

FINDING SAMOLINSKA – AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION  
OF SELECTED WRITINGS  
OF TEOFILA SAMOLINSKA

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A capstone submitted to the

Graduate School–Camden

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts

Graduate Program in Liberal Studies

Written under the direction of

Dr. Virginia Yans

And approved by

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Camden, New Jersey

January 2018

## CAPSTONE ABSTRACT

### Finding Samolinska – an Annotated Translation of Selected Writings of Teofila Samolinska

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Teofila Samolinska, a beloved Polish actress and poet, who lived in Chicago in 1872-1913, was a daring writer and activist who espoused progressive ideas about a woman's place in society. However, apart from a handful of Polish immigration scholars and historians that know about her contributions; she remains an obscure figure for Poles in America and in Poland. One of the reasons for her obscurity is that most of her poems, letters, plays and commentaries perished in the fire of the Polish museum where they were placed after her death. In my paper, I decided to uncover as much as possible about her life and works based on letters and poems she submitted to Polish immigrant press in years 1865 – 1913. I selected some of her letters and one play and translated and annotated them. I decided to select works that would offer good samples of her style and of issues she was interested in or cared about. I hope that my annotated translation of writings of this remarkable woman releases her from unfortunate and ill devised obscurity and that it contributes to the historiography of nineteenth century immigrant community in which she lived.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful to Professor Virginia Yans, who acted as my Advisor, made useful criticisms of the various drafts, and contributed valuable suggestions from her great store of knowledge – her passionate interest in Samolinska's story has sustained me and encouraged me over the months of research and writing. Thank you! I was also helped by my husband, Drew Martin, who proofread one of my translations and offered support throughout the writing process.

Also, I wanted to thank Professor Stuart Charmé for the best course on Psychology and Religion and for guidance and help throughout my three years at Rutgers.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	1
Finding Samolinska	1
Choosing Samolinska's Writings	9
<b>Biography</b>	12
Conclusion	28
<b>Timeline</b>	30
<b>Theme: Patriotism and nationalism: disputes with Polish nationalists and Polish clergy</b>	38
1. The Letter Concerning the Polish Colony in Arkansas	38
2. The Letter – Response to Attacks from Anastasius Skowronski – “Inflated Heads of Chicago”	42
3. The Letter Written for the Celebration of 1863 Uprising	48
4. The Letter – Response to Criticism from Nationalists	56
5. The Anti-defamation Letter: Defending Polonia in the American Press	62
6. The Letter – Response to Wladyslaw Dyniewicz	64
7. The Letter – Speech at the Funeral of J. I. Kraszewski	68
8. The Letter – Response to Criticisms from Father Zalewski	74
<b>Theme: Feminism</b>	75
1. Notes in the Press Regarding the Creation of The Central Association of Polish Women	75
<b>Theme: Polish Theater</b>	82

1. The Letter about the Condition of the Polish National Theater in Chicago	84
2. Play – <i>Trzy Flory</i> ( <i>Three Floras</i> )	90
<b>Theme: Samolinska Through the Eyes of Others</b>	124
<b>Conclusion</b>	127
<b>Bibliography</b>	129

## Introduction

I first came across Teofila Samolinska, writer and activist, while doing my research on the Polish community in Chicago for my “Ethnic, Racial and Religious Groups in the USA” class at Rutgers. I was surprised and thrilled to learn about a group of progressive Chicago Polish women activists that at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century organized and championed the woman's cause in their community. In one of the articles about them, William Galush introduced me to Samolinska calling her “a never a shrinking violet.”<sup>1</sup> His description stuck with me later on, whenever I came across her name. I quickly learned that Samolinska was a leader in the Polish community but also a literary person, a poetess, a playwright, a feminist and an outspoken activist. Although her education stopped at 17, when she left Poland, she was a prolific writer. Her contemporaries noticed and valued her poems, plays and articles that she published in Polish newspapers.

She came with the first migration of Poles fleeing Poland after the fall of the 1863 Uprising.<sup>2</sup> To my knowledge there are no other Polish immigrant women at the time of her immigration or later like her. She seemed so unusual for me, so extraordinary in her combination of creative literary work and social activism that I decided to learn more about her.

After I researched the Polish women organizations in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Chicago and after I wrote my class paper, I shared my findings with my friend and journalist, Mrs. Danuta Swiatek, who invited me to her hour-long radio show at the Polish Radio in Pomona, NY. A conversation with Danuta on the radio about the Polish women activists

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<sup>1</sup> William Galush. “Purity and Power: Chicago Polonian Feminists, 1880-1914.” *Polish American Studies*.vol. 47, no.1, Spring 1990, 6

<sup>2</sup> 1863 Uprising – known as January Uprising, it was an uprising that defined Samolinska's generation and caused many Poles like her to leave Poland. It was a Polish-Lithuanian revolt against Imperial Russia, started as a spontaneous protest by young Poles against conscription into the Imperial Army. After its defeat in 1864, the reprisals involved exiling around 70,000 of Poles (men, women and children) to Siberia and other interior Russia regions, to Caucasus and Urals.

did not go unnoticed and I was later invited to the Kosciuszko Foundation and Polish-American Cultural Foundation in Clark, NJ to make a presentation about these once famous Polish women organizers. I noticed that most of my audience never heard of Samolinska before and I was happy to talk about the history of the Polish women activism to a Polish audience in the USA. However, I felt frustrated by the fact that I knew so little about the life and work of Teofila Samolinska. Thanks to the research done by prominent researchers and historians on the Polish community in the US such as Pien Versteegh, William Galush, and John Bukowczyk, just to name a few, I learned that she was a playwright and “a first Polish woman poet on American soil,” a “mother of the Polish National Alliance,” - but still, after much reading and research I did not come across even one of her poems, plays or correspondence! Where were her poems or plays? Were they all lost?

Apart from wanting to read her work, I was very curious about Teofila herself. Where did she come from? What kind of person was she, what did she look like? I had questions regarding her upbringing and events in her life that, most likely, contributed to that fact that she was that “never shrinking violet” in the Polish-American community. These questions, I felt, were important and should be answered in order to shed a better light on the woman who established the first secular woman-only organization in Polonia and to understand better the issues of the Polish community of Chicago of that era.

My academic adviser, Professor Virginia Yans, advised me to take upon an exciting project of finding Teofila's writings and answering questions regarding her biography and works. I decided to set to the task and started with researching on Ancestry.com and setting up Teofila's genealogical tree. Through that source I was able to locate the date of her arrival to the USA, and create a timeline of her residence in the

USA, first in Hamilton County, Ohio in 1865 - 1872 and then in Chicago in 1872 – 1913. The papers documenting her arrival at Castle Garden, New York City in 1865, indicated that her maiden name was Cwiklinska. She was 17 years old, arriving with another traveler, 10 years older Wladyslaw Cwiklinski – the records did not indicate their relationship; most likely he was her brother or a cousin. As the place of origin they both indicated “Wolstein” (Wolsztyn), Poland. These pieces of information were crucial for starting a search in the Polish archives of the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century for the city of Wolsztyn - a search that I picked up later when I was in Poland for six weeks over the summer.

Although I did make some progress on her biographical background, I still, despite contacting the Polish Museum in Chicago and the Orchard Lake Archives in Michigan, did not find anything published that was written by Teofila. Finally, a breakthrough came when I found in the New York Public Library a self-published brochure by Arthur Leonard Waldo “Teofila Samolinska, Mother of the Polish National Alliance in America (PNA).”<sup>3</sup> I finally realized why I had such trouble with locating her poetry or letters. According to Waldo, after Teofila's death, her husband, Jan, gave all her papers, poems, correspondence and notes to Kazimierz Zychlinski, the president of PNA, who later gave them to the management of PNA. All these documents were held at the PNA Museum in Pennsylvania; they all perished in that museum's fire on January 20, 1931. But this is not the end of the bad luck. As it turns out, some originals and copies of her correspondence and work were held in the Polish Exile Yearbooks at the Polish Museum in Rappersville, Switzerland. However, after Poland regained independence in 1918, the Polish government decided to move the contents of the Rappersville Museum by train to the

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<sup>3</sup> Arthur Leonard Waldo. *Teofila Samolinska Matka Związku Narodowego Polskiego w Ameryce*. Nakład Prywatny, 1980.

National Museum in Warsaw, Poland. During World War II, the Nazis destroyed most of museum's collections, including Samolinska's work.

I realized that it would be quite difficult to discover more about her life and works. I decided to dedicate my Master's Thesis to this project. In conversation with my adviser Professor Virginia Yans, we decided that, considering my ties to Poland and knowledge of Polish, an annotated translation would be an appropriate and meaningful contribution. In order to accomplish this I had to locate as many of her writings and facts about her life as possible.

I looked at the myriad of Polish language newspapers published in America in years 1873-1913, where, according to William Galush, she sent her work. I learned that Samolinska submitted especially to *Zgoda*, *Wiarus*, and *Przyjaciół Ludu* periodicals – all of them newspapers and journals with Polish immigrant readers. I started with looking at *Przyjaciół Ludu* and located 5 articles that she submitted in years 1880-1881, including “Letter about the State of Polish Theater,” “Letter-Response to Wladyslaw Dyniewicz,” “Letter on the Colony in Arkansas,” “Letter-Speech about the Importance of the 1863 Uprising” and the last one “Letter-Response to the Criticism from the Nationalists.” *Przyjaciół Ludu* published 4 poems by her: “From My Fables: The Wasp and the Smith,” “I Want To Be a Dog -Response to Dyniewicz's Gazette,” “Grave of a Refugee,” and “Deeds, Not Songs.” I was very pleased with my findings and I moved on to search in *Wiarus*.

*Wiarus* also yielded very interesting findings: in years 1886 - 1888 she submitted a couple of articles: “Inflated Heads of Chicago,” Letter “Anti-Defamation Effort” published originally in the *Chicago Tribune*, Letter “Speech at the Funeral of J. I. Kraszewski,” Letter “Response to the Criticism from Priest Zalewski,” Letter

“Announcement about the Establishment of her Organization Central Association of Polish Women (CAPW),” Letter “Response to Criticism from Father Barzynski” and many notes about the activities organized by her organization CAPW, such as plays or meetings.

The search in *Wiarus* also offered a contemporary perspective on Samolinska's activity, as I came across articles written by editors or readers describing attending celebrations where she made speeches. These notes gave a testament to her excellent oratory skills. A note by the editor of *Wiarus* describing her house and her personality I included in “Samolinska Through the Eyes of Others” section of this paper.

