of the first theme happens in the exposition, "and then a development section splits apart the reprise of the first theme from that of the second."[47] Even disregarding tonal issues (such as the recapitulations of both themes being in the same keys as in the exposition, the avoidance of dominant areas, or the tonal ambiguity of an entire composition that begins and ends in different keys), the notion of a recapitulation beginning at the end of the exposition and divided by the development seems to be stretching the matters considerably. More convincing a possibility is the idea of rondo form (or sonata-rondo form, with the first theme as a ritornello), which can describe the music of the *Second Ballade* until the reappearance of the second theme in the same key as in the Exposition (m.141). However, that form does not reflect the entire composition (particularly the long, powerful and climactic Coda) either. Thus the puzzling form of the *Second Ballade* requires another explanation.

The form of the *Second Ballade* may in part be explained by its similarities to the structure of its literary counterpart. Both the large-scale and local level form of the work correspond to the main characteristics of literary ballad's syntax--with its characteristic stanzaic structure (often with some kind of refrain), patterns of repetition and variation, usually regular length of lines and rhyme distribution, and frequent use of framing techniques. On a local level, the structure of the first theme may serve as an example. The intense repetitiveness of the theme cannot be accidental and immediately brings to mind the regular, repetitive line and stanza patterns of literary the ballad.[48] Moreover, the repetitions, in connection to the demands of the ballad genre, are never exact but slightly varied, creating the enchanted, but not static, mood of the ballad world. Table 2 outlines the repetition patterns of the first theme. [49] It is possible to analyze the first theme's

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[47] Ibid., p. 135.

[48] This characteristic of the first theme is also observed by Parakilas, in Ballads Without Words, p. 63. Even Michael Griffel notices that the first theme of the *Second Ballade* is in a song form (in "The Sonata Design In Chopin's Ballades," p. 129).

[49] All of the measure numbers in this table as well as in the following discussion of the *Second Ballade* are based on the numbers used in The Fryderyk Chopin Institute and Polish Music Publications' nineteenth edition of Chopin's Ballades (Cracow: 1986), pp. 21-29. In this edition the first, incomplete measure of the

repetition pattern as eight measure units representing four stanzas and creating an AABA pattern (stanza pattern X below),[50] or in terms of four measure units (based on melodic shape) representing lines and creating three stanzas (stanza pattern Y below) with analogous distribution of lines (two of these stanzas, followed by an incomplete third stanza, would represent a four line pattern with alternating rhymes –abab and cbab– used most often by Mickiewicz in his *Ballady*).

Stanza pattern X	A		A		B		A				
measure numbers	(1)3-6	6-10	10-14	14-18	18-20 – 22	22-27	27-30	30-33	34-38	38-42	42-46
key	F				a, C	C	F		a	F	
line pattern	a	b	a	b	c	b	a	b	b	b'	a''
stanza pattern Y	A				A'				A''		

Table 2
Patterns of repetition in the first theme

Both patterns of repetition, overlapping and coinciding with each other, contribute to the intense sense of narrative repetition characteristic of the first theme. The eight measure stanza pattern AABA is easily audible and thus more prominent. It is articulated by clear reference to the beginning at the last A section (m.27), and by an emphasis on the F-major tonality of the first theme (with contrasting B section in a-minor and C-major). In addition, this pattern is similar to rounded binary design typical to rondo themes (this classical pattern of rounded binary form in the first theme is disturbed only by a perfect authentic cadence in the dominant at the end of section B to give the effect of a small

Second Ballade is counted as measure one, and thus there may be a one measure difference between my analysis and some other analyses of the work.

ternary song form). Stanza pattern X is complemented by a second pattern of repetition in stanza pattern Y which emphasizes a-minor (with both the A' and A'' sections beginning in a minor), thereby already introducing one of the main conflicts of the work--the struggle between F-major and a-minor tonalities. Similar line and stanza structure characterizes the second large-scale appearance of the first theme in its developmental stage (mm.83-140), and although patterns of repetition are further blurred here by thematic transformation, canonic imitation, and tonal instability, they are nonetheless present. Both levels of repetition in the second appearance of the first theme are summarized in Table 3.

The large-scale form of the *Second Ballade* also manifests the literary ballad's structure on various levels. The music is highly sectional, with unusually sudden leaps between contrasting sections.[51] These large-scale sections, developing motives of the main themes, form a distinctive repetition pattern (ABAA'BA''BA) that is reminiscent of the alternating stanza pattern of a literary ballad. Independently, the reappearance of the opening of the first theme in its original version (in a melodic, not tonal sense) at key stages of the drama functions almost like a refrain in a song (or a ritornello in rondo form), thus emphasizing the repetitive quality of the genre. In addition, as Parakilas observes, the large-scale form of Chopin's *Ballades* develops in three stages (each made of contrasting scenes based on the two themes and, in case of the *Second Ballade*, signaled by the appearance of the first theme) "as in the progression in the ballad process from the act of defiance to the movement toward reckoning to the reckoning itself."[52] Furthermore, the elaborate generic mixture in the *Second Ballade* corresponds to mixture of poetic modes--lyric, epic, and dramatic--in the literary ballad. Chopin introduces the extremely contrasting genres of barcarolle-*siciliano* (I theme) and etude (II theme) without any transition (mm.46-47), and then employs this generic contrast throughout the work. These two generic types, contrasting not only in tempo, mood, character, harmonic

[50] As it is done by Parakilas, in Ballads Without Words, p. 63.
[51] Parakilas connects Chopin's sudden transitions to a technique identified by ballad scholars and labeled as "leaping and lingering" (in Ballads Without Words, pp. 66-67).
[52] Parakilas describes here the structure of the *First Ballade*, but also relates this comment to other *Ballades* (in Ballads Without Words, p. 72).

Stanza pattern	Intro.	A				B		A			
m. #	96-98	98-102	102-104	104-108	108-115	115-119	119-123	123-127	127-129	129-133	133-140
Key		Db		Gb	Bb	B	G	C		F	g
line pattern		a'	b'	a'	b'	a	a	a'	b'	a'	b'

Table 3

Patterns of repetition in mm. 98-140

rhythm, tonal stability, and dynamics but also in extra-musical associations (the pastoral, introverted, archaic character of a *siciliano* versus the display-oriented, extroverted, contemporary etude) form one of the biggest conflicts of the work. This generic struggle is supplemented by a diabolical waltz, appearing in the first section of the Coda (mm.169-188), and invoking the characteristics of a third, altogether different genre in the work. To stretch this analogy somewhat further, the *siciliano* perhaps represents the lyric and archaic elements of the ballad, the etude and its internal struggle symbolizes dramatic, while the uneasy invocation of the waltz, changed almost beyond recognition in the Coda, represents the supernatural elements of the literary ballad. All levels of large-scale form of the *Second Ballade* are summarized in Table 4.[53]

A strong influence of the literary ballad on the form of the *Second Ballade* is also illustrated by the employment of framing technique, again on all levels of the form (illustrated in Table 5). On a large-scale level, the first and second themes open the work and, in reverse order, close it, providing a symmetrical frame to the rest of the composition.[54] Interestingly, the large-scale thematic repetition pattern within this frame--AA'BA''--corresponds to the stanza pattern of the first theme. Chopin also employs framing on smaller levels throughout the work. For instance, the F-major sections of the first theme (mm.1-18 and mm.27-46) frame its middle section (mm.18-27), the first two appearances of the first theme (mm.1-46 and mm.83-95) frame the second theme and the following agitated figurations, while the unexpected invocation of the opening phrase of the first theme (mm.115-123) is framed by its own agitated transformations (mm.98-115 and mm.123-140).

If the literary ballad's syntax parallels the form of the *Second Ballade*, the semantic contents of the genre, intensified by their (possible) special meaning for Chopin, seem to reverberate in the musical discourse of the work. The key elements of a "ballad story"--including impartial Narrator, characters and their struggle, conflict and defiance,

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[53] In this Table I have also included the divisions of sonata form according to Michael Griffel for purposes of clarity.

[54] In terms of the pattern of thematic repetition, this framing technique is represented by pattern [AB (AA'BA'') BA] in Table 5. The large-scale framing by the main themes in the structure of the *Second Ballade* is also observed by Parakilas, in Ballads Without Words, p. 81.

