

Stereotypes of the Pole in Russian public discourse: the case of Russification in the empire's Western region in the mid-nineteenth century

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THE PRINCIPAL GOAL of this paper is to shed some new light on the dynamic of, and driving forces behind, the stereotyping of the Pole in Russia on the eve and in the immediate aftermath of the Polish uprising of 1863-4. I approach ethnostereotyping as a complex process related very closely to current politics and ideology and not necessarily derived from collective and deeply rooted mentalités of the popular mass.¹ In my view, Russian ethnostereotypes of the Pole were a kind of discursive construction, shifting and convertible, able to be expressed through a variety of forms: official rhetoric, belles-lettres, visual modes of representation, stage performances, and—last but not least—symbolically marked administrative measures.

In this vein I would like to dispute, first, a prevalent notion that ethnostereotypes belong to the less flexible and changeable part of national consciousness; second, a trend to equate them with ethno-phobias, ignoring their ties to 'philiis'. My focus is on a group of bureaucrats and publicists who were striving to assert a Russian identity in so highly contested an area as the so-called Western region, *Zapadnyj kraj* (present-day Ukraine, Belarus', and Lithuania) was in mid-nineteenth century. One of the reasons for narrow-

¹ Recent literature about Polish-Russian mutual ethnostereotyping is very diverse in scholars' approaches and tastes. See, e.g., A. Kępiński, 1990, *Lach i moskal. 2 dziejów stereotypu*, Warszawa • Kraków; A. Giza, 1993, *Polaczkowie i moskale. Wzajemny ogląd w krzywym zwierciadle (1800-1967)*, Szczecin; A. В. Липатов & И. О. Шайтанов (eds), 2000, *Поляки и русские: Взаимопонимание и взаимонепонимание*, Москва; T. Epsztein (ed), 2000, *Polacy a Rosjanie. Poliaki irusskie*, Warszawa; С. Фалькович, 2000, Восприятие русскими польского национального характера и создание национального стереотипа поляка, 'т: *Поляки и русские в глазах друг друга*, Москва, 45-71; A. deLazari (ed), 2001, *Wzajemne uprzedzenia pomiędzy Polakami i Rosjanami. Materiały konferencyjne*, Łódź; В. А. Хорев (ed), 2002, *Россия-Польша. Образы и стереотипы в литературе и культуре*, Москва; Л.Е. Горизонтов, 2004, Польская «цивилизованность» и русское «варварство»: основания для стереотипов и автостереотипов, *Славяноведение* 2004: i, 39-48. For my treatment of the issue, see M. Dolbilov, 2003, Stereotyp Polaka w polityce imperialnej Rosji: depolonizacja Kraju Północno-Zachodniego w latach 60. xix w., *Arcana* 2003:3-4, 70-93.

ing the scope of analysis lies in an attempt at capturing the mechanics of translation of stereotypes as expressed in rhetoric and metaphor into bureaucratic practices. The Russificatory tasks were by no means confined to repressions and persecutions ; Russification implied a good deal of sophisticated cultural confrontation. Not all Russianizers were just bloodthirsty hangmen, some of them were fairly resourceful myth- and image-makers as well—semioticians in practice, so to say. The very language of the Russifying bureaucracy had a 'remarkable tint of literary writing' (*ves'ma zametnyj literaturnyj ottenok*), as it was put by the Minister of Interior Petr Valuev in 1868.² So, imperial officials emerge here as contributors to the nationalistic imagery shared by a broader circle of educated society.

The stereotyping of the Pole in the Western region is especially interesting because of an ambivalent self-definition of bureaucratic Russifiers in this borderland. They claimed themselves to be the ardent fighters against 'Tolonism' in the 'primordially Russian' region, but failed to escape a sense of cultural alienation as if they were a Russian minority in a foreign country. In a private letter of April 1868, the ex-curator of Vil'na (Wilno, Vilnius) School district (the district covered the territory of the so-called Northwestern region) Ivan Kornilov expressed a kind of *profession de foi*:

In the Western region, our small, but tightly-knit, circle encounters three local native societies: Polish-Latin, Jewish, and German. These societies are not simply associations that can be separated, broken up into parties, but are close unions, unified by faith, tradition and nationality. We are the only ones who do not constitute a society in the Western region; we are artificially assembled by the administrative authority in order to serve it as long as will be required and then to leave and go back home.³

² Российский государственный исторический архив (Russian State Historical Archive, St Petersburg, *henceforth*: RGIA), f [ond] 908, opfis' i, d[elo] 104, fo[lio] 93 'z' v.