After a couple of months of looking through *Przyjaciel Ludu* and *Wiarus*, I had 16 of her works (correspondence, speeches, poems), that I printed out and set aside for reading and translation.

Another clue in regards to the location of her works came from the small 2-page article published about her in the *Zgoda* magazine; it described her as the “Mother of the Polish National Alliance (PNA).”<sup>4</sup> I learned that Samolinska was one of the first members of the Alliance, and that PNA started publishing its newspaper *Zgoda* right after it was organized in 1881 – it is logical that she, as a founding member, would submit her work to that publication. I looked at the 1881-1901 years of *Zgoda*. This search was also successful. I located 22 of her entries including poems “Hand,” “To Glory of America,” “Jan III Sobieski,” “For the Late J. I. Kraszewski,” “Poem to Celebrate the Creation of CAPW,” “To the Late Edward,” “On Guard,” The Song of the Polish National Alliance in America,” “Ode to the Present Moment,” “Unfulfilled Longings,” “For *Zgoda*,” “Triumph of Columbus,” “Poor Women” “On Death of Priest Chowaniec,” “Faith,”

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<sup>4</sup> *Zgoda*, 1 March, 2010

“Spring,” “Ludwika Mitchell,” “Stocking,” “Our Polish Women,” “New Year” and letters: “Speech of Mrs. Samolinska,” and “Statement.” The poems can be divided into two categories: personal, feminist poems and the patriotic poems often written for the occasions of Polish celebrations. In that search in *Zgoda* I was greatly helped by Dr. Daniel Kiper, an Archivist at Catholic University of Lublin, who also published articles on the activism of Polish Women in America, knew the *Zgoda* publication well and was able to point me in right direction.

Another very pleasant surprise came from my research in the interlibrary system. Thanks to the help of the Librarian at Rutgers, Dr. Tom Glynn, I was able to locate a beautiful, 16- page long, elegiac poem “James Garfield or Work and Virtue,” published under the name Teofila Samolinska.

That booklet led me to discover that Samolinska also published in the years 1880-1885 under the pen-name MARYTANA (sometimes signed “Marytana”). As I was going through the first issue of *Zgoda* of 1880, I noticed an advertisement for her book about James Garfield but signed as MARYTANA. I started looking for other articles in *Zgoda* under that name and I found that she submitted for *Gazeta Polska* and *Zgoda* under that name. I also found a poem “Grave of a Refugee” that she published in *Zgoda* as Marytana, but in *Wiarus* as Teoflia Samolinska – these findings confirmed that MARYTANA was her pen name.

I found more articles she published under pen-name including an article calling for an establishment of a first Polish Reading Room in Chicago. Also, she reviewed the stage costumes and performances of the famous Polish actress (that she admired) Helena Modejska (Modrzejewska). As Marytana she also published a letter in *Gazeta Polska* regarding the differences between the Jewish and Polish communities, advising well-to-do

Poles to contribute more to common causes and organizations just as wealthy Jews did. That letter sparked a chain of responses from Polish writers and a new string of discussions that is very interesting to follow. She also reviewed the performances of German opera in Chicago. Her love of theater and opera may explain the choice of that pen-name; most likely it refers to “Maritana,” the popular opera created in 1845 by William Vincent Wallace. As Marytana Samolinska liked to review performances, theater and opera productions; most likely she created that pen-name because she wished to write separately - as different people – on politics and the arts.

As I was gathering more and more of Teofila's works, I made a summer trip to Poland, thinking that this might give me an opportunity to pick up her trail on that side of the Atlantic. My visit to the Jagiellonian Library at Cracow did not bring any results, but I started working with a Polish researcher Jaroslaw Juszcak, asking for assistance in finding more about Teofila's birth records. Since she indicated as place of residence Wolsztyn, a city not far away from Poznan, we looked at the 1848 State Records and 1848 Records in Archives of the Archdiocese in Poznan, hoping to find a record of her birth or baptism. Unfortunately, there was no record of Teofila Cwiklinska born on April 22, 1848 in Wolsztyn. There may be many reasons: she may have been born somewhere else and arrived later to Wolsztyn, or her last name may have been misspelled (I saw her record misspelled even as Zuiklinska!). I still believe that she came from the area of Poznan (capital of region Wielkopolska, area in Northern Poland) because she called herself “a person from Wielkopolska” (Wielkopolanka) and admitted seeing plays performed in Poznan.<sup>5</sup> Although I was disappointed by not finding information on her family, school records and residence in Poland, I proceeded with my search for her writings.

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<sup>5</sup> *Przyjaciel Ludu*, 5 November, 1880

After arriving back in the United States, I focused on looking for Teofila's well known and often cited play *Emancypacja Kobiet (Emancipation of Women)*.” The possibility of finding a copy of the play in the US was very low. We don't have many records from the beginnings of Polish amateur theater in America. I contacted theaters in Poland, asking if they have a copy of her work in their archives. I was not able to locate that play, but found a good review of the play, that provided me with information regarding the plot and major themes, which I will discuss later. To my surprise, the Archives of the Raczyński Library in Poznań had a manuscript of her other play *Trzy Flory (Three Floras)*. I asked to have it scanned and sent to me. After a couple of weeks of waiting I had a copy of that manuscript: it was a “prompter's copy,” a hand-written copy that was used by a prompter during the staging of the play. It was written in a 19th century, cursive handwriting with prompter's notes sometimes scribbled on its margins. Armed with a good magnifying glass I proceeded to decipher the 19th century penmanship, first producing a legible copy in Polish before translating it into English. My translation of that play can be found at the end of this paper in the “Polish theater” section.

This thesis represents the research and translations I have completed to date resulting from my first major effort to find Teofila. There is still a lot to be found, and many places to look where more her works might be discovered. The following newspapers would need to be closely looked at: *Pielgrzym, Gazeta Polska, Kropidło, Gazeta Polska Katolicka, Kuryer Polski, Ogniwo, Polak w Ameryce* and also the early issues of the *Głos Polek (Voice of Polish Women)*. Additionally, in Poland, newspapers such as *Dwutygodnik dla Kobiet* or *Gazeta Poznańska* could have some of her writings. Samolisnka admitted that she subscribed to 6 Polish newspapers published in Poland, in cities Warszawa, Kraków, Lwów, Poznań (among them *Głos* and *Kłosy*); it possible, that

she wrote for them as well.<sup>6</sup> When it comes to finding more of her biographical information, a broader research done in Poland could potentially disclose her origins, confirm her birth place and provide details about her family and upbringing.

### Choosing Samolinska's Writings

For this thesis, I decided to translate and annotate some of Samolinska's newspaper writings and one of her plays. While she wrote many poems, I have put these aside for my next foray into her writings. I decided to select works that would offer good samples of her style and of issues she was interested in or cared about; each of them translated, edited and placed in a historical context. Ideally, annotated translations select and edit works from an author's entire works, but here I am limited by what is available to the translator. I hope to continue my project with further research and translation. At this stage I offer what I found in newspapers: her speeches, her articles, one play and notes about her in the Polish press. I hope that the work presented here will track her journey as she changed from a young woman playwright into an activist who was concerned with the Polish women question and Polish nationalism. The writings I have chosen also reflect important moments and turning points in her career.

Contributing to that end, I have organized her writings around three themes: Patriotism and Nationalism, Feminism and the Polish Theater. Letters she wrote between 1880 -1890 for *Wiarus* and *Przyjaciel Ludu* illuminate her ideas about Polish nationalism. They offer a fascinating glimpse into the political and cultural aspects of Chicago's Polish community. She presented her own strong criticism of attitudes of Polonia leaders. She criticized their anti-intellectualism, disregard and disrespect for norms of proper

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<sup>6</sup> *Zgoda*, 26 July, 1882

celebration of national events, their stubborn self-interest as persons seeking fame and status instead of devoting themselves to more important, patriotic causes. These letters also illustrate why Teofila deserved William Galush's description of her as “a never a shrinking violet.”

The section on Feminism includes important notes on the creation of CAPW, because establishment of that first woman-only Polish women group was a breakthrough for women organizing in the Polish community. The idea that Samolinska presented, that women need to be in charge of their own organizations that would compete with men, inspired many other Polish women organizations and finally led to the establishment of the most important Polish women group: *Zwiazek Polek w Ameryce (The Polish Women Alliance in America)*.

The section on the Polish Theater includes Teofila's rich and remarkable comments upon the Polish immigrant amateur theater in America. She commented upon its significance to the community and its audience. I also include a full translation of Teofila's only surviving play, *Trzy Flory (Three Floras)*. The play dramatic accomplishments were not the work of a major playwright. Nonetheless, they reveal a great deal about the writer's values, her perspectives upon class and gender differences along with her boldness in writing and producing a full-length work of art. The plays were performed in Poland as well as in the United States indicating that her work was highly regarded within the theatrical community.

I offer my translations and annotations as a contribution to this undiscovered figure. I hope my efforts contribute as well to the study of the literary and ethnic history of Polish communities in the USA.

I hope that my annotated translation of writings of this remarkable woman releases

her from unfortunate an ill devise obscurity and that it contributes to the historiography of nineteenth century immigrant community in which she lived.

## Biography

Teofila Samoliska, a beloved actress and poet, a daring writer and activist who espoused progressive ideas about a woman's place in society, was deeply engaged in her ethnic community. Apart from a handful of Polish immigration scholars and historians that know about her contributions, she remains an obscure figure for Poles in America and in Poland. We know little about her life before she arrived in New York. She was born Teofila Cwiklińska on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1848 in the German section of partitioned Poland.<sup>7</sup> Many leads point to Wielkopolska, the northwestern part of Poland, as the region where she grew up. She called herself “Wielkopolanka” and wrote for “Album Wilekopolanek,” a collection of poems written by immigrant Poles, created in Chicago.

At the age of only 17, she left Poland for the United States on June 24, 1865 on the ship Saxonia, which traveled from Hamburg, Germany to New York. She did not arrive alone. Wladyslaw Cwiklinski, a ten years older brother or cousin, shared her cabin. The part of Poland Teofila emigrated from was known as the “German Partition,” which is why the nationality of Poles who came from that area was marked as “German” on entrance in the United States. On her arrival manifest, she was described as “single,” and “German.” As her place of residence, she indicated the city Wolstein (in Polish: Wolsztyn), seventy-two kilometers southwest of Poznan, Poland.