Table 4

Son. Form	Exposition			Trans.	Recap. I theme	Development			Recap. II theme		Coda		
m. #	1-46	47-62	63-71	71-82	83-95	96- 115-123		140	141-156	157-168	169-188	189-197	197-204
keys	F	a, g (desc.Seq. in M2nds)	d, f, ab, eb (asc. Seq. in m3rds)	Eb (V of ab)	F, a	Db, Gb Bb	B, G	C, F, g	a d implied	a; V pedal	a	a	a
themes and their transf.	I theme	II theme	figur.; I theme	trans.	I theme	I theme transf.	I theme	I them transf	II theme	I theme transf.		II theme transf.	I theme, cad.
references to song form	Refrain				Refrain		'Ref.'						Refrain
patterns of them. rep.	A	B			A	A'	A	A'	B	A''		B	A
genre	siciliano	etude	etude	etude	siciliano				etude	etude	"waltz"	etude	siciliano
three stage form	Stage 1				Stage 2					Stage 3			
	scene 1	scene 2			scene 1				scene 2	scene 1	scene 2		scene 3
Parakilas' *ballad process*	perfect world/ the nature of things	act of defiance			progress towards reckoning					reckoning	retribution		restoration/ nature absorbing disturbance

Table 4

Large-scale Form of the *Second Ballade*

m. #	1 -46 18-27			47-62	63-71	71-82	83-95	96- 115-123 140			141-156	157-168	169-188	189-197	197-204
keys	F	a, C	F	a, g	d, f, ab, eb	Eb	F, a	Db, Gb Bb	B, G	C, F, g	a	a; V pedal	a	A	A
Patterns of thematic rep.(small scale)	[a	b	a]					[a'	a	a']					
Patterns of them. rep.	[A			B			A]								
(large-scale)	[A			B			(A	A'			B	A'')		B	A]

Table 5

Examples of framing technique in the *Second Ballade*

avoidance of retribution, pre-destined world and ominous Fate--together with themes of alienation, powerlessness, morbid anxiety, homelessness, and nostalgia, are suggested by the music of the *Second Ballade*. In the following discussion I attempt to identify these elements in the music. It is important to note that although some musical "events" may invite different interpretations in terms of their semantic meaning,[55] their existence, unusual in purely musical terms, suggests some kind of extra-musical meaning. In my opinion, this aspect of meaning in the *Second Ballade* corresponds to the most universal elements of a ballad archetype. Also, I would like to emphasize the contrapuntal nature of the following comments, for although I discuss the musical discourse of the *Second Ballade* in relation to particular elements of that discourse (such as the characters of the themes and their development, tonal struggle, and significance of certain motives), all of these elements coincide in the music.

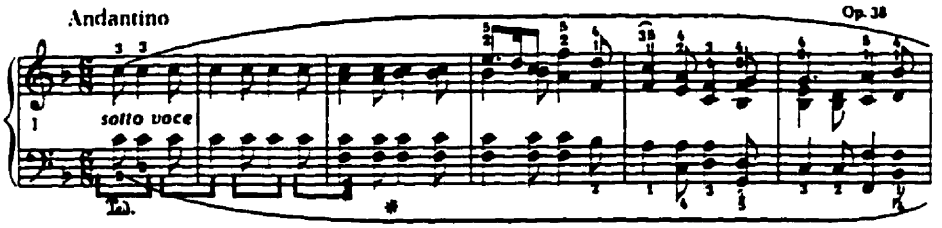
The most apparent influence of the "ballad story" on the music of the *Second Ballade* is in the overall structure of the work. The music of the *Ballade* tells one story, which develops from the beginning to the end. Although the themes reappear, they are never truly recapitulated but rather transformed, thus emphasizing the notion of progressive development typical of literary narrative. The tensions--tonal (the internal struggle between F-major and a-minor), thematic (conflict of two contrasting themes), and dynamic--rise towards the end of the composition, creating an end-weighted form. This rising intensity of the work leads to a final catastrophe (retribution)--the most usual outcome of the ballad story--particularly those of Mickiewicz.

The next aspect of a ballad archetype in the *Second Ballade*, obvious from the very first measures of the work, is a strong impression of tale-telling. This sense is created by compound duple meter and repetitive iambic rhythm. Although it is possible to consider the entire first theme as representing the "narrating function,"[56] I agree with the more specific interpretation offered by Jim Samson, that the Narrator is represented in

[55] For instance, it is possible to interpret all--the first theme, the iambic rhythm, or ever-present pitch A--as a Narrator in the *Second Ballade*. Both the pitch A or descending semitone F-E may represent Fate or pre-destined outcome of the ballad conflict.

[56] As does Parakilas in Ballads Without Words, pp. 64-65.

the music by a steady rhythmic tread.[57] This notion does not contradict the narrative quality of the first theme, but simultaneously disassociates the Narrator from a very "personal" and active first theme. Because the first theme is developed in the course of the work, it is "too involved" to represent the Narrator; rather it is one of the agents in the drama. However, if represented by iambic rhythm, the Narrator's presence in the music is impersonal, somehow detached, but at the same time persistent. The Narrator establishes his authority from the very opening of the work, when the iambic rhythm is heard on its own, emerging out if silence without any melodic disruptions (repeated C octaves in mm.1-2, see Example 1). The unusual upbeat of the first two measures creates an effect of anticipation and tale-telling. Even the beginning of the melody (in m.3) appears out of thin air and is clear only in retrospect.



Example 1

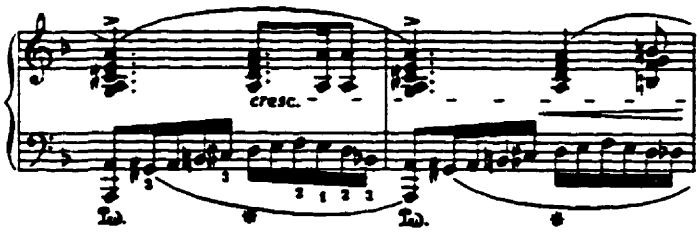
The *Second Ballade*, mm.1-4

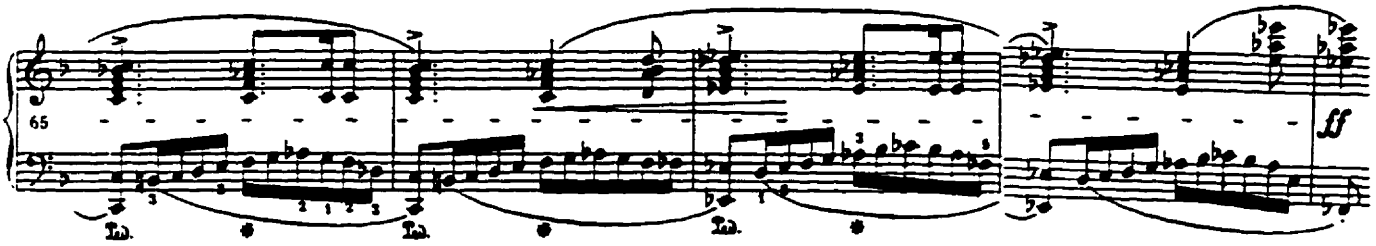
Having introduced himself, the Narrator constantly reasserts his presence (not only ruling the first theme, but also intruding upon the transition in mm.63-69, dominating the dramatic dialogue in mm.98-108 and 123-133, and both transformations of the first theme in mm.96-140 and 157-167; see Example 2), and he is entrusted to usher in the final commentary in mm.197-201.[58] Therefore, according to ballad rules, the Narrator introduces other characters and lets them act, but at the same time he is always present. It is also the Narrator's right to say the last word. As a repeated rhythmic motive the Narrator of the *Second Ballade* can be present even as other characters (themes) speak or

[57] Jim Samson, Chopin: The Four Ballades, p. 86.

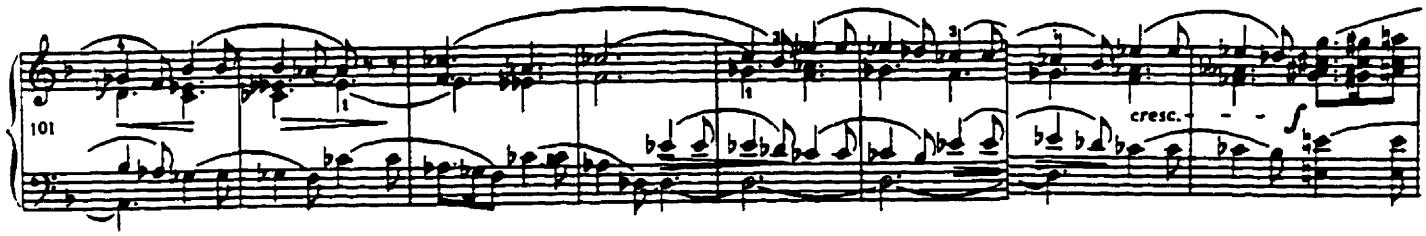
[58] For the example of the Narrator's final appearance, see Example 6.