³ «В Западном крае наш немногочисленный, но дружный, согласный кружок сталкивается с тремя местными, туземными обществами: польско-латинским, еврейским и германским. Эти общества суть не только общества, которые могут быть разрознены, разбиты на партии, но суть тесные союзы, сплоченные вероисповеданием, преданием и национальностью. Мы одни не составляем в Западном крае общества; мы собраны искусственно властью для того, чтобы послужить столько, сколько прикажут, и затем уйти восвояси.» (Российская национальная библиотека, Рукописный отдел [Russian National Library, Manuscript Division, St Petersburg, *henceforth*: RNB], f. 377, d. 374, fo. 6r-v.)

One of the sources of the 'engineered' Russian Polonophobia in the 1860s was to be found in a representational strategy of the imperial power which, after the emancipation of serfs in 1861, was seeking to invoke new images of its affection for the masses of the people. An intense search for authentic and primeval historical foundation marked many of the imperial measures and undertakings.⁴ In this framework, symbolic demonstration and celebration of the 'ancient' Russianness of the peasantry in the Western provinces (in contrast with the disloyal upper stratum of Polish descent and/or self-identity) were designed to realize a metaphor of awakening from sleep as applied to the liberated peasantry as a whole. This cultural task faced the Russificatory bureaucrats with a challenge similar to that of the nascent populist intelligentsia of the 1860s—how to utilize their own idealistic self-identification with the people in a conflict with other groupings within educated (in this case, Polish-speaking) society. The image of the hostile Polish nobleman or Catholic priest proved to be a tool for dramatizing a myth of the faithful peasant mass organically tied to the throne and government. Thus, in this case, Polonophobia was not primordial but served as an ad hoc instrument. Below I will concentrate on several cases of such engineering.

Notions of superiority, splendor, and sophistication had been indispensable traits of the lofty self-portrait of the Polish nobility. Now these notions were deliberately hyperbolized to the degree that they became subject to negative interpretations. An expressive conversion of meanings took place: superiority transformed into 'superficiality' (*nanosnoj sloj*, as the nobility of the Western region was labeled in the official discourse), splendor—into 'artificiality' and 'falsehood', sophistication and intelligence—into an inveterate commitment to political heresies and subversive doctrines.

The idea that the local Polish-speaking nobility, the *szlachta*, was irreversibly and profoundly disloyal to the throne objectified itself in a series of administrative actions. Apart from executions, exiling, and confiscations of landholdings, which affected only a minority of the *szlachta*, an elaborate system of fines and indemnities to the treasury was applied to every landowner and, irrespective of its

⁴ On this cultural strategy of the Russian autocracy under Alexander II, see R. Wortman, 2000, *Scenarios of Power. Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy 2: From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas II*, Princeton, part 1; О. Е. Майорова, 2000, Бессмертный Рюрик. Празднование Тысячелетия России в 1862 г., *Новое литературное обозрение* 2000:43, 137-65

practical ends, vividly demonstrated the government's persistent mistrust towards the Polish-speaking elite *in corpore*. A characteristic scene was the submission of a 'most loyal' petition (*vsepoddan-nejšij adres*) to Alexander II (in July 1863) by the nobility of the Vil'na province. Inspired by the Vil'na administration, the petition condemned the activities of the 'revolutionary party' and its supporters among the nobility and begged the Emperor's pardon and mercy. The Vil'na Governor General, Michail Murav'ev, gave a severe and discouraging response to the delegates of the nobility: 'You ought to have done it much earlier, and what you did [at last] is well; but though you say you are repenting sincerely, I do not believe you.'⁵ There might have been an impression that the administration elicited the petition only in order to have yet one more occasion to show its scorn for the *szlachta* as a whole.