A short biography of Samolinska, self-published by historian Arthur Waldo in 1980 indicated that she went through a private school for girls in Poznan. “She arrived to the USA straight from a private school for girls, that she finished with distinction, ahead of her peers.”<sup>8</sup> At that time five private schools for Polish girls existed in Poznan:

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<sup>7</sup> Partitioned Poland, in 19<sup>th</sup> century Poland was under control of three powers, Russia, Germany and Austro-Hungary

<sup>8</sup> Waldo, 23

Urszulanki, School of Ludwika, Pensjonat of Tekla Herwig, Pensjonat of Antonina Estkowska, and School of Katarzyna Poplinska. Each of these private schools offered an excellent education for girls; their curricula also included trips to the theater, and play-writing.<sup>9</sup> That private school education would explain why she began writing plays at an early age, right after arriving in the United States. It also confirms that Teofila most likely came from an affluent family with patriotic traditions, since the education of girls was very expensive. She was not a peasant girl, as were most of Polish women immigrating to the United States at that time. She belonged to the gentry – the intelligentsia – the group, that used their education after arriving in the US to become leaders in their communities.

A closer look at the history of Wolsztyn in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century indicated that it was a small multicultural city, comprised of about 3,000 citizens, of which two-thirds were Germans; ethnic Poles and Polish Jews constituted the rest of population. My research to date suggests that she grew up there during the latter half of the nineteenth century when Wolsztyn became a stage for strong Germanization pressures from the German occupiers. Perhaps that, combined with the dire effects of failed Polish Uprising of 1863 in which she took part<sup>10</sup> pushed her to emigrate to the United States two years after the collapse of that rebellion. We see in her letters that she comes back to that event, calling it a “catastrophe,” a defining moment for the Poles in Chicago.

Since Teofila, like many Polish women in Wielkopolska, took part in that Uprising, she (and her family) may have been subjected to harsh punitive measures and oppression that was placed on the Polish population by Russian and German occupiers after the rebellion. Was her family sent to camps in Siberia or imprisoned? Or, fearing prosecution,

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<sup>9</sup> Jan Moras. *Na Pensji w XIX-wiecznym Poznaniu*, w: Pensje, gimnazja, licea, “Kronika Miasta Poznania,” nr.4, 2013

<sup>10</sup> Angela and Donald Pienkos. *A History of Polish Women Alliance of America*. New York: 2003, 15

did her family send her to relatives or friends to the United States? We don't know exactly, but we are sure, that witnessing that oppression made her what she became later for the Polonia in her new country: a patriotic poet and activist that devoted almost 50 years of her life to the idea of Polish cause and Polish nation.

After her arrival in New York City, Teofila traveled to Cincinnati, Ohio, to a settled colony of Poles who had arrived from areas of the German Partition. On March 4, 1866 in Cincinnati, Hamilton County, less than a year after she arrived, she married Jan Samolinski,<sup>11</sup> an activist of Polonia, one of the first members of *Gmina Polska (The Polish Commune Society)*.<sup>12</sup> He later became the President of that organization (1887).

Jan Samolinski's involvement in the organizational and political life of Polonia undoubtedly helped Samolinska to be at the center of the Polish activism in Chicago, a city to which they moved in 1872; she not only knew the most important men in Polish secular and Catholic organizations, she also knew their wives. With them, she would later organize amateur groups and a women organization.

Why did she marry so soon? We know from the research on immigrant women that they often married quite soon after their arrival.<sup>13</sup> We do not know if she knew Samolinski before she came to the US: a good guess would be that she met him through friends or relatives during one of Polish community's events in Ohio, since Samolinski was an activist just like her. Perhaps they connected through their shared involvement in their community and Polish patriotism.

Four years after her wedding, while still in Ohio, Samolinska had her debut as a

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<sup>11</sup> Samolinski; masculine form for Polish last names ends with suffix -ski, whereas feminine form with -ska; therefore a wife of Samolinski is Samolinska

<sup>12</sup> *Gmina Polska, the Polish Community Society*, the first non-religious Polish organization in Chicago, founded very early (1866) by Political exiles of 1848 Uprising and 1863 Uprising; it sponsored amateur theatricals as early as 1873

<sup>13</sup> See Christine Harzig. *Peasant Maids, City Women. From the European Countryside to Urban America*. Ithaca, 1997.

poet; in February of 1870, she wrote a poem for the first Polish newspaper in the United States, *Orzel Polski (The Polish Eagle)* that was published in Washington, Missouri. This poem “Do Rodakow” (“To My Compatriots”) was censored before the publication by the editor for being too forward in calling for military activities against oppressors.<sup>14</sup> We also know that she became very active in Cincinnati's Polish amateur theater right after her arrival. Her play *Emancypacja Kobiet (Emancipation of Women)* – a sign of her progressive attitudes - brought her great popularity in certain progressive Polish circles. In 1870, she also sent her second play, *Trzy Flory (Three Floras)*, to a competition in Warsaw and received an award.

In 1872 Samolinska and her husband moved to Chicago, the city considered the unofficial capital of Polonia because of its growing number of Polish immigrants and Polish organizations. The City's Directory from the year 1872 mentioned her husband Jan Samolinski, indicating that Jan worked as a “machinist in company C.L.Rice and Co.”<sup>15</sup> and, later, as a machinist for McCormick, a producer of farming machines. He was considered a “skilled laborer” and his stable salary allowed the young couple to have a comfortable living, at least according to immigrant standards. There is no evidence in City Directories of the Census that Teofila worked at any wage labor. They lived in the southern part of Chicago, moving quite often, originally on Taylor Street, then on 18<sup>th</sup> Street, in the area known among Poles as Wojciechowo.<sup>16</sup>

According to Juliusz Smietanka,<sup>17</sup> who knew the Samolinski couple personally:

Jan always worked; he was a mechanic, almost an engineer, with a good salary. They had a nice house, and Mrs. Samolinska had all the comforts she needed; she had help and a lot of free time that she very usefully spent on various

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<sup>14</sup> Waldo, 19

<sup>15</sup> City Directory of Chicago 1872 at Cook County, Illinois Online Historical Directories

<sup>16</sup> Wojciechowo, Polish neighborhood in Chicago concentrated around the Church of Sw. Wojciech

<sup>17</sup> Samolinska's friend, lawyer Juliusz Smietanka; Waldo, 34

activities. Mr. Samolinski was like an ideal husband; he did not interfere, did not disturb her in anything, he simply existed in his wife's kingdom like a shadow, always loyal, faithful, courteous and helpful; so the “nice Mrs. Teosia”<sup>18</sup> ruled in the house, in theater, on celebrations, everywhere she went. She had time and patience to prepare herself and she was prepared for every occasion. I remember them the best from these days when they lived on the 18<sup>th</sup> Street in the southern part of the city. Her house was always open for people, often filled with visitors; joyful, hospitable and filled with life. And you had to see Mrs. Samolinska: she liked to be dressed neatly, richly, with the nicest fabrics. She loved especially ribbons, intricate laces, silk – she wore her dresses long to the ground, often with a long train, as the fashion at that time dictated. She was shapely and slender. Fate punished her only by denying her height: she wasn't even 5 feet tall. But where nature was hard on her, she compensated with her gestures, posture and behavior, because she knew how to be the main attraction of every gathering; she was filled with vigor, glamour and energy.<sup>19</sup>

There are many comments on Samolinska's classy and elegant style of dress; she also published a letter in *Zgoda* where she described the dresses that the famous Polish actress Helena Modejska (Modrzejewska) wore while playing on stage in Chicago; we learn that Samolinska paid great attention to and knew a lot about fashion and trends in women's clothing. This also separated her from ordinary Polish women most of whom came from peasant families, but as we shall see from translated documents, she earned their admiration from women in her theater audiences aspiring to become American ladies and to dress like them.

In Chicago, she was able to work at home as an artist and writer. She and her husband were both involved with the first secular Polish organization created in Chicago: *Gmina Polska (The Polish Commune)* – Samolinska, for most of that decade (from 1873-1886) was also involved with the Theater of *Gmina Polska* in Chicago. Following the advertisements in the Polish press for the plays produced by this particular theater gives

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<sup>18</sup> Teosia, short form of "Teofila"

<sup>19</sup> Waldo, 34.

us ideas about plays she was involved with. For the years 1880 – 1886 I found 14 plays<sup>20</sup> staged by Theater of *Gmina Polska*; plays that Samolinska, most likely, took an important part, considering that she was described as the most talented female actress at that time.<sup>21</sup>

It was Teofila's own passion for the stage that made her so popular among the Polish expatriates. According to many sources, she had a great presence on stage and loved acting – landing many leading female roles. One source reported:

when a young and pretty Samolinska charms her audience with her artistry, spectators leap to the stage and kiss her hands, until the happily overcome amateur actress sheds real tears, as happened in operetta *The Nightingale* (*Slowiczek*) in 1885.<sup>22</sup>

For example, on 28<sup>th</sup> of 1873 in Chicago, Samolinska played the leading role of Katarzyna in popular play *Peasants Aristocrats* (*Chłopi Arystokraci*) by Wladyslaw Anczyc and in 1876, her play *Three Floras* (*Trzy Flory*) was presented in Chicago; she directed, as well as played a role. The role of Katarzyna was praised even by the usually critical of Teofila *Gazeta Katolicka*:

Mrs. Samolinska, who mastered the peasant dialect to admirable perfection, again made sure that her Katarzyna, was a complex, true character marked with faults and vices (...).<sup>23</sup>

According to Waldo, she sung and played in following Polish productions in

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<sup>20</sup> 9 January 1880 – *Cyrulik ze Zwierzynca* (*Barber from Zwierzyniec*)  
 12 August 1882 – *Sad Przysięgłych czyli Pozory* (*Court of Jurists or Pretenses*)  
 21 January 1883 – *Dwaj Roztargnieni* (*Two Distracted Men*)  
     *Oryl* (*Oryl*)  
 1 April 1883 – *Ulicznik Paryski* (*Hooligan of Paris*)  
 1 May 1883 – *Podejrzana Osoba* (*Suspicious Person*)  
 13 May 1883 – *Okreżne* (*Circular*)  
 25 November 1883 – *Chłopi Arystokraci* (*Peasants Aristocrats*)  
     *Slowiczek* (*Nightingale*)  
 20 April 1884 – *Sluby Panienskie* (*Girls' Pledges*)  
 7 June 1884 – *Emancypacja Kobiet*  
 23 November 1884 – *Kasper Karlinski* (*Kasper Karlinski*)  
 26 February 1886 – *Zbojcy* by Schiller (*Robbers*)  
 17 April 1887 – *Wieslaw* (*Wieslaw*)

<sup>21</sup> Finding reviews of these plays in the Polish press will provide information on parts/roles played by Teofila

<sup>22</sup> Mathew Strumski. "The Beginning of the Polish American Theater." *Polish American Studies*. Vol. 4, No.1/2.