Example 2

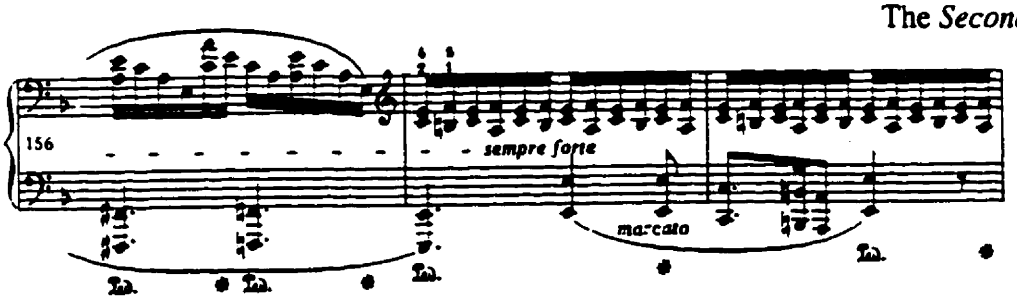


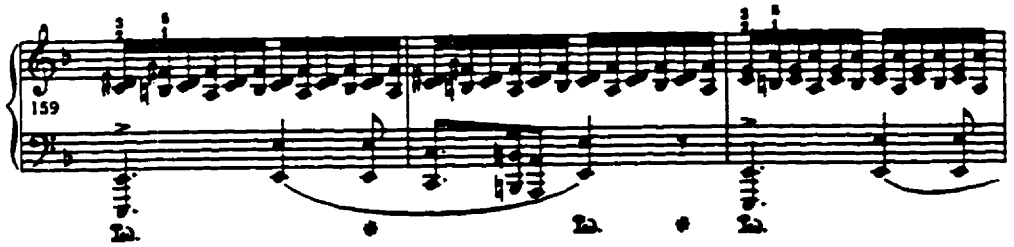


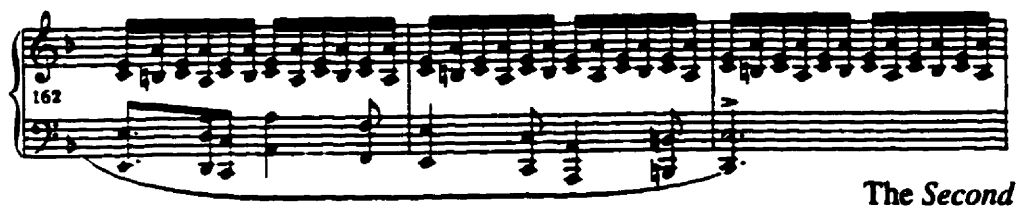
The *Second Ballade*, mm.63-69



The *Second Ballade*, mm.98-108

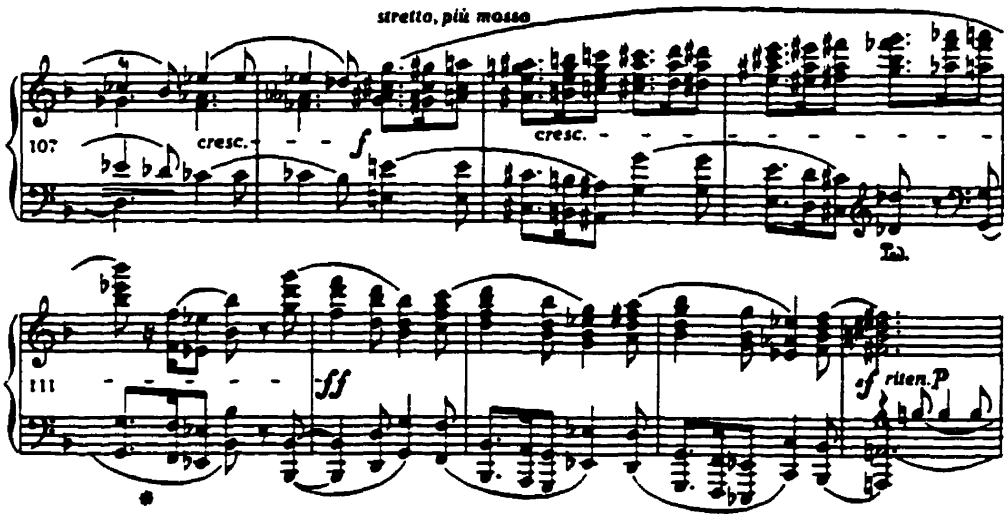






The *Second Ballade*, mm.157-164

act, and also comment on their actions. For instance, in the middle of transformation of the first theme (mm.108-115 and 133-140), the Narrator (the left hand octaves) seems to be commenting on agitated chromatic surge of the right hand (see Example 3). Also, the Narrator's rhythmic nature emphasizes his impartiality and impersonality, and allows the composer to reintroduce the Narrator at any stage of the drama.



Example 3

The *Second Ballade*, mm.108-115

The themes of the *Second Ballade* symbolize the next interesting element of the "ballad story" in the musical discourse. The two main themes of the work are unusual, very characteristic, and extremely contrasting to each other (in terms of tempo, genre, mood, key, harmonic rhythm, and dynamics). For Parakilas, the first theme (mm.1-46) represents the narrative function, while the second theme (mm.47-82) symbolizes the forces of conflict in the story.[59] It is easy to map this content onto the thematic development of the *Second Ballade*: the narrative is established in mm.1-46, forces of conflict intrude in mm.47-82, they influence (transform) the narrative (mm.83-140), conflict intensifies (mm.141-168) and leads to a final reckoning in mm.169-204. However, since the forces of conflict in fact form part of the narrative, it is difficult to

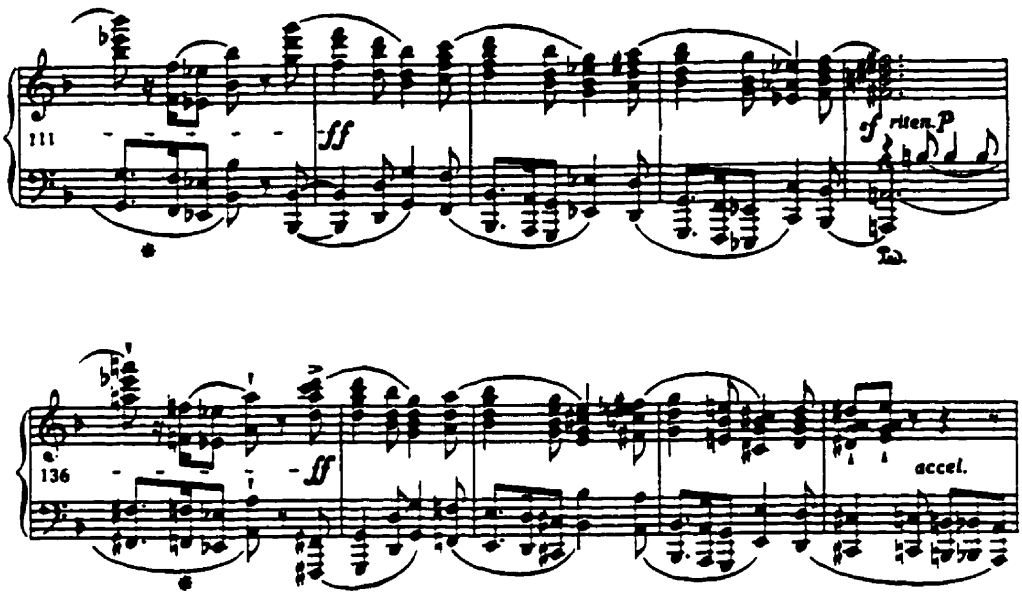
[59] In Ballads Without Words, p. 65.

label only the first theme as representing the narrative function. Thus I propose to interpret the first theme as symbolizing the perfect world, in Parakilas' terms "the nature of things," defied later by the forces of conflict (the second theme). It is also possible to understand both themes as representing protagonists of the drama and thematic transformations as development of the story. However, in this case, before discussing their interactions, it is important to analyze the characteristics of the main themes.

The pastoral first theme seems to invoke a perfect world. Its clear F-major (pastoral key) diatonicism, tonal stability (clearly articulated cadences, emphasis on tonic chords), steady *Andantino* tempo, repetitive structure, invocation of *siciliano* and soft dynamics all contribute to that effect. Moreover, the somewhat archaic aura of the theme (created by dominant pedal and pre-dominance of open fifths and fourths in the accompaniment) gives the theme a nostalgic quality, apparent from its first appearance. At the beginning of the *Second Ballade* this character belongs to the peaceful scenery and does not defy the "nature of things." It emerges out of silence and drifts away into thin air (m.46), all the while dominated by the persistent presence of the Narrator. In sharp contrast to the first theme stands the agitated second theme. This "character" represents the conflict and morbid anxiety of the ballad world, intensified by the *Presto con fuoco* tempo, rapid figurations, tonal instability (avoidance of cadences, emphasis on diminished seventh chords, large-scale descending sequence--in mm.47-54 and mm.55-62) and *fortissimo* dynamics. It is this theme that commits an act of defiance and transforms the peaceful landscape of this *Ballade*--almost scattering the world of the first theme. This act must lead to reckoning and retribution, and change both characters in the process. At the beginning the two themes are alienated from each other in all possible ways--in terms of tonality, harmonic stability, tempo, genre, character, dynamics--and although they come back later in the work, they rather influence each other than interact (the themes are combined only once, in mm.157-168, and they are never synthesized).

Following the act of defiance, the first theme appears in a transformed, intensified version in mm.83-140. In this development towards the reckoning it is influenced by the second theme (with its *stretto*, dense texture, *fortissimo* dynamics, and unstable tonality), but retains its own identity. In this forceful metamorphosis the first theme twice attempts

a triumph (in mm.108-115 and 133-140) with dramatic increases in texture, dynamics, and register, but is not allowed to achieve it (instead of completing both passages with cadences, Chopin continues his restless modulations with the unstable third inversion of the dominant seventh of the dominant of a-minor in m.115, and with the dominant seventh of d-minor--an "implied" tonic of the second appearance of the second theme--in m.140; see Example 4).



Example 4

The *Second Ballade*, mm.111-115, mm.136-140.

The second theme changes even less, but its forceful and more tonally unstable (through implied d-minor tonality, or strong emphasis on subdominant harmony in a-minor, in its first segment in mm.141-148) reappearance in mm.141-156 leads to the reckoning in mm.157-168, where agitated figurations of the second theme are combined with the opening phrase of the first theme (played in octaves *marcato* in a low register). Only at the moment of reckoning do the characters (themes) act at the same time. What remains is retribution, occurring in mm.169-197, which touches the second theme (the forces of conflict or the character which committed the act of defiance) and a sad,

nostalgic commentary by the first theme in mm.197-201, bringing to mind a distant memory of the perfect world of the beginning.