Furthermore, the officials and journalists readily developed the myth that the local Polish-speaking noblemen were not Poles proper, but 'renegades' and traitors to Orthodoxy and to Russian-ness itself, and to the memory of their Orthodox ancestors of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Michail Murav'ev, notorious for his repressiveness, quite bluntly referred to them as 'the Polish landowners who long ago were Russian' (*pol'skie pomesaki, byvsie prežde togo russkimi*),⁶ as if they had once changed their essence and thenceforth outlived a natural span of human life ('long ago' may well have referred to the epoch of the Brest Church Union in 1596). This primordialist rhetoric asserted the immutability of one's 'true' national identity, the impossibility of a natural assimilation into another nationality and faith, even through a number of generations. Assimilation meant solely perversion. In such a perspective a strong emphasis on their—supposedly—Russian origin defined the local noble corporation as dead *qua* Russian body: these noblemen *had been* Russian but were Russian no longer. Taken together, rhetoric and administrative practice reinforced connotations of life-lessness and stagnation in the notion of the Rzeczpospolita political and cultural legacy. Playing on the readership's susceptibility to Gothic pictures the historian Michail Pogodin wrote with dubious eloquence:

⁵ М.Н.Муравьев, 1882, Записки об управлении Северо-Западным краем и усмирении в нем мятежа, 1863-1866 гг., *Русская старина* 1882:11,418-21. See also *Русский архив* 1906:3,268-9.

⁶ [М. Н. Муравьев], 1902, Всеподданнейший отчет об управлении Северо-Западным краем с 1863 по 1865 г., *Русская старина* 1902:6,497,510.

Our enemies have no names. Their whereabouts are unknown. They do not even have a body. They are shadows that are emitted at night from some nether region and disappear at sunrise.⁷

The connection of the highest social stratum with 'superficiality' and 'falsehood' was often exploited by the government in a semiotic way. This is obvious from a study of that fierce campaign against all visible and audible signs, relics and reminiscences, even minor ones, of the legacy of Great Poland which officials waged in 1863—6. Such 'relics' could be found in the architectural and musical magnificence of Catholic churches, in manners of dressing, or in restaurant menus written in Polish, etc. High-ranking bureaucrats took a strange pleasure in watching over trifles and minutiae along the city streets (for instance, details of harnesses and decoration in horses' manes) which, of course, had earlier escaped their attention. This overt fixation on detrimental 'Polish appearances', a hunting, so to say, for such appearances, was not a mania intrinsic to Russian officials; rather, it was a concerted obsession. Quite purposefully, it underscored, on the level of collective representations of the ruling elite, the supposedly artificial and alien nature of 'Polonism'.— What is so conspicuous, spectacular, and obtrusive must be superficial and rootless.—This strategy was practiced by the elite; there was no Polonophobic hysteria to be found among lower classes of the population.

An eloquent example is the ban issued in May 1863 on wearing mourning in public. Deep mourning, especially the female mourning costume, was a very popular and prevalent manifestation of compassion and support for the insurgents which in 1861-2, as a rule, passed unpunished by authorities. The administration was afraid of looking ridiculous in its efforts to make ladies change dresses. However, in 1863 Governor General Michail Murav'ev succeeded in presenting the ban on mourning as a most important part of the struggle against visual signs of the Polish presence in the Western region. The list of what it was not permitted to wear seems to have covered all the items of the female mourning dress that the

⁷ «Враги наши не имеют имени. Местопребывание их неизвестно. У них нет даже никакого тела. Это тени, высылаемые по ночам из каких-то преисподних и исчезающие при восхождении солнца.» (М. П. Погодин, 1867, *Польский вопрос. Собрание рассуждений, записок и замечаний. 1831-1867*, Москва, 146) On the Russian necrological rhetoric as used against the Poles, see O. Maiorova, 2005, 'A horrid dream did burden us...' (1863): connecting Tiutchev's imagery with the political rhetoric of his era, *Russian Literature* 2005:1 (forthcoming).