<sup>23</sup> After *Zgoda*, 5 December, 1883

Chicago: *Lobzowanie (Rascals)*, *Karpaccy Gorale (Mountaineers of Carpathia)*, *Trojka Hultajska (Three Rascals)*, *Wesele na Pradniku (Wedding in Pradnik)*, *Kominiarz i Młynarz (Chimneysweep and Miller)*, *Flisacy (Flisacs)*, *Slowiczek (Nightingale)*, *Cyrulik ze Zwierzynca (Barber from Zwierzyniec)*.<sup>24</sup>

Judging by the amount of time and dedication Samolinska gave to the Polish theater, we could assume that theater was her passion. Early on and ahead of others, she realized its importance in fostering patriotic sentiment:

our Polish national theater in America stopped being just entertainment, it became a tool for moral development of Polonia, and it needs to be treated seriously.<sup>25</sup>

The years 1880-1890 were very prolific for Samolinska; she submitted many poems to *Zgoda*, a publication of the Polish National Alliance (PNA), an organization that she helped to create; her close relation with *Zgoda* lasted for more than a decade. In the first years of this newspaper, between 1880-1885 she published sometimes under a pen-name MARYTANA. During this time she still continued being involved in *Gmina Polska* and its Theater. She participated in picnics, celebrations and trips organized by *Gmina Polska*. She reported on these trips in one of her letters in *Zgoda*.

Also, in years 1880 -1890 she published her correspondence on pages of other Polish newspapers *Wiarus* and *Przyjaciół Ludu*. These pieces of correspondence are crucial for understanding Samolinska's ideas about literature, theater and patriotism and are translated and annotated in this paper. Her poems are not translated here but her feminist poems are briefly analyzed in the Feminism section of this paper.

It is also in the 1880s that she was very involved in the social and political life of

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<sup>24</sup> Waldo, 32

<sup>25</sup> *Przyjaciół Ludu*, November 5, 1880

her Chicago community. One of her main achievements is her contribution to the creation of Polish National Alliance (PNA), the first Polish national fraternal organization in the USA. In 1879, she wrote a letter to Agaton Giller, a member of Polish National Government, who resided in Rappersville, Switzerland.<sup>26</sup> In it she stated:

We are the even faster growing branch of Polish exiles worldwide. We need a structure, a system if we want to survive the cataclysm, preserve our national spirit and save Poland. Without central power, without uniting all fractions under one umbrella – we will perish. We should not split into fractions. We all are willing to serve Poland, but we lack experience in organizing, we lack knowledge how to create a governing, managing body. We all know that every organization needs to have an executive power. We have been waiting long for guidance from a leader, for a call to unity under one organization.<sup>27</sup>

In response to her letter, and the letters of others who joined her in writing to him, Giller wrote an open letter to Polonia's leaders urging for the creation of one umbrella organization. That letter led to creation of PNA. It was established on February 15, 1880 in Philadelphia, with a comprehensive insurance program for the Polish-American community. Due to her writings and activism Samolinska became known as “a spiritual mother of PNA.”

Between the years 1880 and 1894 Samolinska submitted a total of 27 poems to *Zgoda*, *Lech*, *Wiarus*, *Orzel Polski* and *Przyjaciół Ludu*<sup>28</sup> and published 24 long pieces of correspondence in these publications. In her letters, she often got into arguments and disputes with secular and religious activists of Chicago, especially with Father Wincent Barzynski or with the Editor of *Gazeta Polska* Władysław Dyniewicz.<sup>29</sup> Against Father Wincent Barzynski of the Congregation of Resurrection, a charismatic Polonia leader, she defended her right to start her own society outside of the confines of the Catholic Church,

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<sup>26</sup> Rappersville, city in Switzerland that has given refuge to many Poles in the 19th century, place of the famous Polish Museum

<sup>27</sup> Stanisław Osada. *Historia Związku Narodowego Polskiego*. Chicago, 1905, t.1, 317

<sup>28</sup> I list the poems separately in the bibliography under “Poems”

<sup>29</sup> Władysław Dyniewicz (1843 - 1928), pioneer in Chicago's Polonia, created first Polish-language newspaper in the USA, *Gazeta Polska*

and also the right to open the door to her group for women who were not Catholic. A long dispute with Wladyslaw Dyniewicz and his circle consisted often of Samolinska defending herself against his accusations that she is too critical of Polish nationalists and of Polish gatherings in her reviews of various Polish celebrations.

In her other articles, she reviewed performances of German opera in Chicago, argued for a need of a public Polish Reading Room, discussed stage acting of famous actresses such as Helena Modrzejewska and Sara Bernhardt, discussed the value of Polish literature, wrote about the state of Polish Theater in Chicago and lamented over the imprisonment of her beloved writer J. I. Kraszewski. Some of these articles she signed as T. Samolinska, some of them as Marytana.

All these newspapers valued Samolinska's writings and their editors supported her and Polish women's patriotic activism. The small newspaper *Wiarus*, published in Winnona, Minnesota, achieved a great readership thanks to strong-willed editor Hieronim Derdowski, who supported Samolinska's progressive Polish women's group, the Central Association of Polish Women (CAPW), by publishing Samolinska's announcements regarding her society (she also published them in *Zgoda*). At the end of my paper I translated notes announcing the creation of CAPW and a note written by Hieronim Derdowski, describing Samolinska as a venerable member of the Polish community.

Samolinska's disputes on the pages of *Wiarus* and *Przyjaciel Ludu*, her audacity as a reporter and journalist likely contributed to a higher readership in these newspapers. These disputes gave examples of her scathing style; her polemics were laced with a humor and sarcasm, that she used to undermine her opponents' arguments. For example, in her Letter "Wielkie Glowki Chicago" ("Inflated Heads of Chicago") she mercilessly mocked her critics and vain, gossipy Poles who sought the spotlight for themselves

instead of focusing on betterment of Polish community and the common good.

As much as she liked to criticize her opponents, she also liked to express adoration in her newspaper writings for public figures whose actions and values she considered “worthy of praise.” In 1885, she wrote a 16-page-long elegiac poem, “James Garfield albo Praca i Cnota” (“James Garfield or Work and Virtue”) in which she glorified his achievements and mourned his long and painful death. Another example of an elegiac poem is her “Hymn na Smierc J.I. Kraszewskiego” (“Hymn to J.I.Kraszewski”) where she was mourning the death of this famous Polish writer and patriot. She also adored the actresses Sara Bernhardt and Helena Modejska, and promoted the works of Polish writer Jozef Korzeniowski (Joseph Conrad).

After the death of James Garfield, Samolinska submitted her poem to his wife, the First Lady Lucretia Garfield for the Celebration of Unveiling of a Monument of James Garfield in Cleveland, Ohio. The First Lady wrote back to Samolinska, thanking her for her contribution with following words:

My grateful regards to Mrs. Theophila Samolinska for the copy of her poem written in honor to the memory of General Garfield. It is our misfortune to be unacquainted with the Polish language but nevertheless I accept the sentiment as described in the accompanying letter sent to Me on May 20 1890 with heartiest of thanks. We shall always consider the Polish people as the highest cultivated of oppressed nations. Very respectfully Yours *Mrs. General J.A.Garfield.*<sup>30</sup>

One of the most important of her contributions for the cause of Polish women was in creating the progressive Central Association of Polish Women (CAPW) in 1887, an organization with open doors to women of various faiths and backgrounds. Her years of membership in PNA and *Gmina Polska* – Polish fraternal – paid off with knowledge of how to establish and run a society. Her group was not affiliated with any church or parish.

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<sup>30</sup> *Zgoda*, 18 June, 1890

On the contrary, she chose to meet with her members in her house in the “South Side of Chicago” and then the women held meetings at meeting halls, especially at the Vorwaerts Turner Hall.

In the creation of this woman-only CAPW Samolinska placed herself as a feminist and a progressive organizer ahead of the time. Knowing that she would be criticized by certain Polish traditional circles, she took a big risk. Even a decade after the creation of Samolinska's group, a debate raged in the Polish press questioning whether it was “appropriate” to have women-only organizations, since “the place of women was being a mother and a nurturer” and “if the women will be taking part in politics and journalism, the regard for them will dwindle.”<sup>31</sup> We see that Samolinska had a completely different vision of a woman's role and believed that the political struggle should not be left only to men. Women, she believed, need to be involved in politics and public life, and on their own terms.

Samolinska also contributed to the establishment of the Polish Reading Room in Chicago – her letters in *Zgoda*, urging for opening it led to donations from four Polish organizations: *Gmina Polska*, *Harmonia*, *Towarzystwo Naukowe* i *Towarzystwo im. Kosciuszki*. Collected funds allowed for the opening of the Polish Reading Rooms on 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1883.

Teofila was also one of the first women to join *the Falcons (Sokoly)*,<sup>32</sup> – a paramilitary Polish society, aimed at preparing members for fight for Poland, assuming that Poland might soon have an opportunity to fight for independence. This society was established in 1887 and invited women to join. There, Samolinska and another member

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<sup>31</sup> *Zgoda*, 1 April, 1883

<sup>32</sup> *The Falcons (Sokoly)*, a gymnastic society with patriotic and military overtones, open to women, started in Austrian Poland in 1881

Stefania Chmielinska,<sup>33</sup> became frustrated with the subordinate status given to them. They could not vote or hold managerial positions. *The Falcons'* leadership explained that women could not be soldiers, so they could not be in the organization's leadership. That response lead Chmielinska and other members to establishing the *Polish Women Alliance* (PWA) that became later a national organization;<sup>34</sup> Samolinska did not join that organization, her CAPW competed with PWA for Polish women's memberships.