The *Ballade* consists of the interplay of these two themes, and if the themes represent characters, these characters are undoubtedly engaged in a power struggle. The second theme, although agitated and full of anxiety, is powerless to win this struggle, it is upstaged by the quiet, pastoral first theme. The character representing "forces of conflict" has no chance against the character symbolizing "forces of nature absorbing the disturbance" and the relatively unchanging ballad world.[60]

The tonal structure of the *Second Ballade* is also unusual if analyzed in purely musical terms. The piece opens clearly in F-major (the first theme--mm.1-46--is in that key, and the F-major tonality appears as late as the canonic imitations in mm.129-133) and ends in a-minor. This two-key scheme, however, can easily be related to the semantic content of the work. The internal struggle between F-major and a-minor tonalities may be related to structure of powerlessness in the ballad world; no matter how secure the F-major beginning of the *Second Ballade* is, this key is powerless to assert itself as the main tonality of the piece and disappears half-way through. This powerlessness of the key of F-major renders the first theme tonally uprooted and, in a sense, homeless. The theme is never allowed to return to its home key after the expressive rest in m.88, and concludes its tonal "pilgrimage" in a main key of the second theme rather than its own. In retrospect, this tonal instability of the *Second Ballade* tonally alienates the beginning of the work (mm.1-46 in F-major) from the rest of the composition (mostly in a-minor).

The powerlessness of F-major tonality is related to one additional aspect of the ballad archetype, that is the fact that a-minor seems to be pre-destined to win the tonal struggle of the work. Its destiny is already hinted at through constant emphasis on mediant tonality within the first statement of the first theme (mm.1-46, the strongest presence of F-major) which functions almost like the Narrator's warnings in literary

[60] The last appearance of the first theme would symbolize a relatively unchanging world, or rather a world returning to normal after absorbing a disturbance, because it brings the first theme not in its original key (F-major), but rather in the key of the second theme (a-minor).

ballad--the seeds of the final tonal outcome are already present at the very beginning of the musical story. Moreover, a-minor enters the tonal world of the *Second Ballade* together with the second theme (in m.47), it reappears with the second theme in mm.141-156, and reaches its goal (standing on the dominant) when the second theme asserts its power at the moment of reckoning (mm.157-168). It is not only connected to "forces of conflict," but represents their power. When the second theme disappears after the retribution, the only remaining part of the "forces of conflict" in the piece is the a-minor tonality. Although at this point it is reduced to a "disturbance" within the world of the first theme, it is nonetheless present to the end of the story and strong enough to change the character of the "perfect world" (the change of mode changes the mood of the first theme in mm.197-201).

The deemphasis of dominant sonority in the music of the *Second Ballade*, unusual in purely musical terms, makes perfect sense in terms of ballad narrative. The structural dominant does not arrive until m.157, where it turns into an eleven measure dominant pedal leading to the Coda--thus it appears at the last stage of the formal structure.[61] However, if related to the ballad archetype, this dominant arrival may represent the final reckoning, and its avoidance may symbolize avoidance of retribution on the part of the protagonists. Therefore, the arrival of the dominant must be postponed to the point when the two characters speak at the same time (the themes are combined in mm.157-168) and when the forces of conflict become most prominent in order to set the stage for retribution (when the a-minor tonality, unstable to this point, is firmly established). In addition, although it may be considerably delayed, the arrival of the dominant is unavoidable in tonal music; its avoidance is as powerless as the avoidance of retribution by the protagonists of the ballad story.

The next two musical events I would like to discuss, the special significance of pitch A and of the descending semitone F-E, are among the most subjective aspects of the musical discourse in the *Second Ballade*. Both of these events almost develop a life of their own in the composition, ever-present in both themes and, in spite of tonal changes,

[61] This late dominant arrival is one of the main problems regarding sonata form in the *Second Ballade*.

articulating the most important divisions of the work. Their semantic meaning is one of the most interesting questions posed by the music of the *Second Ballade*. In my understanding of the music in relation to the ballad archetype, the pitch A represents Fate or Destiny, while the sigh-motive F-E symbolizes conflict.[62] Thus, Fate may appear on its own and connected to forces of conflict; it also concludes the final struggle at the end of the work. The semitone F-E (conflict) always creates tension in the music, and that tension is finally resolved by the pitch A; in tonal terms submediant leading to dominant in a-minor creates tension which is resolved by the following tonic A. Also, this emphasis on the semitone F-E and pitch A throughout the *Ballade* replays, on a different level, the tonal tensions created by two-key scheme of the work. For appearances of both Fate and conflict motives, see Table 6.

Fate (pitch A) is omnipresent in the music of the *Second Ballade*. It appears at the very first chord of the piece (together with the tonic F) in m.3, and becomes increasingly important in the course of the first theme (it is present at the main divisions of the first theme at mm.10, 18, 27) and dominates its conclusion (mm.42-46), remaining the only note at the end of m.46 and leading to the second theme. The second theme opens with triple As over five octaves at m.47 (Fate is indeed present here), combined with the conflict semitone F-E in the top voice. Thus the main conflict of the piece is introduced by Fate. The conflict semitone reasserts itself in a lower register in bass octaves at the end of the rapid *crescendo* in mm.51-52, and remains unresolved (followed by a sequential repetition of the second theme in mm.55-62). Fate (in the form of three As) is again present at the next stage of the drama, when it introduces sequential figurations in m.63, while conflict reappears in mm.70-71 (this time in form of Fb-Eb semitone, repeated an octave lower in mm.74-75). This struggle between forces of conflict and Fate remains unresolved. Fate (the low A in the melody line) comes back with the first theme in m.83 and leads to remote modulations of the transformation of the first theme. It reminds us of its unquestionable rule in m.115, when a low bass octave A

[62] It is interesting to note that Karol Berger, in his article "The Form of Chopin's Ballade, Op.23" (Nineteenth Century Music Vol.20, no.1, Summer 1996: 46-71) identifies the *Ur*-motif C-Bb as one of the main factors providing narrative continuity in the *First Ballade*.

m. #	3 (10, 18, 27)	46	47	52	63	70-71	74-75	83	115	140
Fate Pitch A	A (alto)	A (mel.)	A (mel. + bass)		A (mel.)			A (mel.)	A (bass)	A (bass)
Confl. Sem. F-E			F-E (mel.)	F-E (bass)		Fb-Eb (mel.)	Fb-Eb (mel.)			
Them. Unit	I theme		II theme					I theme	I theme	

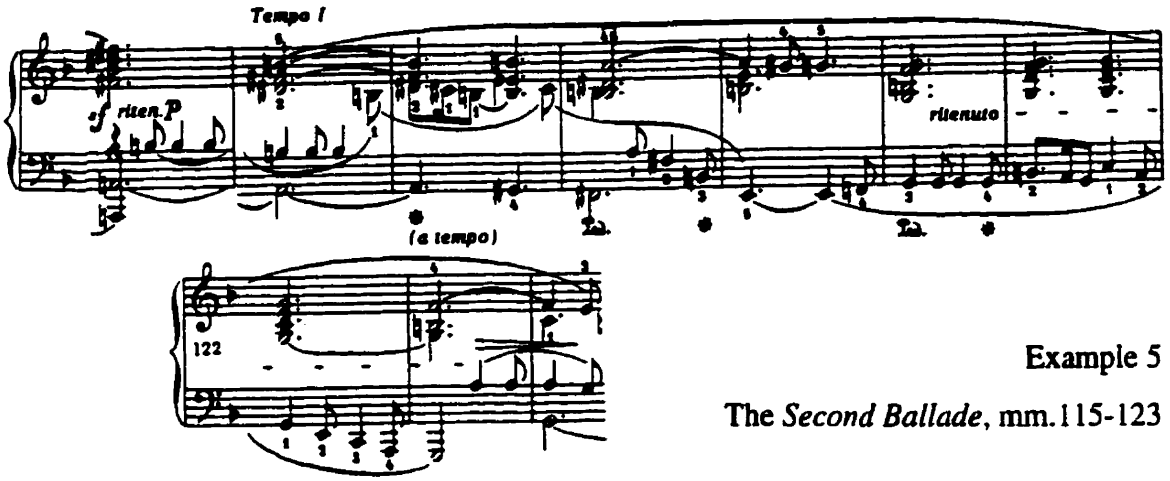
m.#	141	149	156-57	169	183	188-89 -194	197- 197-98	201	204
Fate pitch A	A (mel. + bass)	A (mel. + bass)		A (bass)			A (mel. + bass)		A (mel. + bass)
Conflict Sem. F-E	F-E (mel.)	F-E (mel.)	F-E (bass)		F-E (bass)	F-E (bass; repeat.)	F- (bass)	E	
them. unit	II theme		II theme I theme	Coda		II theme	I theme		

Table 6

Distribution of Fate and Conflict motives in the *Second Ballade*

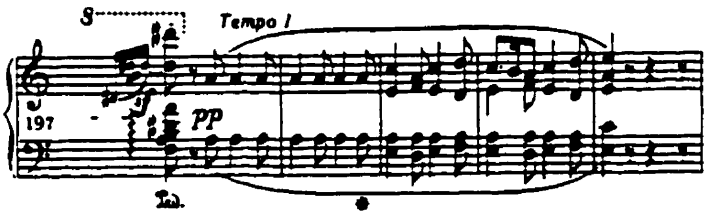
introduces the reappearance of the first theme's opening phrase in B-major (A functions here as a seventh in the dominant seventh of the dominant in a-minor). Fate also ends transformation of the first theme (m.140) and brings back the energy of the second theme in m.141, again combined with conflict semitone F-E in the top voice. However, this time the repetition of the second theme does not bring a sequential break, as both Fate and conflict reappear in m.149. Finally, the conflict semitone asserts itself above Fate in mm.156-157 (the low bass octaves F-E, signaling the arrival of the structural dominant) and creates tension which is prolonged until m.168 (dominant pedal). This is resolved by the arrival of a low A octave (Fate) in m.169. The struggle between conflict and Fate does not end there. The forces of conflict reappear with agitated power in m.183 (bass octaves), are prolonged by a deceptive cadence in mm.184-185 (based on reversed 'conflict semitone'), and intensified by fiery repetitions in mm. 188-194 (the last appearance of the second theme). Finally, the conflict semitone underlines the sudden break of the second theme in m.197 (where F is a basis of a French augmented sixth chord) and the end of the last appearance of the first theme in m.201--it lasts to the very end of the *Ballade*, resolved only by the Fate of the final cadence in m.204. Fate also introduces and dominates the last statement of the first theme in mm.197-198--in the end forces of conflict are powerless against Fate.