officials' imagination and experience were able to invoke —black dresses, black hats with white plumes, brooches in the form of a broken cross, similar medallions, chains, pins, bracelets, etc. Any violation of the ban would cause at the least a fine.⁸ Within a month, the administration went even further. A report came from one of the provinces that women had begun to appear in a costume never seen before—black dresses and red head-scarfs. The administration was quick to decipher this novelty as a 'bloody mourning dress' (*krova-vyj traur*) and issue a circular prohibiting 'red attires with a political meaning' (*alye narjady spolitičeskim značeniem*). But even as late as mid-1864 (by which time the uprising was actually quashed) most fervent Russifiers kept observing with morbid curiosity the combination of colors in ladies' dresses. After his visit to a pension for Polish girls one of the Vil'na School district inspectors deplored:

All the girls wear dark dresses, mostly of coffee color, and all in the same style. It cannot but seem strange that the uniforms the girls wear to their classes have nothing colorful in them: no ribbon, no bow, no sash; such absence of light colors betrays a sense of sadness and, without a doubt, is a kind of mourning dress.⁹

As many memoirists have witnessed, the ban on mourning dress had an encouraging impact on Russian officials;¹⁰ it was understood by them as an expression of the self-confidence of imperial power vis-à-vis a treacherous and devious enemy. But deeper roots of this effect are to be found in the general theme of Polish femininity as it existed and was developed in the Russian public discourse. This subject gives an insight into so contradictory (at first glance) a way of stereotyping Poles as a drastic transformation of *Polonophile* images into *Polonophobic* ones. This was particularly true in regard to the 1863 uprising. The distance between Polonophilia and

⁸ А. К. Гейне, 1899, *Собрание литературных трудов Александра Константиновича Гейнса* 3, Санкт-Петербург, 89; Н. Цылов (ed), 1866, *Сборник распоряжений графа Михаила Николаевича Муравьева по усмирению польского мятежа в Северо-Западных губерниях*, Вильна, 3 5 3-4.

⁹ «Все девицы носят платье темного цвета, преимущественно кофейного, и одного покроя. Не может не показаться странным, что в том costume, в котором девицы сидят в классах, нет ничего цветного: ни ленточки, ни бантика, ни кушака; это отсутствие светлых цветов имеет характер печали и, без сомнения, есть своего рода траур.» (Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas [Lithuanian State Historical Archive, Vilnius], f. 378, PS, 1863 m., b. 1804, fos. 8-10; f. 567, ap. 3, b. 1267, fos. 34-35)

¹⁰ See, e.g., Д.А.Милютин, 2003, *Воспоминания генерал-фельдмаршала графа Дмитрия Алексеевича Милютина. 1863-1864*, Москва, 237-9.

Polonophobia turned out to be not so great, since both extremes were emblematic modes of conceptualization of the 'Other' rather than a neutral perception of a neighboring people.

Femininity was one of the most conspicuous features in the portrait of the Polish character and open to divergent interpretations. On the Polonophile plane, Polish femininity designated sociability, elegance, 'civilization*' and refinement, and surely, in the case of Polish women proper, beauty and glamor. There was a significant tendency to romanticize love affairs between Russians and Poles. Just to give an example: the first love of Alexander II, as early as 1838 (when he was the heir to the throne), was a Polish *Fräulein (freilina)*, Severina Kalinovskaja, a fact which may shed some new light on the feminine aspects of his persona brought to the attention of historians, most recently by Richard Wortman.¹¹

From the Polonophobic perspective, the Polish lady emerged as a seductive (and glamorous) instigator of the political insanities in the Rzeczpospolita, a fanatical inspirer of hatred towards Russia and a promoter of Catholic proselytism, fiercer even than the priests. The metaphor of she-cat, with a long tail of diverse associations, was of much use in depicting Polish female influences. Interestingly, the tone of this rhetoric was often set by the Poles themselves. The well-known ideologist of the autocracy and odious informer of the imperial secret police Faddej Bulgarin (Tadeusz Bułharyn), who never fully abandoned his affection for the Polish national character, wrote in his memoirs:

The foremost Polish poet, Mickiewicz, praising the amiability of the Polish ladies, compared them with female kittens. I completely agree with this comparison. All feline animals ... are extraordinarily beautiful and graceful in their movements—but this is the most insidious of all the predatory animals. The cat has been tamed by man and has become a domestic animal but retained many of the instincts of its species, especially craftiness; she is afraid of a man who is indifferent to her, and scratches only those who love her, pet her, and play with her. Every Samson arriving in Poland found his Leila [*sic*], every Hercules had his Deianira.¹²

Like-minded Russians used far less elegant expressions for conveying the same idea. Shortly after the 1831 uprising, Nicholas I wrote to his Viceroy in the Kingdom of Poland, Ivan Paskevič, as if in anticipation of the Kalinovskaja affair, which posed a serious

¹¹ Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, 204.