Samolinska was involved in a bitter battle that raged in Chicago's Polonia in 1880's and 1890's between the secular nationalist PNA and the religious, Catholic front. She was on the secularist side. She was in opposition to the religious Polish Roman Catholic Union (PRCU). While she understood the importance of religion and the Catholic Church to immigrant Poles and to the nationalist movement, her nationalism took priority whenever the two appeared to be in conflict. She was sometimes anticlerical in her views, criticizing priests such as Father Wincent Barzynski and Priest Zalewski. But she argued for the importance of faith in life; she defended the value of Christian faith in raising children in her Letter "Response to Criticism from the Nationalists." And as her poem dedicated to Priest Chowaniec of Baltimore demonstrated, she supported priests who were patriots. In her letter after the death of that priest, she wrote about the importance of Catholic faith:

As daughters of the Roman Catholic Church, we Polish women strongly believe, that only a sincere prayer of a pious heart could bring a sorrowed spirit closer to Heaven. We also believe, that our prayers are too unworthy and could not be equal to prayers of our priests.<sup>35</sup>

In the late 1880's, after her disputes with Dyniewicz and his circle and after being subjected to heavy criticisms and attacks on her in *Gazeta Polska* and *Kropidlo*,

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<sup>33</sup>Stefania Chmielinska, Polish activist, later the President of the *Polish Women Alliance in America*

<sup>34</sup>*Polish Women Alliance of America* (PWA), first national Polish woman organization in the USA, 1898-present

<sup>35</sup>*Zgoda*, 6 July, 1887

Samolinska focused on CAPW giving it her full attention. Her society donated money to *Grosz Polski (Polish Penny)* contributing to funds for the Polish National Treasury. It organized speeches, presentations, celebrations, mask balls and also had its own theater group that prepared performances of plays, and later it also offered life and “sick” insurance. Running this organization (that by 1894 had 190 members) must have been quite demanding. During the same period its Theater group presented three plays: *Dwie Sieroty (Two Orphans)*, *Nowy Don Kiszot (New Don Quixote)* and *Wasy i Peruki (Mustaches and Wigs)*.

Samolinska spoke at least four languages. One of her letters in *Zgoda* entitled “Gora Poezja Polska! Die Literatur der Polen” (“Praise to Polish Poetry!”) was a response to an article about Polish literature, written in German *Spottvogel*.<sup>36</sup> Samolinska admitted to reading that newspaper, that she considered one of the best literary magazine. We learn that she spoke fluent German, a fact that additionally confirms that she arrived from the German partition. Waldo also wrote that she spoke four languages.<sup>37</sup> Most likely she also spoke Russian, as she also used some Russian words in her letters. She definitely spoke English, because in one of her 3-rd of May speeches she addressed English-speaking guests in the audience in English.

The Polish community in Chicago was like a family for Samolinska. That community celebrated many historical anniversaries throughout the year. These events gave Samolinska an opportunity to frequently see her friends, adversaries and acquaintances. In January, she usually attended the January Uprising Celebrations in Chicago, that consisted of a Catholic mass followed by a gathering at one of Chicago's

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<sup>36</sup>*Spottvogel*, 4 November 1883; *Spottvogel* was a German magazine published in Indianapolis, IN

<sup>37</sup>Waldo,16

halls where the program included declamations of poetry, singing of patriotic songs, speeches by community leaders and dances. In May, she celebrated the anniversary of the 3-rd of May Constitution. August was the time for the Celebration of King III Sobieski victorious battle of Vienna, and in November the anniversary of the November Uprising. These celebrations were very important for all Poles in Chicago – at many of these gatherings Samolinska was invited to address the audience. Apart from these patriotic, festive celebrations (that were later in detail described in the Polish press), Samolinska took part in picnics and trips organized by *Gmina Polska* and in theater productions of Theater of *Gmina Polska* and Theater of CAPW; these productions were also social gatherings, as they were followed by an obligatory ball, sometimes “masked ball.”

Samolinska was well known in Polish community for her strong oratory skills. She was frequently invited to speak publicly and we know that the audience was never impartial to her performances. Below is a fragment from the article by P. Kosmowska, secretary of CAPW, describing Samolinska's speech at one of the group's meetings:

The meeting was started by the President, Mrs. Samolinska, who with a sign of holy cross and among festive silence delivered a patriotic speech, that the congregation of Polish women, rising from their seats, attentively listened to. I won't repeat here the content of that speech, I will only add, that the effect of it on listeners was enormous. Right in the beginning many people were visibly moved and at some faces tears started rolling down. And, later in the speech, even Mrs. Samolinska, very emotional, started to cry and the hall was filled with quiet sobs. It was a solemn moment, and only Providence's eye was looking at so many heavy tears of patriotic women, exiles in America (...).<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, during the funeral of the Polish writer J.I Kraszewski we read that:

The audience welcomed with enthusiasm our Polish poet, Mrs. Samolinska (...); we can only say that we have not heard before a speech so solemn, so appropriate for our celebration (...). Her speech moved the listeners to tears and touched everyone's spirit. Her speech was rewarded with a thunder of

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<sup>38</sup>*Wiarus*, April 14, 1887

applause, so great that we feared the hall will collapse (...).<sup>39</sup>

Also, in 1887, the *Wiarus'* editor described Samolinska's speech at the celebration of the 57th anniversary of the November Uprising:<sup>40</sup>

(...) Then the President of the Central Association of Polish Women, Mrs. Samolinska, gave a speech about the beginning of the Uprising, based on the diaries of Countess G.<sup>41</sup> that resided at that time in Warsaw. These diaries are in the Archives of the National Museum in Rappersville. After readings from the diary, Mrs. Samolinska gave a speech that made a great impression on all present. Mrs. Samolinska took our thoughts back to Poland, to places and times of our childhood, where everyone in our nation stood hand in hand at heavy and painful times; where there was no class difference between us, because we all knew that our enemies are ready to bring us down. Our enemies, that wanted to take away from us what th e most precious: our language and our land. Mrs. Samolinska took our thoughts back to that time of the Uprising, where the priests stood side by side the noblemen, intelligentsia and peasants - as one, in order to show the world that we may not win our fight, but at least we will show in our protest that the Polish nation is still alive and demands its rights. Mrs. Samolinska stated that she is disappointed that here, in the exile, in the land of freedom, we have not been able to create that bond and to have peace among us; that here we have been quarreling and arguing among each other (...).<sup>42</sup>

Samolinska and her husband did not have children. The 1910 City Census of Chicago indicated that she lived with her husband and a young woman named Mary Loss, most likely a boarder, friend or a caregiver. As an occupation, Teofila indicated “literary.”<sup>43</sup> Her tombstone misses the “beloved mother” inscription, that we find so common for people with children. Also, her husband's death certificate does not indicate any of his kin present (for example children) at his burial.

After public disputes with both the Polish secularists and the clergy in her fifties Samolinska decided to withdraw from participating in the public life of Chicago's Polonia

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<sup>39</sup> *Zgoda*, June 20, 1883

<sup>40</sup> Uprising of November 1831

<sup>41</sup> diaries of Ksiezna G. (Countess G.), by Kunegunda Bialopiotrowiczowa were published in *Lech*, nr.34-50, 1878

<sup>42</sup> *Wiarus*, December 15, 1887

<sup>43</sup> 1910 census for Chicago Cook County, Illinois, Online Historical Directories

in the 1900's. In this paper, we have a translation of an article from *Wiarus* reporting on the editor's visit to Samolinska's house; he confirmed that she decided not to be involved as much as she was in 1870's and 1880's. She admitted to rarely submitting work to newspapers, limiting herself only to commenting on major events in life of her community. We also know that she was ill in the last decades of her life, as she already mentioned her being sick in her Letter "Response to Criticisms from Skowronski."

We don't have much knowledge about Samolinka's activities at the end of her life from 1900 to 1913. Waldo indicated that she was very enthusiastic about the creation of the first professional Polish Theater in Chicago in 1911. The Theater's management invited Samolinska to the opening of that Theater, that was named Theater of Tadeusz Kosciuszko. Samolinska was also invited to the reception that took place at the "Trzech Slodkich" ("Three Sweets") restaurant in 1911, where she made a speech (most likely her last one). According to Waldo, she called the creation of this Polish Theater "the crown of her deepest dreams."<sup>44</sup>

Samolinska died on December 1, 1913 in Chicago, almost 50 years after her arrival in the United States. She had a Christian burial. Her obituary, written by her husband was placed in *Dziennik Zwiazkowy*, the official newspaper of the PNA, two days later, read:

To all family and friends I convey that sad message that my beloved wife, Teofila Samolinska, after a long sickness, died on 1<sup>st</sup> of December, at 7 pm, 1913, at the age of 65. The funeral will take place on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> of December at 9 am, at the Funeral Home at 1948 Chicago Ave, then we proceed to the Church of Brothers Mlodzianki, then to St. Adalbert Cemetery.<sup>45</sup>

On the pages of this newspaper, the PNA published its resolution signed by the

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<sup>44</sup>Waldo, 36

<sup>45</sup>*Dziennik Zwiazkowy*, 3 December, 1913

President of PNA, Kazimierz Zychlinski:

Considering that the late Teofila Samolinska throughout her life professed the love for her Homeland and expressed this love in her activities on national stage and in striving for concentration of all Polish forces here in Exile into one united entity;

Considering that she was an ardent and tireless champion of patriotic duties among her compatriots, thrown here in Exile;

Considering that she used her literary talent to revive in her compatriots love for everything that is dear to a Polish heart and was involved in all matters that concerned Polonia;

The Management of PNA declares on 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 1913 to pay the highest respects to the deceased by publishing this resolution and expressing sincere condolences to her family.

An obituary appeared in all major Polish newspapers. Some of the best comments included: “The best daughter of our unhappy Homeland and all compatriots in Exile. There wasn't a national cause that Samolinska would not participate in.”<sup>46</sup> “She was a devout and faithful to the national cause patriot, an accomplished activist, especially in the old days of our time here.”<sup>47</sup>

Samolinska was buried at Saint Adalbert Catholic Cemetery in Niles, Cook County, north of Chicago. Her tombstone is carved with the following inscription:

“TEOFILA SAMOLINSKA 1848-1913 POETESS – AUTHORESS – PATRIOT,  
FOUNDER 1887 POLISH WOMAN'S CENTRAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA.”

### Conclusion

Samolinska was recognized as a gifted poet and writer in the United States and abroad in her own lifetime. As a charismatic society hostess, she was notorious in fighting her political enemies, and she planted revolutionary ideas about a woman's place in society in her ethnic enclave. Her activism paved the way for feminism and women's

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<sup>46</sup> Jan Samolinski. “Teofila Samolinska Obituary.” *Dziennik Zwiazkowy*. 2 December ,1913

<sup>47</sup> Kazimierz Zychlinski. “Resolution.” *Dziennik Zwiazkowy*. 3 December ,1913

activism in Polish community. At the time when women were not expected to speak publicly and address audiences, Samolinska took to the podium. She not only impressed with her eloquence and knowledge, but boldly criticized Polish organizations and Polish leaders, pointing out what needs to be improved. This attitude infuriated many people and groups that kept attacking and criticizing her “masculine style,” but also gained her many admirers and friends. The below translations of her correspondence and a play will allow English language readers to hear Samolinska “in her own voice.”