Another interesting problem in the music of the *Second Ballade* is created by the issue of past and present. Although on the surface each performance of the work simply presents musical events in the "present tense," this uniformity seems more complex with regards to particular sections of the composition in relation to each other. The archaic, steady *sotto voce* character of the first theme itself invokes a sense of past at the very beginning of the *Ballade* and its subsequent reappearance only magnifies that sense. When the first theme fades away in m.88 after a dramatic pause, it forces the listener to remember its first appearance (it almost wants the listener to complete it) and creates a sense of its own past. This sense of the past tense is only intensified by the appearance of the first theme in mm.115-123 (see Example 5), where it sounds like a distant echo of itself, again bringing to mind its past versions.



Example 5
The *Second Ballade*, mm.115-123

Finally, the last rendition of the first theme (mm.197-201, see Example 6), nostalgic and distant, brings that perception of the past (through the listener's memory of its previous appearances) to the extreme. A sense of nostalgia is created here by a very clear invocation of the beginning of the piece, with its open octaves appearing out of silence and emphasizing the irregular upbeat, followed by the emerging melody of the first theme.

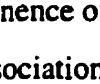


Example 6
The *Second Ballade*, mm.197-201

Contrary to this sense of past tense, however, the canonic imitations at previous statements in mm.98-108 and 123-133 resemble a dialogue and create a sense of dramatic present tense. A similar effect is created by the impetuous, urgent surges of the second theme and the emotional outbursts of the Coda.

Finally, the other-worldly character of the Coda (mm.169-204) can be related to a ballad archetype. The Coda of the *Second Ballade* brings neither thematic synthesis nor apotheosis. Instead, it invokes a distorted, tonally unstable, and almost diabolical waltz (mm.169-185) followed by a struggling, fiery re-statement of the second theme (mm.189-

197) and chorale-like, resigned appearance of the first theme (mm.197-201)--in short, it brings catastrophe followed by a sad reference to the beginning. This content of the Coda corresponds to demands of ballad genre: it brings fiery retribution to forces of conflict (the second theme) and restores the previous order of things. A distorted invocation of a waltz--completely alienated here in both the formal and generic sense--may represent the otherworldly, supernatural element of the ballad world. The first two parts of the Coda form the climax of the musical story with extreme dynamics, registerial contrasts, virtuosity, and tonal incoherence. This diabolical climax ends abruptly and tonally unresolved on the French augmented sixth chord in m.197, completing only the retribution stage of the drama. The restoration is left to the chorale-like statement of the first theme, introduced by Fate (pitch A repeated in open octaves seven times in mm.197-198). Here the Coda produces an aura of morbidity, but also reinforces the unquestionable authority of the Narrator (the clearly stated iambic rhythm) and finally resolves the tonal conflicts with a cadence in a-minor.

There are other examples of the influence of ballad genre on Chopin's *Second Ballade*--such as the always sounding voice (represented by clear, easily audible melody lines), prominence of Chopin's typical nocturne rhythm () in the *Ballades* (bringing associations with nocturnal mode--setting of most of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and other literary ballads) and continuous build-up of momentum in Chopin's *Ballades*--already identified and discussed by James Parakilas.[63] Their existence contributes to a sense of connection between Chopin's *Ballades* and the literary ballad in general, and the *Second Ballade* and the themes of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* in particular. This story--expressed through themes of alienation and powerlessness, anxiety and nostalgia, homelessness and pilgrimage--is very similar to the story of the Great Emigration. In light of these similarities it is not surprising that Chopin's contemporaries heard his *Second Ballade* as a "Pilgrim's Ballade."

[63] In Ballads Without Words, pp. 56-57, 54.

Conclusion

Chopin's *Second Ballade* is difficult to understand in purely musical terms; the ambiguous form, sectional structure, extreme internal contrasts, puzzling ending, and two-key scheme have invited extra-musical interpretations since its earliest days. Although all kinds of distinctive readings of the music reflect the various aesthetic and ideological changes in cultural history over the past century and a half, the mere fact that the *Ballades* have caused such different (and often contrary) appropriations seems to suggest that a consensus has emerged that the most fruitful way to listen to the works is with some recognition of extra-musical allusion. Many readings identify and emphasize some kind of 'otherness' expressed in the music; from Mallefille's "path of the Exiles" to Berger's historical narrative of the Great Emigration, most authors hear a distinctive narrative sequence, most often with nationalistic overtones, in the musical discourse of Chopin's *Ballades*. The *Second Ballade* can be considered an excellent example of this.

My interpretation of Chopin's narrative ties the ideology of the Great Emigration--expressed through themes of alienation, powerlessness, homelessness, morbidity, pilgrimage and nostalgia--to the generic title of *Ballades* and thus to the collection of Mickiewicz's poems. Mickiewicz's *Ballady* share with Chopin's piano compositions not only the same title, but also similar semantic content--a story of alienation and powerlessness, relevant to the plots of the poems and emotional content of the music. I believe that a firm case can be made that the syntax and semantic content of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* are paralleled in the form and musical discourse of the *Second Ballade.* Moreover, this parallel may well explain the tonal and formal anomalies of the work on the level of compositional intent. Striking analogies in the lives and works of Chopin and Mickiewicz--their common experiences, similar reactions to contemporary events (particularly the collapse of the November Uprising) and lives in exile--only contribute to the validity of this perspective. As the intellectual leader of the Great Emigration, Mickiewicz defined its ideology in his most esoteric works, both written in 1832: Dziady Część III and Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego. The same ideology,

expressed through identical images, is echoed in Chopin's letters. More importantly, it may be plausibly connected to his music, being responsible for its national character and everything that was classified by Parisian audiences as "morbid, exotic, and nostalgic" in Chopin's works. If Mickiewicz's works defined the ideology of the Great Emigration, some of Chopin's most important compositions reflected its emotional content to the fullest extent. Both artists reflected upon the reality of their existence in their works, and that reality was, for both poet and composer, a story of their generation's alienation and powerlessness, a story expressed in Mickiewicz's *Ballady* and sublimated in Chopin's *Ballades*. Considering Chopin's aesthetics and his claim that ". . . it's up to the listener to complete the picture,"[1] the story of alienation and powerlessness and the collection of Mickiewicz's *Ballady* may represent an interesting possibility to "complete the picture" of the *Second Ballade*.

[1] As reported by Chopin's pupil Wilhelm von Lenz, quoted in Berger's "Chopin's Ballade Op.23," p. 80.

Appendix 1

Mickiewicz's Dziady Część III, Act I, Scene 2, in Selected Poetry and Prose, pp. 98-105.

The Great Improvisation

Konrad (*After a long silence*)
Alone! Ah, men! And who of you, divining
My spirit, grasps the meaning of its song?
Whose eye will see the radiance of its shining?
Alas, who toils to sing for men, toils long!
The tongue belies all sound, and sound all thought,
While thoughts fly hence ere by slow phrases caught;
Words but engulf our thoughts and o'er them quiver
As does the earth where streams flow underground,
Yet from that trembling who will know the river,
How deep it lie, or where it source be found?

My feeling surges through my heart; it glows
Like blood that sings deep down within the veins,
And so much crimson as my pale face shows,
So much men comprehend of my heart strains.

My song, thou art a star beyond the bourne
Of earth; and human eyes,
Seeking to track thee through the skis,
Will reach thee not though they take wings of glass.
They only strike against the Milky Way,
Behold the suns that turn
Through the space, yet may
Not measure them, nor count them as they pass.

What need hast thou, my song, of human ears?
Flow in the secret places of my heart,
Gleam on its hights, inviolate, apart,
Like sunken streams, like stars beyond the spheres.

Then heed me, God and nature, for my song
Is worthy you, worthy to echo long.--
A master I!
I stretch my hands on high
And touch the stars. Ah, see!
Now forth there peals
As from the illimitable crystal wheels
Of some harmonica, a melody;
And as the circles roll
I tune the turning planets to my soul.
A million notes stream on;
I catch each one,
I braid them into rainbow-coloured chords,
And out they flow and flash like lightning swords.