¹² «Первый польский поэт, Мицкевич, воспевая любезность полек, сравнил их с молодыми кошечками. Я принимаю это сравнение в полном и настоящем его смысле. Все звери кошачьей породы... чрезвычайно красивы и ловки во всех движениях—но это самая коварная порода из всех хищных пород. Кошка укрощена человеком и сделалась домашним животным, но она сохранила много инстинктов своей породы, особенно коварство; она боится человека, равнодушного к ней, и царапает только тех, которые ее любят, ласкают и играют с ней. Каждый Самсон, пришедший в Польшу, нашел свою Лейлу [*sic*], каждый Геркулес имел свою Деяниру.» (Ф. Булгарин, 2001, *Воспоминания*, Москва, 689.)

threat to the project of his son's dynastic marriage: The dread women. This infernal people has always acted through them.¹³ Nicholas's daughter and the heir's sister, Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, later described Kalinovskaja by means of a similar stereotype, invoking a female image which could match misogynistic fantasies:

She had large dark eyes, but without any particular expression; she possessed undeniable charm, but of a feline kind, characteristic of Polish women, the kind that has a special effect on men. In general, she was neither intelligent nor sentimental, nor witty, and neither did she have any interests.¹⁴

The 1863 uprising laid new ground for this discursive trend. A negatively marked femininity came to symbolize the rebellion as such. The conventional rhetoric filled descriptions of the insurgents' actions and behaviour with hints and allusions to their presumed dependence on women and the universe of female emotions and motives. This gendered strategy owed its success to Polonophilia as well, because the latter contributed much to the highly metaphorized perception of Polish femininity. Systematically placing an accent on the insurgents' 'senseless' (*bezmozglaja*) exaltation, fanaticism, cowardice, deviousness, inconsistency, lack of judgment and prudence, officials and journalists were striving to denigrate the uprising by means of symbolic effeminization. Subsequent conventional descriptions in memoirs—originating in military reports—of how the panic-stricken rebels abandoned the field

¹³ «[Я] боюсь женщин; этот адский народ ими всегда действовал» (Н. Шильдер, 1997. *Император Николай Первый. Его жизнь и царствование* 2, Москва, 364; cf. А.П. Щербатов, 1896, *Генерал-Фельдмаршал князь Паскевич. Его жизнь и деятельность. Приложения к тому же. 1832-1847*, Санкт-Петербург, 356,601).

¹⁴ «У нее были большие темные глаза, но без особого выражения; в ней была несомненная прелесть, но кошачьего характера, свойственная полякам, которая особенно действует на мужчин. В общем, она не была ни умна, ни сентиментальна, ни остроумна и не имела никаких интересов.» ([Ольга Николаевна], 2000, Сон юности. Воспоминания великой княжны Ольги Николаевны. 1825-1846, in: *Николай I. Муж. Отец. Император*, Москва, 263-4)

72 of battle and ran away at sight of a single cannon (the insurgents indeed had no artillery at all) obtained discernible phallocratic connotations. Here is just one example:

Nothing is easier than to provoke a Polish woman to commit an act of patriotism in the Polish sense. Of course, love of one's motherland, at its core, is an honorable sentiment, but in Poles, and especially Polish women, this sentiment is not balanced by reason and consequently is manifested in the most extreme form, as uncontrollable exaltation. Patriotic sensibility in Polish women is much more agonizing than in Polish men and always sets their hearts on fire. If some fanatic decided to mobilize whole regiments of women under the banner of the fatherland, he would not encounter any resistance, although, of course, it would be sufficient to place merely the muzzle of a cannon against such an army for it to suffer a nervous breakdown and disperse.¹⁵