## TIMELINE

22 April 1848 - Teofila Samoliska (née Cwiklinska) was born in German-controlled  
Poland

1859-1865 – attended one of private schools for girls in Poznan (Posen), Poland

24 June 1865 – Teofila Cwiklinska (Samolinska) departed from Hamburg to New York

10 July 1865 – Teofila Cwiklinska (Samolinska) arrived in NYC from Hamburg, through  
Southampton, England on ship Saxonia

4 March 1866 – marriage of Teofila Cwiklinska and John Samolinski in Cincinnati,  
Hamilton County, Ohio

22 February 1870 – published a poem “Do Rodakow” (“To Compatriots”) in *Orzel Polski*

1870 – awarded in Warsaw for play *Trzy Flory* (*Three Floras*)

1872 – moved to Chicago; lived at 77 O'Brien St, then 234 W. Taylor, then 128 W. 13<sup>th</sup>  
Street, 675 W. 20<sup>th</sup> Street, later at 733 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street

28<sup>th</sup> December 1873 – played in the Polish Amateur Theater in Chicago: Klara in *Po  
Wystawie Paryskiej* (*After the Parisian Exhibition*) and Katarzyna in *Chlopi  
Arystokraci* (*Peasants Aristocrats*) (theater on Tylor street, between Canal  
and Beach)

1873 – her play *Emancypacja Kobiet* (*Emancipation of Women*) played in Chicago

2 March 1875 – published a letter in *Gazeta Katolicka* defending *Gmina Polska* against  
accusations of involvement with freemason societies

1876 – her play *Trzy Flory* (*Three Floras*) played in Chicago

1879 – published poem “Od Polek Z Ameryki” (“From Polish Women in America”) in  
*Lech-Tygodnik Ilustrowany* in Poznan (Posen)

1880 – wrote a letter to Agaton Giller, urging for creation of an umbrella organization for

## Polonia in the US

1880 – became unofficial Chicago correspondent for *Przyjaciel Ludu*

5 November 1880 – published correspondence: letter in *Przyjaciel Ludu* (“The State of Polish National Theater in Chicago”)

9 December 1880 – published correspondence: letter in *Przyjaciel Ludu* (“Exhaustive Treatises”)

29 December 1880 – poem “Moich Bajek, Osa i Kowal” (“My Fairy Tales: the Wasp and The Smith”) in *Przyjaciel Ludu*

12 January 1881 – published “Chce Byc Psem – Odpowiedz Gazecie Dyniewiczza” (“I Want to Be a Dog – Response to Dyniewicz's *Gazette*”) in *Przyjaciel Ludu*

24 January 1881 – published correspondence: letter in *Przyjaciel Ludu* (“Report form the Celebrations of 1863 Uprising”)

31 January 1881 – published correspondence: letter in *Przyjaciel Ludu* (“Colony i in Arkansas”)

6 February 1881 – published poem “Czynu nie Piesni – Immiennikom Kosciuszki” (“Deeds, not Hymns”) in *Przyjaciel Ludu*

24 December 1881 – published correspondence: letter in *Przyjaciel Ludu* (“Open Letter to Nationalists”)

8 June 1881 – published “Grob Wygnanca” (“Grave of a Refugee”) in *Przyjaciel Ludu*

12 July 1882 – published a letter about the Celebration at the St. Wojciech Church i  
*Zgoda*

26 July 1882 – published a letter in *Zgoda*: “A Couple of Words Regarding the Need of The Polish Reading Room in Chicago” as MARYTANA

20 September 1882 – information placed in *Zgoda* about the publication of “James

Garfield alb Praca i Cnota” (“James Garfield or Work and Virtue”) under her pen-name MARYTANA

20 September 1882 – published correspondence in *Zgoda* signed MARYTANA, a report

From picnics and trips organized by *Gmina Polska*

28 February 1883 – published correspondence in *Zgoda*, a letter about Helena

Modrzejewska, signed MARYTANA

14 March 1883 – published a poem “Na Drugoroczne Urodziny *Zgody*” (“For the Second

Anniversary of *Zgoda*”) in *Zgoda*

28 March 1883 – published a letter: review of performances of Helena Modrzejewska in

*Zgoda*

11 April 1883 – published a poem “Pogrzeb na Wygnaniu” (“Funeral in Exile”) signed

MARYTANA in *Zgoda* (same poem published five years later in *Wiarus* signed Teofila Samolinska)

2 May 1883 – published a poem “Wiara” (“Faith”) in *Zgoda*

16 May 1883 – published a poem “Wiosna” (“Spring”) in *Zgoda*

23 May 1883 – published a poem “Biedne Kobiety!” (“Poor Women!”) in *Zgoda*

13 June 1883 – published a letter: “Review of Leon's Letters” in *Zgoda*

20 June 1883 – published a poem: “Ludwika Mitchell” in *Zgoda*

11 July 1883 – published “List Marytany” (“Letter from Marytana”) about Bartholdi in

*Zgoda*

25 July 1883 – published “Na Czesc Ameryki” (“Glory of America”) poem in *Zgoda*

8 August 1883 – published a letter: “List Marytany” about the release of Kraszewski from

prison and various other political and cultural topics, in *Zgoda*

15 August 1883 – published poem “Ponczoszka” (“Stocking”) in *Zgoda*

- 5 September 1883 – published her translation from Byron “Wyspy Grecyi” (“Islands of Greece”) in *Zgoda*
- 26 September 1883 – published a letter: review of a play about Tadeusz Kosciuszko in *Zgoda*
- 14 November 1883 – published a letter about Polish literature and Polish poetry in *Zgoda*
- 5 December 1883 – published a review of two plays presented by *Gmina Polska's* Theater (*Chlopi Arystokraci, Slowiczek*) in *Zgoda*
- 12 December 1883 – published “Jan III Sobieski” poem in *Zgoda*
- 27 April 1884 – played one of the main roles (Klara) in *Sluby Panienskie* by Fredro, organized by the Theater of *Gmina Polska*: negative review by Samota in 30 April of *Zgoda*, positive review by K.Pokrzywinski in 24 May of *Zgoda*
- 7 June 1884 - *Emancypacja Kobiet* staged by the Theater of *Gmina Polska*; Samolinska played the main role of Malwina. Review of the play by Samota presented in 18 of June 1884 issue of *Zgoda*
- 1885 – published 16-pages booklet “James Garfield, or Work and Virtue,” this time signed “Teofila Samolinska”
- 11 February 1885 – published a letter: “A Couple of Notes in Response to J.A. in Philadelphia” (about Polish and Jewish communities) in *Gazeta Polska* in Chicago as Marytana – her letter caused a chain of letters-responses (first from Julian Lipinski in 4 March 1885 of *Zgoda*, second from J.A. “Response to Marytana” in 11 March 1885 issue of *Zgoda*, third by Ludolub Konieczny in 1 April 1885 issue of *Zgoda*)
- June 1886 – published correspondence: a letter in *Chicago Tribune* (“Anti-Defamation Letter”)

- 10 June 1886 – her Anti-Defamation Letter reprinted in *Wiarus*
- 17 June 1886 – published correspondence: a letter in *Wiarus* (“Inflated Heads of Chicago”)
- 13 March 1887 – in her house established Central Association of Polish Women (CAPW)
- 24 March 1887 – information about the creation of CAPW in *Wiarus*
- 30 March 1887 – published “S.P. Kraszewskiemu” poem in *Zgoda*
- 31 March 1887 – published “S.P. Kraszewskiemu” poem in *Wiarus*
- 20 April 1887 – published a letter: “Obrona” (“Defense”) in *Zgoda*, declared that CAPW  
is planning on establishing their own newspaper
- 1 May 1887 – joined *Sokoly - the Polish Falcons of America*
- 20 June 1887 – *Zgoda* informed that Samolinska made a speech at the funeral of  
J.K.Kraszewski; very good reception, good review
- 6 July 1887 – her “Letter to the Editor” published in *Zgoda*; she informed about her plan  
of publishing CAPW announcements in *Zgoda*
- 6 July 1887 – published a letter “Nasze Polki” (“Our Polish Women”) in *Zgoda*, in which  
she thanked Priest Chowaniec for his blessings of CAPW
- 13 July 1887 – published her speech in *Zgoda* (“Speech at the Funeral of J.I. Kraszewski”)
- 3 August 1887 – *Zgoda* informed that Samolinska was criticized by Stanislaw Slisz, the  
editor of *Kropidlo (Sprinkler)*, the newspaper of the Polish American Catholic  
Union: (“Slisz can not offend Mrs. Samolinska – the more he belittles her, the  
more she is respected by honest people”)
- 21 October 1887 – published a letter in *Zgoda*: “Jozef Korzeniowski in Ameryka”  
 (“Joseph Conrad in America”) - promoted Korzeniowski in Polonia
- 30 October 1887 – officially opened the Polish Amateur Theater at CAPW, with a play by  
Joseph Conrad *Wasy i Peruka (Mustaches and Wigs)*; play was a success

31 November 1887 – made a patriotic speech at the 57<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the November Uprising

14 December 1887 – published in *Zgoda* “Wiersz” (“Poem”) written to celebrate the opening of the Theater at CAPW

January 1888 – published poem “Na Czesc Ameryki” (“To the Glory of America”) in *Dwutygodnik dla Kobiet* in Poznan

23 February 1888 – published “Na Czesc Ameryki” in *Wiarus*

8 March 1888 – published response to criticisms from Priest Zalewski in *Wiarus*

15 March 1888 – published poem “Pogrzeb na Wygnaniu” (“Funeral in Exile”), signed as Samolinska in *Wiarus* (same poem published in 1883 in *Zgoda* signed Marytana)

21 March 1888 – donated money (\$2.40) to the Polish National Treasury – note in *Zgoda*

8<sup>th</sup> April 1888 – the Theater of CAPW presented the play *Dwie Sieroty* (*The Two Orphans*) by D'Ennery; translated by Samoliska, played at Vorwaerts Turner Hall (12<sup>th</sup> Street by Halsted)

18 April 1888 – published a letter: “Theater Reviews,” discussed the state of Polish amateur theaters in America, in *Zgoda*; second part of the letter published on 25 April, third part on 2 May of *Zgoda*