I take my hands away: each starry circle
Of that harmonica its turning stays;
Through the spaces far beyond the planets' sparkle,
Beyond all confines now, my arms I raise.
I sing alone; and, long
And wailing like the tempest's breath, my song
Searches the ocean of humanity;
It moans with grief, it roars with storm,
And listening centuries transform
The echoes to a vast antiphony.
I hear it as I hear the wind that rocks
The rushing waters, whistling loud;
I see it as I ass the wind that walks
Appareled in a robe of cloud.
My song is worthy God and nature; great
It is, it also doth create;
Such song is power and deathless energy.
Such song is immortality.
Yes, I have made this immortality I feel:
What greater deed, O God, canst thou reveal?
I body forth my songs in words; they fly,
They scatter over all the sky,
They whirl above, they play, they shine;
I touch them still though they are far,
Their tender graces I caress
And their rounded forms I press:
Their every moment I divine.
They are the children of my poetry,
Each song I sing a star;
They are the tempests of the mind that rove,
They are all passion and all love;
And in their midst I stand, the sovereign
And loving father of this progeny,
For they are mine, all mine.
Poets and prophets, wise men of past days,
Whom the wide world doth magnify and praise,
I hold you all in scorn.
Though you yet walked among the children born
Of your own spirits, and yet heard the bright air riven
With hymns and plaudits that you knew were rightly given;
Though round your brows there shone
Fair coronals enwoven of the gleams
Of daily homage and melodious themes
Sung you by generations past and gone,
Still never would you feel your happiness and might
As I feel mine, here in the lonely night,
Singing unheard, alone,
Singing onto myself, alone.
Yes, I have wisdom now, and love and power!
Oh, never have I felt as at this hour!
This is my zenith, and my strength tonight
Has reached its height;
Now I shall know
If I be one supreme, or only proud.

This is the destined moment; lo,
I strain my spirit's arms abroad!
It is the moment that was Samson's when a prisoner, blind
He brooded by the pillars. Now my mind
Casts off its body; through the air's expanse
It wings, and far and fleet,
On past the mazy planets' dance
I take my course where God and nature meet.

My wings! I have them now, and they suffice!
I stretch them to the east and to the west,
The right wing strikes the future and the left the past,
And higher, higher, on the flames of love I rise
And look into thy breast.
O thou! Of whom they say that still thou art
Loving toward men, thou dwelling in the skies,
My strength has power to reach to thee,
My pinions bear me here to thee,
But I am human and there where lies
My body, in the land I loved, there lies my heart!--

And yet my love hath never found repose
In selfish joy with any single man,
Like the poor insect, living in the rose;
Nor in the generation nor one clan.
I love a nation, and my wide embrace
Presses the past and future of the race
To my deep breast.
Both friend and lover, spouse and father, I:
And I would raise my country high
Upon the crest
Of joy, for all the world to glorify.
But I have not the means: 'tis that has brought
Me here, armed with the power of thought,
Of thought that snatched thy lightnings from the sky,
That followed where the planets go,
That opened up the ocean's floor
By its great strength. And I have more,
A power that men cannot bestow:
Feeling, that oftentimes must choke
Within itself, and yet sometimes doth pour
Forth words as the volcano smoke.

Nor have I plucked this strength from Eden's tree:
Twas not the fruit of knowledge gave it me;
Not from books and tales it springs,
Not from magic questionings,
Nor unriddling secret things,
But I am a creator born;
My power hath come to me
From where thine came to thee:
Thou didst not seek it and thou dost not fear
That of that power thou shalt e'er be shorn.
So, I, who have my strength, from thee or otherwhere,
My swift and potent eye,

Fear not, and when the time is on me, high,
Scarce visible along a cloudy trail,
I see the distant birds of passage sail:
Then I send forth my wish, and my swift sight
Holds them as in a snare;
And, till I loose them, they may cry in mournful tone,
But cannot move in flight,
Although to drive them on
Thou madest furious tempests of the air.
I gaze upon a comet's track to prove
My power--and the comet cannot move.
Only men, corrupt of heart,
Yet with an immortal part,
Heed me and know me not, nor me, nor thee.
And so I come to seek in heaven the art
To make them yield to me,
And with the power I have o'er nature, bind
The human mind.
As I rule birds and planets with my nod,
So will I rule my fellow men, my rod
No sword--that calls forth sword; no song--
For it must germinate too long;
Not learning--it will soon decay;
Not miracles--too loud are they;
But I will rule men by the love in me,
As thou dost rule, forever, secretly.
What I desire, at once let all
Divine, and joyously fulfill;
And if they shall oppose my will,
Let them suffer, let them fall.
Let men be onto me as speech and thought,
From whom at will the house of song is wrought;
'Tis so that thou dost rule, men say.
Thou knobbiest that I never have belied
My thought: then give me equal rule with thee
O'er spirits. I will make my land a pride,
A living song more marvelous than thine
Own works. For I will sing of happiness divine!
Give me the rule of souls! This lifeless building
That common people call the world, and praise,
I so despise that I have never tested
Whether my word has not the power to raze
And ruin it. But well I know if through the portal
Of air I shot my will in one swift bound,
Its power compressed and centered, that it might
Put out a hundred stars and then might light
Another hundred, for I am immortal!
I know that in creation's round
Are other deathless ones, but higher than I
I know none yet, and so I seek thee here
Within thy sky,
I, highest of the beings of earthly sphere.
I have not seen thee yet, but what thou art I guess;
Now let me see and let me feel at last thy loftiness.
Give me the power I seek, or tell me how

To gain it. I have heard of prophets who
Could reign o'er spirits, and so can I, too.
I would have power o'er souls no less
Than thou in heaven dost possess,
To rule them as dost thou.
(*A long silence*)
(*With irony*)
Still thou art silent. I have fathomed thee
And read the secret of thy sovereignty:
He lied who called thee love, thou art
Wisdom alone. Not to the heart
But to the mind thy ways shall be revealed
And what the weapon that shine arm doth wield.
He who has delved in books alone,
In numbers, corpses, metals, stone,
'Tis he and only he who may approach
Thee and upon thy power encroach.
He shall find poison, dust, and steam,
Uproar and smoke and tinsel gleam,
And empty laws, to teach again
To would-be wise or witless men.
Thou givest all the fruits of earth
To mind, to leave the heart in dearth:
On me, who have most power to feel,
Thou dost bestow the shortest time of weal.
(*Silence*)
What is the love I feel for man?
Only a gleam!
What is my life and its brief span?
A moment of time!
And the lightnings of tomorrow, what are they today?
Only a gleam!
An the storied ages coursing on their endless way?
A moment of time!
Whence came this little world that maketh our mankind?
From an instant's gleam!
And what is death that wastes the riches of the mind?
A moment of time!
What was the while the worlds yet lay within his breast?
Only a gleam!
And eternity, when he shall swallow it at last?
A moment of time!

Voice from the left side.
Saddle his soul!
Mount it and gallop,
On, on to our goal!

Voice from the right.
How he doth rave!
Wrap our wide wings round him,
Shelter and save!

The moment and the gleam, as they expand and burn,
Can make and overturn.
Then stretch and lengthen out the fleeting time,
Blow up the flickering spark to fire sublime.
Now--and I challenge thee--come forth! Once more,
Baring my soul to thee as to a friend,
I call upon thee solemnly, attend!

No answer?--Yet in person thou didst war
With Satan. Spurn me not; although alone
I challenge thee.
I and a nation's mighty heart are one;
Thrones, powers, armies follow in my train.
If thou dost drive me onto blasphemy,
A bloodier conflict thou shalt join
Than ever Satan waged with thee;
For Satan sought dominion for the mind;
I battle for the heart of all mankind:
I have grown up in suffering and love,
And though of my own happiness dispossessed,
I beat my hands upon my bleeding breast,
But never raised them against heaven above.

Voice.
The steed is a bird,
And, onward, spurred,
Let it mount the height
In eagle flight.

Voice.
A falling star. Alas,
It sinks in the abyss!

Now is my soul incarnate in my country
And in my body dwells her soul:
My fatherland and I are one great whole.
My name is million, for I love as millions:
Their pain and suffering I feel:
I gaze upon my country fallen on days
Of torment, as a son would gaze
Upon his father broken on the wheel.
I feel within myself my country's massacre
Even as a mother feels within her womb
The travail of the children whom
She bears. Yet thou, still wise and cool,
Reigning in bliss, dost rule,
And men will say that thou canst never err!
Her me if that be true which once I heard
With filial faith, that thou dost love the earth
To which thou gavest birth:
Hear me, if once thy word
Saved from the flood within the sheltering ark,
With man and each original beast, the spark
Of love: if love be no monstrosity.
Whose nature is impermanence,
That cannot ripen to maturity:
If in thy rule love is not anarchy:
If on the millions crying, "Save us, Lord!"
Thou dost not gaze with an unmoved regard,
As thou wouldst gaze on the confusion wrought
By some false reckoning: if in creation,
As thou hast planned and made it, love is aught
But a wrong figure in thy calculation,
Then hear me, Lord!

Voice.
Now like a hydra

Voice.
From the bright sun

The eagle doth rise;
Onward and upward,
Pluck out his eyes!

The comet strays;
When will its race be run,
Whither its ways?

Silent, though I have opened all my heart!
I conjure thee, give me the smallest part
Of all the power that pride doth arrogate;
From that least part what joy I would create!
Silent! Then if thou dost despise the heart,
Give up this power to the mind. Foremost
Am I of men and of thine angel host,
I know thee better than thy seraphs, part
Of thy dominion I deserve. Then say
If I am wrong. But I speak true, for thou
Art silent still and trustest certainly
In thy strong arm. But thou shalt know
That love can burn what mind can never break.

My fire is love, and I
Will heap it up till it burn high.
Then, as with powder, I will fill
With it the cannon of my will.

Voice.
Flame on through space!

Voice.
Mercy, grace!

Speak, or thunder forth, and if I can
Not shatter nature into shards, yet all thy plan
Of wheeling worlds and planets, every star,
Shall rock, as I proclaim to all creation
From generation unto generation
That thou art not the father--

Voice of the devil.
But the tsar!

(*Konrad stands for a moment, then totters and falls*)

Translated by Dorothea Prall Radin.