Another ambivalent trait of Polishness was chivalry and a chivalrous sense of honor which, in the Polonophile treatment, stood for Europeanness and enlightenment. This stereotype also underwent semiotic inversion: from the Polonophobic point of view, too, Poles remained typical Europeans, but in the sense of an imagined medieval Europe, associated with backwardness, feudal anarchy, religious fanaticism, and bloodthirsty belligerence (in a striking combination with the simultaneous 'feminization' of insurgents). A bright illustration of this perceptual scheme is to be found in an article by an anonymous author, 'The word of a Russian to the rebel-

¹⁵ «Нет ничего легче как подвинуть польскую женщину на патриотический подвиг в польском смысле. Конечно, любовь к родине в основе своей — почтенное чувство, но у поляков и в особенности у полек это чувство не уравновешивается рассудком и проявляется поэтому в самой острой форме, как неудержимая экзальтация. Патриотическое чувство у польских женщин гораздо болезненнее, чем у мужчин, и всегда горит в их сердцах жгучим пламенем. Если бы какому сумасброду вздумалось набрать под знаменем ойчизны [*ojczyzna*, derisively in Polish] целые полки женщин, то и в этом не встретилось бы затруднений, хотя, конечно, достаточно было бы выставить против подобного войска только дуло пушки, чтоб это войско, по нервности своей, разбежалось.» (И.В.Любарский, 1895, В мятежном крае. (Из воспоминаний), *Исторический вестник* 1895:4, 174-5) f A ¹⁵⁶У straightforward and even blasphemous metaphor of brutal sexual aggression is to be found in one memoirist's depiction of how Vil'na authorities had an influential Catholic convent closed down in 1865, the nuns being deported to France. See П.А. Черевин, 1920, *Воспоминания П. А. Черевина. 1863-1866*; Кострома, 62-3. The question as to whether this type of xenophobic discourse was anticipated and prompted by the Enlightenment rhetoric of sexuality and sexual possession as a part of the myth of Eastern Europe, is subject to further research (see L. Wolff, 1994, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford, ch 2, 3 ff).

lious Poles' (*Slovo russkogo k mjateznychpoljakam*), published in a propagandist journal, *Vestnik Jugo-Zapadnoj i Zapadnoj Rossii* in 1863.

You [Poles] have an unfortunate ability to extol the savage fights [*najazdy*] and other violent actions of your ancestors as epic exploits, to see in Jesuitical intrigues and infringements traces of the wisdom and patriotism of your historical figures, in executed criminals—Polish martyrs ... Your vision of the whole past and present is quite distorted, you have missed several centuries and continue to regard yourselves as Poles of the time of Stephan Batory, and Russians as the barbarians of Ivan the Terrible, You dream of a Poland where everything beyond the *szlachta* would be nil, you want time and history to march back, not forward; you dream of the Middle Ages returning for you, with their *liberum veto*, confederations, independence and equality {*Polish in the original: niepodległość, równość, M. D.*} in words, and with tyranny and Asiatic arrogance in practice.¹⁶

As this inflammatory passage clearly shows, imagining Poland as a medieval relic may even have led to a kind of orientalization of the Polish *szlachta*; the temporal shift in perception provoked a spatial one. The distinct aversion to Polish women became an important part of local officials' self-identity. It was one of the reasons why the reconciliatory initiatives of the newly appointed Vil'na Governor General Alexander Potapov encountered harsh criticism among his subordinates. Shortly after his arrival in 1868, Potapov organized an open-air ball (an inconceivable event under his predecessors!) to ease tensions between the local Polish beau monde and leading figures in the Russian administration. Aware of this plan, one of the hard-liners wrote to another in a private letter:

Even from a distance I think that the magnificent lighting of a garden would remind me of the Polish arsons
[here we deal with a widespread belief that Poles were responsible for a number of devas-