23 January 1889 – published poem “Reka” (“Hand”) in *Zgoda*

16 October 1889 – published poem “Piesn Związku Narodowego Polskiego w Ameryce” (“Hymn of the Polish National Alliance in America”) in *Zgoda*

23 October 1889 – published “Oda do Obecnej Chwili” (“Ode to the Present Moment”) in *Zgoda*

6 November 1889 – published poem “Z Niedoszlych Pragnien” (“Unfulfilled Desires”) in

*Zgoda*

- 1 January 1890 – published poem “Nowy Rok” (“New Year”) in *Zgoda*
- 21 May 1890 – published a review of German opera performances in Chicago – in *Zgoda*
- 31 May 1890 – sent a copy of her “James Garfield or Work and Virtue” to the First Lady, wife of James Garfield, on the occasion of unveiling of the statue of James Garfield in Cleveland, Ohio – note in *Zgoda*, 18<sup>th</sup> June 1890 issue
- 9 June 1890 – First Lady, Mrs. General J.A Garfield wrote a thank you note to Samolinska
- 18 March 1891 – published poem “Na Posterunku” (“On Guard”) in *Zgoda*
- 3 May 1891 – delivered a speech at a 100-Year Anniversary of 3-rd of May Constitution
- 7 October 1891 – published poem “S.P. Edwardowi” in *Zgoda*
- 22 June 1892 – published poem “Na Grobie Ks. Chowanca” (“By the Grave of Priest Chowaniec”) in *Zgoda*
- 19 October 1892 – published poem “Tryumf Columba” in *Zgoda*
- March 1894 – sent to the Lviv Exhibition a book “Historya Centralnego Zwiazku Polek w Ameryce” (“History of the Central Association of Polish Women in America”) for the Polish Pavillon
- 12 February 1899 – CAPW organized a Masked Ball at Pulaski Hall
- 14 December 1899 – CAPW calls all Polish women to join the organization, a note emphasized the proud history and achievements of CAPW – in *Zgoda*
- January 4 1900 – another call from CAPW for the Polish women to join the organization – in *Zgoda*
- 5 April 1900 – note in *Zgoda*, CAPW calls all members to arrive for an urgent meeting (“nadzwyczajne posiedzenie”)
- 14 June 1900 – CAPW calls in *Zgoda* for the Polish women to join their organization,

described their insurance policy; the new CAPW management revealed,  
Samolinska's name not listed in the management of CAPW

1911 – supported the creation of the professional Polish Theater im. T. Kosciuszki, took  
part in the celebration of opening the Theater, made her last speech at the  
restaurant “Trzech Slodkich” in Chicago

1 December 1913 – died in Chicago at age 65

## Correspondence

### Theme: Nationalism

#### 1. The Letter Concerning the Polish Colony in Arkansas

In the letter below Samolinska referred to the Polish Colony founded in 1877 near Marche (Pulaski County) in Arkansas. Twenty-two thousand acres of land located 10 miles northwest of Little Rock were purchased by a Polish nobleman and refugee Count von Choinski, who, concerned with the suffering of many of his fellow Polish immigrants in slums of large cities, purchased the land, wishing to improve immigrants' conditions by moving some of them to farming areas that he considered to be more familiar to these immigrant Poles than the great American cities they settled. Eighty-five families settled first, more followed. Malaria was rampant early on and caused many deaths; some immigrants moved back to Chicago additionally discouraged by uncleared land and lack of housing.

Samolinska wrote the letter as a response to comments written about her in “Dyniewicz newspaper” *Gazeta Polska*.<sup>48</sup> Wladyslaw Dyniewicz, editor of *Gazeta Polska*, was a powerful adversary of Samolinska. According to his article, she offended the settlers in Arkansas by her harsh comments. The letter below is Samolinska's response to his accusations.

This letter is important because Samolinska discussed her love for writing and for poetry, her aversion to housework and domestic duties. We see that she does not see herself as a homemaker or a wife, but, primarily, as a woman-writer and literature-lover. Also, her yearning for her homeland is expressed here very clearly.

#### **Teofila Samolinska. “Letter to the Editor.” *Przyjacieli Ludu*. January 21, 1881**

Dear Editor!

Every perpetrator of others' misfortunes likes to hide his identity in order to avoid responsibility for his villainous deeds in case they were ever discovered. Such perpetrators are these four writers in Arkansas hired by Mr. Dyniewicz<sup>49</sup> for producing

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<sup>48</sup> I could not find that article

<sup>49</sup> Wladyslaw Dyniewicz, editor of *Gazeta Polska*, a secularist and powerful adversary of Samolinska

that article describing the climate in Arkansas as the healthiest, with the most fertile soil, and with all life accommodations easy to acquire; all good – if it wasn't for that sun....only that sun!

How to trust people when even the sun is starting to disappoint them? While we here in Chicago are convinced of the revitalizing powers of sun-rays, without which nothing on this Earth could thrive and we greet joyfully each sunrise, our brothers in Arkansas are blaming the sun, as a catalyst of calamities and diseases, and a reason for deaths of many victims, who died right after arriving and settling there. It is hard to tell if this article was conceived by the four misguided authors in the middle of “kanikula”<sup>50</sup> or in the season of -20 degrees C and frost, but it seems to be more likely that it happened in summer, and the author (authors) of this article already suffered from too much exposure to the Arkansas' sun! He (they) compares, believe it or not, half-million population of Chicago with the number of settlers of Rock Island, that thanks to their perseverance found here their promised land!

It is fair, however, that the intellectuals of Arkansas were offended by some of Mrs. S's<sup>51</sup> comments regarding the deaths of Polish settlers who arrived there and died of hunger. But, if the rivers there flow with milk and honey (as Dyniewicz describes), why did the victims die of hunger, not from overeating?

Regarding the invitation, that the writers of the article are kindly issuing to Mrs. S. – she is accepting it, and will come for a visit, as soon as she nails her pots and pans to the walls with six inch nails, so they will not run away during her absence – the same pots that the gentlemen are telling her to “stick to!!” It seems to me, that you, brothers in

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<sup>50</sup>kanikula, in *Russian*: vacation

<sup>51</sup>Samolinska, presented herself in the 3-rd person in this article

Arkansas, know still very little about Mrs. S., if you think that when writing about Arkansas she did not have in her mind solely the benefit and wellbeing of her brothers and sisters. Wait only, let us get to know each other better, and we are sure, that you will not only apologize but even wash for her these pots and pans. Because when it comes to housework, we need to admit, Mrs. S. is extremely lazy. She would rather sing her songs and hymns like a bard with a guitar by a stream in Arkansas (when there is no stream to sit by and sing) than scrub jugs in Chicago – fe! In that human conditioning we see God's Providence: if all ladies would feel a sudden urge to scrub pots, pottery makers would be in real trouble.

But let's leave the trivial subjects and move to discuss poetry, because you need to know that Mrs. S is suffering from love of poetry and if she ever came to Arkansas, a lofty dithyramb<sup>52</sup> she would write. In her article Mrs. S.'s intention wasn't to hurt someone, but to express what she feels and what she considers a fact; and if the victims could lift the lids from their sorrowful graves, they would attest to that truth, just as long ago the resurrected Piotrowina<sup>53</sup> did for St. Stanislaw.<sup>54</sup> We need to mention that we have among ourselves members that thanks for the donation of *Gmina Polska*, were able to leave Arkansas and escape inevitable death.

Live then and may God bless fruits of your hard work and don't think that we are jealous of your good fortune! Please know, that Mrs. S. will only rejoice at your happiness as she partakes in the happiness of her compatriots herself.

Soon she will arrive with a visit – to apologize – and to congratulate you for your

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<sup>52</sup>Dythramb, a passionate or inflated speech, poem, or other writing

<sup>53</sup>Piotrowina, a hero of hagiographical legend from XI century, written in the *Life of St. Stanislaus* by Wincenty from Kielcz. Piotrowina was resurrected from his grave by St. Stanislaus in order to testify for him in a process involving land

<sup>54</sup>St. Stanislaus the Martyr (1030 – 1079), Stanislaw from Szczepanow, Bishop of Krakow, known for having been martyred by the Polish King Boleslaw the Brave in 1079. According to the legend, the saint's dismembered body was miraculously put back together

perseverance, and maybe, influenced by the atmosphere of Arkansas, and sitting in the shade of its pines, in company of children of Polish colonists, she will learn to paint better the beauty of your countryside for the readers of *Przyjaciół Ludu*. It wasn't Mrs. S fault, that a scorching sun, adding the consumptive deaths of victims, did not give her a better idea for her pen. She does not want to write a teary elegy that would be worth engraving on a tombstone; she would prefer to write songs for the living, for a community enjoying peace and fruits of its labor; a hymn just like that one by our beloved Wincenty Pol.<sup>55</sup>

*“Young brother, do you know,  
these waters so familiar to you?”<sup>56</sup>*

Eh – hush now - it would be wiser for me to crush my pen when it describes this country that is not our home – two words of poetry are enough to water my eyes and remind of the everlasting exile and fill my heart with longing. Because there is no land over Poland.

*T. Samolinska*

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<sup>55</sup>Wincenty Pol (1807 – 1872), Polish poet and geographer, his poems were often published in Polish immigrant press

<sup>56</sup>Fragment from “Piesn o Ziemi Naszej” (“Song about Our Land”) by Wincenty Pol

## 2. Letter - Response to Attacks by Anastasius Skowronski

In the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, 1886 issue of *Wiarus*, Samolinska's behavior at a Polish celebration was scrutinized by a member of the Polish community she did not know, Anastasius Skowronski, who wrote an article "She Has Not Been Americanized Yet." In the absence of the main Editor of *Wiarus*, who was a supporter of Teofila and her work, the piece was published portraying Teofila and her husband in a very negative light. The occasion he described was the party after the 3-rd of May Celebration – one of very important events, where the Poles celebrated the creation of the First Polish Constitution on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1791.

Skowronski accused Samolinska of being haughty and "lordly" in her demeanor and too proud to participate in dances with the "simple folk." He described her arriving at the theater late, not taking a place on the stage but somewhere in the back row "in order to show false modesty," and only after her husband Jan begged her almost on his knees, she joined the speakers on stage. Skowronski presented her speech as full of lofty, empty words. He claimed that apart of producing pretty speeches she did nothing for the Polish community.