Appendix 2

Mickiewicz's *Ballady*, in Selected Poetry and Prose, pp. 27-44.

Romantyczność

"Romanticism"

Maiden, hark to what I say!
--She will not hear you.--
This is the town! This is broad day!
No living soul stands there so near you:
What do you pluck at with your hands?
Your speech, your smile, who understands?
--She will not hear you.

Now like a carven stone, with eyes
Set straight ahead, she will not turn;
Now swift her darting glances burn,
Now bitterly she cries.
And now her groping hands have closed on air--
With tears and laughter wild, she claps them there.

--There in the night--'tis you?--Jasienek! You!
Aye, and he loves me, even after death!
Here, here, but softly--softly as a breath--
My foster mother, she will hear you too.

"But let her listen--now that you are laid
Within the earth so far!
Then--you are dead! Now? Ah! but I am afraid!
Why do I fear Jasienek? It is he!
Your face, your eyes--your own dear eyes--I see--
How white your garments are!

"And you yourself are white--white as a sheet,
Cold to the finger-tips!
Put here your hands, to feel my warm heart beat,
And press me, lips to lips!

"Surely 'tis cold, there in the grave to lie!
You have been dead for--yes, these two years past;
Ah, take me there! Beside you I will die,
The world escaped at last.

"Wretched am I amid the spiteful herd:
I weep--they jeer at me;
I speak--they cannot understand a word;
I see--they do not see!

"Do I but dream? Could you not come by day?
I hold you here so close--it is no dream:

Where, my Jasienek, do you glide away
Before the dawn's first gleam?

"Ah, God! The cock is crowing! It is dawn,
And pale the windows glow.
Jasienek! Tarry! Wither have you gone?
Do you not see my woe?"

Thus with endearing words, caresses vain,
The maiden stumbles, pleads and cries aloud:
Seeing her fall, hearing her voice of pain,
Gathers the curious crowd.

Gathers the crowd and murmurs: "Say a prayer!
Here is Karusia, Jasio's promised bride:
His ghost must be here, walking at her side,
He loved her so," the simple folk declare.

And I--I cannot question what they say;
I hear, and I believe. I weep and pray.

"Hark, maiden! Hark!" an old man calls aloud:
"Listen to me!" he shouts to all the crowd;
"My eyes are true, my spectacles are clear,
And I see nothing here.

"Ghosts are a figment of the vulgar throng,
By folly shaped upon the forge of dreams;
The maiden gibbers nonsense--idle, wrong;
The stupid rabble utterly blasphemes."

I answer modestly: "The maid can feel,
The common people to their faith are true:
Feeling and faith to me far more reveal
Than eyes and spectacles, though learned, do.

"You delve among dead truths, to men unknown,
The world you see in dust and specks of light;
But Truth you know not, miracles disown--
Look in your heart, that still may see aright!"

Translated by George Rapall Noyes and Jewell Parish.

Świtezianka

"The Nixie"

Who is the lad so comely and young
And who is the maid at his side
Who walk by the Świteź blue waters, among
The moonbeams that shine on its tide?

A basket of raspberries she holds out,
    He gives her a wreath for her hair;
The lad is her lover, beyond a doubt,
    And she is his sweetheart fair.

Never a night but a dusk they stand
    On the shore by the old larch tree;
The youth hunts here in the forest land,
    But the maiden is strange to me.

You may ask in vain whence she comes and where
    She vanishes: no one knows.
Like the crowfoot's moist bloom on the marsh, she is there--
    Like the will-o'-the -wisp, she goes.

"Beautiful maid whom I love so well,
    Wherefore this secrecy?
Where do your father and mother dwell,
    By what road do you come to me?

"Summer is over, the leaves grow brown,
    And the rains are about to break;
Must I always wait here till you wander down
    To the shore of the desolate lake?

"Will you range through the wood like a heedless roe,
    Forever a ghost in the night?
Stay rather with him who will love you so,
    With me, O my heart's delight!

"My cottage is near where the woodland trees
    Spread their sheltering branches thick;
There is plenty of milk, there is game when you please,
    And the fruit from the boughs to pick."

"Nay, have done, haughty stripling, my father's tales
    Have forewarned me against your art:
For the voice of a man is the nightingale's,
    But the fox's is his heart.

"And I have more fear of your treachery
    Than belief in your changing flame;
And were I to do what you ask of me
    Would you always remain the same?

Then the youth knelt down and with sand in his palm
    He called on the powers of hell,
He swore by the moon so holy and calm--
    Will he hold to his oath so well?

"I counsel you, hunter, to keep your oath
    And the promise that here you swore;
For woe to the man who shall break it, both
    While he lives and forevermore."

So saying, she places her wreath on his brow
And, making no longer stay,
She has waved him good-by from afar and now
She is over the field and away.

Vainly the hunter increases his speed,
For her fleetness outmatches his own;
She has vanished as light as the wind on the mead,
He is left on the shore alone.

Alone he returns on the desolate ground
Where the marshlands heave and quake
And the air is silent--the only sound
When the dry twigs rustle and break.

He walks by the water with wandering tread,
He searches with wandering eyes;
On a sudden the winds through the deepwood spread
And the waters seethe and rise.

They rise and they swell and their depths divide--
Oh, phantoms, seen only in dreams!
On the field of the Świteź all silver-dyed
A beauteous maiden gleams!

Her face like the petals of some pale rose
That is sprinkled with morning dew;
Round her heavenly form her light dress blows
Like a cloud of a misty hue.

"My handsome young stripling," so o'er and o'er
Comes the maiden's tender croon,
"Oh, why do you walk on the desolate shore
By the light of the shining moon?

"Why do you grieve for a wanton flirt
Who has cozened you into her trap,
Who has turned your head and has brought you to hurt
And who laughs at you now, mayhap?

"Oh, heed my soft words and my gentle glance,
Sigh and be mournful no more,
But come to me here and together we'll dance
On the water's crystal floor.

"You may fly like the swallow that swiftly skims,
Just brushing the water's face,
Or, merry and sound as a fish, you may swim
All day in the splashing race.

"You may sleep in the silvery depths at night
On a couch in a mirrored tent
Upon water lilies soft and white,
Amid visions of ravishment."

Her swan bosom gleams through her drapery,
The hunter's glance modestly falls
As the maiden draws nearer him over the sea
And "Come to me, come!" she calls.

Then winging her path on the breeze she sweeps
In a rainbow arch away
And cutting the waves in the watery deeps
She splashes the silver spray.

The youth follows after, then pauses once more,
He would leap yet he still draws back;
And the damp wave goes rippling away from the shore,
Luring him on in its track.

It lures caressingly over the sand
Till his heart melts away in his breast,
As when a chaste maid softly presses the hand
Of the youth whom she loves the best.

No longer he thinks of his own fair maid
And the vow that he swore he would keep;
By another enchantress his senses are swayed
And he runs to his death in the deep.

He hastens and gazes, he looks and he hastes,
Till already the land is far;
He is carried away on the lake's broad wastes
Where its midmost waters are.

Now his fingers clasp snowy-cool finger-tips,
His eyes meet a beautiful face,
He presses his lips against rosy lips,
And he circles through dancing space.

Then a little breeze whistled, a little cloud broke
That had cast its deceiving shade,
And the youth knows the maid, now unhid by its cloak--
'Tis his love of the woodland glade!

"Now where is my counsel and where is your oath
And the vow so solemnly swore?
Oh, woe to the man who has broken it, both
While he lives and forevermore!

"Not for you is the silvery whirlpool's cup
Nor the gulfs where the clear sea lies,
But the harsh earth shall swallow your body up
And the gravel shall put out your eyes.

"For a thousand years shall your spirit wait
By the side of this witnessing tree,
And the fires of hell that never abate
Shall burn you unceasingly."

He hears, and he walks with a wandering tread,
    He gazes with wandering eyes;
Then a hurricane out of the deepwood sped
    And the waters seethe and rise.

They seethe to their depths and the circling tide
    Of the whirlpool snatches them down
Through its open jaws as the seas divide:
    So the youth and the maiden drown.

And still when the lake waters foam and roar,
    And still in the moon's pale light,
Two shadows come flitting along the shore:
    The youth and the maiden bright.

She plays where the lake glitters silver and clear,
    He groans by the old larch tree;
The youth hunted game in the forest here,
    But the maiden is strange to me.

Translated by Dorothea Prall Radin.

Lilije

"The Lilies"

    Monstrous deed: A lady bright
Slays her own, her wedded knight;
Buries him beside a brook
In a grove where none will look.
Lilies on his grave she plants;
As she saws them, thus she chants:
"Lily flowers, grow as high
As my husband deep doth lie;
As my husband deep doth lie,
Do ye, lilies, grow so high!"

    Dabbled with his blood the wife,
She who took her husband's life,
Rushes over hill and dale,
Speeds away through wood and vale.
Evening, and the cold winds blow,
All is dark and chill and foul:
Now the cawing of a crow,
Now the hooting of an owl.

    She has come to river lands
Where a beech's branches rock
And a hermit's cottage stands:
Knock, knock! Knock, knock:

"What is that?" the metal pin
Falls, the hermit brings a light;
With a shriek she rushes in
Like a vampire of the night.
Blue her lips and wild her eyes,
White her face as linen thread;
Shivering, the lady cries,
"Oh, my husband! He lies dead!"

—"God be with thee woman! What
Dost thou in the wood alone?
What has brought thee to this spot
While the stormy night-winds moan?"