¹⁶ «Вы имеете несчастную способность возводить дикие наезды и другие насилия ваших предков в эпические подвиги, видеть в иезуитских интригах и притязаниях следы мудрости и патриотизма ваших исторических деятелей, в казненных преступниках — польских мучеников... Вам все прошедшее и настоящее представляется в обратном виде, вы промахнули несколько веков и все еще считаете себя поляками времен Батория, а русских варварами Грозного. Вам хочется, чтобы в Польше все было нуль, кроме шляхты, чтобы время и события шли назад, а не вперед; чтобы для вас настали вновь средние века, с их *liberum veto*, конфедерациями, *niepodległością, równością* на словах и тиранией и азиатскою спесью на деле.» (*Вестник Юго-Западной и Западной России* vol. i, bk 3 (September 1863), part 3, 51-3)

tating fires in Russia, especially in 1862, M.D.], And is it possible that the Polish ladies too would so easily forget the {Russian} gallows? Well, they did dance under Alexander I and then, right after, with Napoleon I. I would like to know how many of the newly arrived Russians will be made the laughing-stock of every Polish lady! Purer, more honest, not ridiculous, but frightening were we when we did not become acquainted with—and still remain strangers to—both the Polish ladies and the Polish girls.¹⁷

The words quoted reflect not so much the individual phobia of a gloomy misogynist as the emotional climate of an entire group. However, it should be emphasized once more that the very intensity of this hatred implied a possibility that, for many, this hatred might swiftly turn into its opposite.

One of the urgent administrative measures undertaken in the summer of 1863 symbolically underscored an identification of the rebellious *szlachta* with ghosts from the medieval past. Governor General Murav'ev ordered that the forests along the newly built railroads be cut down as soon as possible. To be sure, security of transportation through dangerous forest zones was a primary concern of the administration; but on a discursive level, the implementation of this order manifested a *métonymie* relationship between Polish insurgents and a savage, uncultivated 'medieval' landscape. As one of the opponents of this ravaging measure sarcastically put it, 'The military commanders chopped wood with such courage and heroism that they appeared to be trying to resurrect fairy-tale heroes.'¹⁸

The issue of the conceptualization of Poles as inhabitants of the past is closely linked to another curious question—that of how the symbolic vision of Poles was being shaped through an interaction between imperial stereotypes of the Pole and Russian 'autostereotypes' (Russians' representations of themselves). Particularly, negative traits from Russian autostereotypes could readily be translated into stereotypes of the Poles. So it was with the image of the

¹⁷ «Мне даже издали кажется, что пышное освещение сада напомнило мне польские поджоги. И неужели и польские дамы так легко забудут виселицы? Впрочем, танцевали же они при Александре I, а потом сейчас же с Наполеоном I. Желательно знать, сколько вновь прибывших русских попадетя сегодня на посмеяние каждой пани! Честнее, чище, не смешны, а страшны были мы, не знакомившиеся и доселе незнакомые ни с пани, ни с паннами.» (RNB, f- 377d. 374, fo. 33^{r-v})

¹⁸ «Военные начальники рубили леса с такою отвагою и героизмом, как будто бы старались воскресить сказочных героев» (RGIA, f. 908, op. i, d. 279, fo. i88r; cf. Муравьев, Записки об управлении, 427-8; cf. А. И. Дельвиг, 1913, *Мои воспоминания* 3, Москва, 240).

exploitative, cruel, and arbitrary landowning *pan*, which was highly reminiscent of the conventional or satirical portrayal of Russian partisans of serfdom and the privileges of the nobility.¹⁹ As for fictional characters, Kirila Petrovič Troekurov in Aleksandr Puškin's *Dubrovskij* anticipated those images of arbitrary and ungovernable Polish magnates that, after 1863, poured into bureaucrats' memoranda and journalists' accounts.