—"Over wood and marshy hollow
Shines my castle, but to far
Kiev must my husband follow
King Boleslaw in the war.
Years went on, and still among
Battle's noise he wandered free;
I was young amid the young,
Virtue's path is slippery,
And I broke my vows at last.
Woe upon me and alack!
Stern the laws our king has passed,
And the warriors have come back.

"But my husband shall not know:
See the blood upon this blade!
He is silenced and laid low!—
Full confession I have made:
Give me, therefore, holy sage,
Prayers to say and pilgrimage;
Tell me where I am to go!
I would walk to hell, endure
Brand, and scourge that tears the skin,
If I only could be sure
Night would cover up my sin."

"Woman, dost thou then repent
Of the crime that brought thee here,
Or but dread the punishment?
Go in peace, cast off thy fear,
Clear thy brow, thy secret lies
Safe forever from men's eyes.
Thus the Lord commands us: those
Things thou dost in secret, none
But thy husband can disclose,
And thy husband's life is done."

With this judgment well content,
As she came, the lady went,
Homeward through the night she stole,
Saying naught to any soul.
At the door her children wait,

"Mother," eagerly they cry,
"Why does father stay so late?"
--"What!" she thinks, "You wait the dead?"
But at last she makes reply:
"He is in the wood near by,
He will come tonight," she said.

So the children wait perplexed
All the next day and the next;
All the week they watch the door,
Till at last they watch no more.

But the lady finds it hard
To forget her guilty act;
From her lips the smiles are barred,
And her heart is ever racked.
Sleep will close her eyes no more;
For at night when all is dark
Something knocks upon the door,
Something walks the courtyard. Hark!
"Children, hear me!" comes the cry,
"'Tis tour father, it is I!"

Through the night she lies awake,
Conscious of her guilty act,
On her lips no smiles will break,
And her heart is ever racked.

"Hurry, Hanka, for I hear
Trampling on the bridge. I see
Clouds of dust now drawing near.
Are they guests to visit me?
Haste through wood and highroad, say
Whether someone rides this way!"

--"They ride hither in their might,
All the road a whirling cloud,
And their sharp swords glisten bright
And their black steeds neigh aloud.
They are knights-at-arms who ride,
Brothers of our lord who died."

--"Greetings! And how dost thou fare?
Greet us, sister! Tell us, where
Is our brother?"--"He is dead,
He no longer lives," she said.
--"When?"--"A year ago. He died
In the war," the wife replied.
--"Nay, 'tis false! Be happy, thou,
For the war is over now;
He is well and of good cheer,
Soon thou shalt behold him here."

In her fright the lady paled,
Swooning, and her senses failed,

While with vacant eyes she gazed
Terror-stricken and amazed.
"Where is he, a man long dead?"
And then, coming back to life
Slowly, like a faithful wife
Who had swooned for joy, she said:
"Where is he, my own true knight?
Will he soon rejoice my sight?"

--"He returned with us, but then
Hastened on ahead that he
Might receive us with his men
And the sooner comfort thee.
He will come, if not today,
Then tomorrow; he perhaps
In his haste has lost the way.
We will let a day elapse
And then seek him. Never fear,
One more night will bring him here."

They sent searches high and low,
Waiting one day, then another;
When they cannot find their brother,
Weeping, they decide to go.

But the lady's pleas begin:
"Brothers, my beloved kin,
Autumn is no time for travel,
Winds are cold and rains are wet;
You have waited without cavil,
Wait a little longer yet."

So they waited. Winter came,
But no brother. Just the same
Still they waited, saying then
Spring would bring him back again.
But he lies within his grave,
O'er him flowery branches wave,
And the lilies grow as high
As his body deep doth lie.
So they waited on through spring,
Putting off their journeying.

For their hostess pleased them well
And her youth had cast its spell.
They pretended they would go--
But they tarried even so,
Waiting on; and by another
Summer had forgot their brother.

For the lady pleased them well,
She was young and cast her spell;
And as they were two, they both
Fell in love and sought her troth.
Both their hearts by hope were fanned,

Both were seized with love's alarms;
Neither would renounce her charms,
Both could not possess her hand.
To the lady they agree
To repair and make their plea.

"Take our message in good part,
Lady, once our brother's wife!
He has surely lost his life;
We sit idle here. Thou art
Youthful--far too young, in truth,
To renounce the world and smother
All the impulses of youth:
Take one brother for another!"

So they spoke and paused. In each
Jealousy and anger blazed;
Both in turn burst forth in speech,
Both upon the lady gazed,
Bit their lips till they were blue,
Seized their swords and almost drew.

When the lady saw their wrath
She was doubtful what to say,
So she sought the forest path,
Bidding them to wait a day.
Down she rushed through river lands
Where the beech's branches rock
And the hermit's cottage stands:
Knock, knock! Knock, knock!
All her story she goes through,
Asking what she is to do.

"Tell me how to reconcile them,
Both would have me, I must choose.
Either suits me: how beguile them?
Who shall win and who shall lose?
I have children. I command
Wealth of stores and settled land,
But my wealth will soon have fled
If I stay alone, unwed.
Ah, but there can never be
Any wedded joy for me!
God has sent a cruel blight
And a specter haunts my night.
Scarcely have I closed my eyes,
Creak! And up the door latch flies;
And I wake and see and hear
How it pants as it draws near,
And its panting and its tread
Tell me that I hear the dead!
Whir! It holds a knife in air,
Wet with blood, above me there.
From its mouth the sparks fly free
And it pulls and pinches me.

Ah, enough of torment! I
Must from my own dwelling fly;
Happiness I shall not see,
Wedded joy is not for me."

--"Daughter," said the priest, "no crime
But is punished in due time.
Yet the Lord doth still give ear
When repentance is sincere.
I know secrets hid from men,
And I bring thee words of cheer:
I can raise thy knight again
Though he has been dead a year."

--"What, my father! Do not thou
Raise the dead! 'Tis over now,
And the blade of steel must sever
Me and him it slew forever.
I am worthy punishment,
I will suffer what is sent,
Only let this ghost relent!
I will give up all my goods,
Far within the lonely woods,
In a cloister take the vow,
Only, father, do not thou
Raise the dead! 'Tis over now,
And the blade of steel must sever
Me and him it slew forever!"

Heavily the old man sighed,
Wrung his hands and hid his face,
Weeping for a little space;
And with sadness he replied:
"Go then, while thou canst, and marry:
Do not fear the spectre form!
In the grave the dead will tarry,
For death's gate is hard to storm,
And thy husband will appear
Only if thou call him here."

--"How appease the brothers? Who
Shall be favored of the two?"
--"Let God choose, and do thou call
Him on whom the lot shall fall.
Let them both at break of day
Go and gather flowers, and they
From the flowers for thee shall twine
Each a wreath and put a sign
In the garland that shall show
Which is which for all to know;
Then in church will their own hands
Place them where the altar stands.
He whose wreath thou choosest, he
Thine own lord and love shall be."

Then the lady, well content,
All her thoughts on marriage bent,
Ceased to fear the phantom; for
She knew very well indeed
Never in the direst need
Would she summon him once more.
So, with spirit confident,
As she entered, so she went.
Homeward hurriedly she stole,
Saying naught to any soul.
Swift she ran through field and wood,
Rushing on, then, halting, stood,
Stood intent and listened. Hark!
Someone softly seemed to follow,
Something whispered through the hollow
Wood, where all was still and dark,
"'Tis thy husband, I am here!"
So she halted, caught by stark
Terror, listened, and then fled,
Every hair on end with dread.
Yet she dared not look around
Though she heard the whisper sound.
Echoing ever in her ear,
"'Tis thy husband, I am here."

But the festive Sunday came
When her suitor she might claim.
With the early rays of dawn
Forth the two young men had gone
And the lady fair, attended
By her bridal maids, descended
To the church; nor did she falter,
But, advancing to the altar,
Raised a wreath and bore it round.
"Lo, the wreath of lilies: Whose
Are they, who is it I choose,
Who the true love I have found?"

Up the elder brother springs,
Joy upon his face ashine;
Claps his hands and leaps and sings:
"Mine thou art, those flowers are mine!
There inside the lily wreath
I enwove a ribbon band:
See the token underneath!
It is mine—I win thy hand."

—"'Tis a lie!" his brother shouted;
"Not far off there is a plot
In which lily plants have sprouted
And these flowers are from that spot
In a forest opening,
On a grave beside a river.
I will show you grave and spring:
This my wreath and I the giver."

Wrangling thus with evil hearts
One denies and one upbraids;
From the scabbards fly their blades;
And a bitter combat starts,
And the wreath before the shrine
They both pluck at, shouting, "Mine!"

Suddenly the church door trembled
And the altar lights were quenched;
There before the host assembled
Rose a form in white: they blanched,
For the bearing was well known
And the arms; a voice malign
Then rang out with hollow moan:
"'Tis my wreath, and thou are mine!
From my grave the flowers were broken:
Bind me, father, with thy stole!
Evil wife, by every token
I am thine! Curst be thy soul!
Curst be you, my evil brothers,
Who have thus despoiled my grave!
Cease your struggle for each other's
Life-blood. Mine the wreath you gave!
Wife and brothers, you shall go
With me to the world below!"

Thereupon the church foundation
Shook. The walls and arches slipped
From their lofty elevation,
Sinking down beneath the crypt.
All lie buried underground,
Lilies blossom on the mound,
And the flowers grow as high
As the dead man deep did lie.

Translated by Dorothea Prall Radin.

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