One more case of such resemblance is the story of the 1864 pictorial caricatures of Polish rebels. To my knowledge, this was the first time that the imperial power ventured to use visual—not only verbal—modes of representation in order to denigrate its internal enemies. Taken together as a narrative, these officially sanctioned pictures praised the bravery and faithfulness of the local peasants of both sexes and condemned the 'rebels' as traitors and cowards. In 1864 the caricatures were disseminated in lithographic copies among troops and the peasant population of the Northwest region and were expected to instill in them a militant spirit of Russian nationalism. However, the administration was afraid of going too far. The very ethnonym 'Pole' or 'Polish' was absent in the ideologically significant captions: Russian peasants were seizing and binding the 'rebels', not the 'Polish rebels'. Thus, the verbalization should have mitigated the visualization. But it is precisely a lack of markers of Polish nationality which eventually undermined the attempt to broaden the scope of Polonophobic propaganda. In 1865, the authorities of Moscow would not allow the distribution of some 10,000 copies of caricatures in the city and province, and the Vil'na Governor General Kaufman, who had earlier supported this undertaking of his predecessor Murav'ev, made no effort to get the ban cancelled by the supreme power. The reason is clear: the social dimension of the images painted was too conspicuous. Although the figures of 'rebels' were carefully given a number of conventional features of Polishness, such as curled mustaches, high jackboots and other items of dress, lower-class inhabitants of the interior Russian regions, who had no clear notion of how a Polish *pan* was supposed to look, were very likely to identify the peasants' captives simply as noblemen and officers. In stereotypes of the Pole, elements of social stereotyping of the higher estates might have dwarfed the ethnic essence.²⁰

¹⁹ See, e.g., [И], 1865, *Панские фацеции*, *Вестник Западной России* vol. 3, bk 10 (April 1861), part 4, 97-114; *ibid.*, bk 11 (May 1865), part 4, 179-99.

²⁰ For further detail, see M. Dolbilov, 2004, *Russification and the Bureaucratic Mind in the Russian Empire's Northwestern Region in the 1860s*, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5:2, 245-71

Finally, I would like to point out yet another way for stereotypes to arise and function: the Russificatory officials' imitation of the stereotype of themselves as it existed in, and could be 'borrowed' from, the mind of their Polish rivals. For example, the image of the brutal and barbaric Russian, *moskal'*, was deliberately emulated by a number of Russian officials, in order to make use of the macabre expectations of the Polish population and to instill fear and subjugation. A Cossack general, Jakov Baklanov, was especially notorious for this. He encouraged his subordinates to disseminate rumors of him as a savage Hun who ate only the flesh of human babies.²¹ The myth of Cossacks as cannibals was widespread in Europe, and Baklanov was convinced that, in certain circumstances, its circulation could work in favor of imperial power. But the question remains as to what was more important as an impetus for Baklanov's strategy of intimidation: individual Poles who were reported to ask which babies the General would prefer—fat ones or thin ones or, again, the *Russian* stereotype of Polish hatred for, and fear of, Russians.

In the light of such discursive interdependency, in spite of their being currently saturated with enmity and even hatred, Russian stereotypes of the Pole betray an indisputable cultural proximity between Russians and Poles. In other words, at least several facets of ethnostereotypes can be defined as a product of the reciprocal familiarity and rediscovery of the one people's distinctive features in images of the other.

As for the imperial Russifiers in the lands of the former Rzeczpospolita, stereotypes served as a tool for their self-orientation in an uncomfortable cultural milieu. Stereotypes were designed to manifest otherness, but *z. familiar* otherness. The bureaucrats' construction of stereotypes of Poles reflected their lasting preoccupation with empire-wide problems. Even the most xenophobic visions of the Poles signalled, often euphemistically, one or other of the current concerns of the Russian government. For instance, the image of the disloyal and treacherous Polish *szlachta*, promoted so vigorously

²¹ «Я человек дикий и варвар, как гунн, и не питаюсь мясом животных, а пожираю детей.» (И.А.Бакланов, 1871, Моя боевая жизнь, *Русская старина* 1871: 8, 157-8) On the European, primarily French, stereotype of the Cossack, see Г. Кабакова, 1998, Свечкоед. Образ казака во французской культуре XIX в., *Новое литературное обозрение* 1998: 34,55-77.

by Russifiers, conveyed an awareness of a growing alienation of the Russian nobility from the imperial throne, which was a consequence of the peasant emancipation in 1861. The stereotype of the Polish lady as an instigator of Catholic propaganda referred to a lack of interest among Orthodox priests in proselytizing. Thus, the mutual conversion of ethnic, political, gender, social traits in the process of constructing otherness is subject to further investigation.