However, his main accusation was that Teofila distanced herself from ordinary Polish people in the Polish community, that she was "Americanized," that she shunned the uneducated, unrefined masses and expected special treatment. Her main offense was that she left with her husband before the celebrations were over, did not talk much to anyone and did not dance like everyone else. He called her a "queen" and described her husband's behavior as servant-like. One of Samolinska's transgressions was also, according to Skowronski, that she wore gloves on her hands and expected people to pay her their respects.

But we also have another account of Samolinska's speech at that celebration, placed in *Wiarus* by Teofil Arbuzow in the article "3-rd of May in Chicago" (*Wiarus*, 13 May, 1886):

Then it was turn for the next speaker, Mrs. Samolinska. Our very accomplished Mrs. Samolinska proved again that she did not spend years in a Polish academy for nothing. She spoke about the Constitution, Polish refugees, our national duties, and also about the indifference of many of Poles in Chicago to the Polish cause. All this was very good, but I doubt, if anyone can get away from touching that delicate matter of Polish participation; her bold words of truth, coming from the lips of our favorite actress, did not upset the audience, on the contrary, her speech was rewarded with a loud applause and cries "Yes, it's true!" And she spoke also on the following subject: Three Polish societies invited all Poles to participate in the celebration, but only a handful of Poles arrived! She told them! – but she did not say more than what they (these organizations) deserved.

In the next number of *Wiarus*, the Editor apologized publicly to Teofila for publishing Skowronski's slanderous article, explaining the reason for this misunderstanding. Here is the translation of the apologetic

note from the Editor, placed in *Wiarus*, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1886:

To Mrs. Teofila Samolinska: the correspondence of Mr. Skowronski got into *Wiarus* at the time when, busy with the project of enlarging the format of the newspaper, I gave the management of the correspondence section to a man of strong literary skills and very knowledgeable about our society here in Chicago. When I noticed that my trust in him was betrayed, it was too late to take the pamphlet out from the paper; I managed only to get rid of the ending. - *Wiarus* made a mistake, but hopefully Dear Mrs. Samolinska will forgive.

In the letter below Teofila defended herself against harsh and mean accusation of “Americanization.” The letter is interesting because it shows her opinion concerning “Americanization” of Polish women and also about being a Polish woman.

She also gave a chilling account of the disharmony among the Poles in Chicago, lack of reliable leaders and selfishness of its members:

There is no cause or matter in our nation, that our leaders would not tear apart with claims and accusations; there are no statesmen that would get rewarded for their good efforts for the national cause; there are no privates (low-rank soldiers) that would not insist on wearing captain's ranks; and so, on each step we find selfishness and greed and people with a need to elevate themselves over others. A sad state of affairs we have, and if we don't fix it, our brotherly bonds will be completely broken.

Samolinska was also concerned with the low quality of articles published in the Polish press. She objected to the verbal attack on her husband and bringing private matters into the public forum.

### **Teofila Samolinska. “Inflated Heads of Chicago.” *Wiarus*. June 17, 1886**

Our Polish society have been long time prided itself for multitude of Big Heads, Big Critics and Big People with Big Eloquence. However, these heads, break and crack when faced with a tougher material, thus exposing their gaping void...

Every act, step or word of honest people or even a small act like wiping one's nose, will be for these people (Big Heads) treated as if seen through a falsifying spyglass of malice. That spyglass, used by these inflated heads is a tool to attack people and cross the line of what could possibly be tolerated.

The inflation of these void, fruitless, idle heads makes them look like bubbles, slowly swaying in the wind, rocked by the hands of children holding them on strings;

these glossy, colorful bubbles mean as much as the soap bubbles blown from straws.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> number of *Wiarus*, one of these inflated heads, not having a more useful activity to do, attempting at some literary prowess, in his article “She Has Not Been Americanized Yet,” attacked me shamelessly, ridiculing also my husband, leveling the whole 3-rd Day of May Celebration to a farce.

I don't know who is guilty here: is it Mr. Skowronski, unknown to me, a newcomer to this city, who is just ignorant and does not realize that he is ridiculing people that have been for twenty years working for Polonia and already have an established opinion and position among their compatriots?

I think Mr. Skowronski is now aware that he discredited himself, and won't be treated seriously by readers; no Compatriot of mine, will give him a right to give me advice on “how I should Americanize.”

I don't derive my ideas about duties of Poles from “uncooked cereal,”<sup>57</sup> Polish institutions (on which you talk with a hunger of a starving kitty), but from the school of life, from my disappointments, tears and pains of life in Exile, that I have been sharing with my brothers and sisters, who are dear to me.

If someone sets himself on criticizing, first maybe he or she should check if he is competent to do so; he should have learned first more about the subject of his critique.

Who is this Mr. Skowronski? - I ask in vain. In vain I am trying to convince myself that this must not be my fellow-countryman; although...-ski, -ski, -ski... Skowronski has a Polish sound to it. He must not be Polish... it is hard to believe, that someone could accuse me of not being “Polish,” because I did not dance on the 3-rd of May Celebration with “chaff,” as he described simple folk. I have danced, Mr.

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<sup>57</sup>Skowronski wrote that eating “uncooked cereal” during her school years caused her to give inflated speeches

Skowronski, with many people on various occasions and I have proven on many celebrations that I can have good time with the company of my brothers. And even if I chose not to dance on this one, not being completely healthy, still I was there to commemorate the important day in the history of our Homeland.

My conduct does not insult the good name of a Polish woman as you imply, and having a respectable position in Polish-American society, I won't allow for insults being thrown at my husband. It is strange that one of the goals of the Polish press here would be to dig into our private affairs.

If only our newspapers treated our national affairs with less disrespect!! Then maybe they would spend less attention on descriptions of gloves, hats and dances, and maybe instead of insanity that is ruling in our heads, we would be able to create a peaceful community, with love in our hearts.

I am not interested in dances; I am interested in our national causes and I have been defending them; a recent proof of it is my latest note published in the *Chicago Tribune*<sup>58</sup> where the American press collectively accused all Poles (of rioting), warning others against these "Polish enemies of social order." These accounts in the press are sad experiences and we need to be able to contemplate them, look back and draw conclusions about our Polish society here. We need to ask ourselves if our society is able to say that we don't have the disruptors of social order that bring quarrels, dissonance and disagreements?

There is no cause or matter in our nation, that our leaders would not tear apart with claims and accusations; there are no statesmen that would be rewarded for their efforts for the national cause; there are no privates (low-rank soldiers) that would not insist on

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<sup>58</sup>*Chicago Tribune*, June 1, 1886

wearing captain's ranks; and so, on each step we find selfishness and greed and people with a need to elevate themselves over others. A sad state of affairs we have, and if we don't fix it, our brotherly bonds will be completely broken.

We need heads in our nation, not inflated with pride, but strong with reason.

In our city of Chicago, the number of these inflated heads seems to be playing a big part, and it is a shame, because this does little for the common good. These inflated heads, brought to the front from the back alleys of our public life, with bared teeth like in a scull in Hamlet's hand, in every step only abuse the peace of mind of those who run away from them, disgusted by their displays.

To the row of these heads undoubtedly must belong Mr. Skowronski, who, not known to me in person, was probably convinced by someone to write this piece. There is no other explanation for me that would justify his obstinacy and hatred towards a person unknown to him. How does Mr. Skowronski know that I “scold my neighbors” without ever being in my neighborhood? Why is he so critical of my behavior that has always been completely civil and appropriate? How come he calls me an “outcast?”

Judging by Mr. Skowronski's writing I can only assume that his head is filled with sawdust, because only a person like that would advise his ladies-compatriots to “Americanize.” A Polish woman that behaves like a foreigner among her own people, stops immediately to be a Polish woman in our Polish society. Patriotism and an ability to sacrifice for the Homeland is what we value the most in a Polish woman.

Becoming a foreigner is not an honor for anyone, neither in our home country nor in the Exile. To accuse a Polish woman of “Americanization” would have the same result as if someone threw a shoe into another person's face.

In the meantime, I am not planning on betraying the principles of an honorable

woman and a Pole, and I forgive Mr. Skowronski, giving him an advice for the future not to barge in unknown to a person's private life on pages of newspapers. Please remember that the celebrations of national memorials have more importance in hearts of those who love Homeland, than dances have for inflated heads.

*Teofila Samolinska*

### **3. Letter Written for Celebration of the 1863 January Uprising**

The role of the press for the Polish community in Chicago was very important: to educate, to inform. For the Polish people who did not speak English the Polish press was essential in providing local news and information from Poland and Europe. According to Jan Kowalik:

the immigrant press of that period (...), in order to reach the farmer or the factory worker, had to lower the literary level and tailor the content to its readers' needs and likings. (...). They (newspapers) did more than their share to educate the often illiterate immigrant masses and promote their ethnic and religious self-consciousness.<sup>59</sup>

The Polish exiles in Chicago were fiercely dedicated to the cause of free Poland, but, despite this unifying cause, the Polish community was not harmonious. As we can see in the letter below, there were divisions, factions and animosities. The Poles succeeded in developing a self-sustaining community, but they often had arguments and different views on what path the Polonia should follow: all these disputes were carried out in the Polish press.

In this letter Samolinska gave a description of a very important event: Celebration of the 1863 Uprising among the secularist fraction of Polonia. The celebration turned into a quarrel about the quality of the Polish immigrant press. Teofila was appalled that such an important event was used for political purposes and that speakers treated it as an opportunity to attack the clergy and editors of Polish rival newspapers.

We especially see here Samolinska as a keen observer of people and a documentarian of events around her. She is quite funny in her letter below, ridiculing Dyniewicz's performance and taking delight in mocking his speech. We have a glimpse of Samolinska's writing as a performance, in which she used her acting skills, especially evident in passages where she got into a dialogue with her opponents and made fun of them.

At the time of Samolinska's letter the various Polish publications reflected the split between left-wing and anti-clerical front represented by *Gazeta Polska* (*Polish Gazette*), *Zgoda* (*Peace*) and *Narod Polski* (*Polish Nation*), and the very influential newspapers run by the clergy, such as *Kropidło* (*Sprinkler*), *Pielgrzym* (*Pilgrim*), *Gazeta Polska Katolicka* (*Polish Catholic Gazette*), *Wiara i Ojczyzna* (*Faith and Homeland*).

#### **Teofila Samolinska. “Letter Written to Commemorate the Anniversary of the 1863 Uprising.” *Przyjacieli Ludu*. January 24, 1881**

Quote from Zygmunt Krasinski<sup>60</sup>

*“On the fingertips of bloated pride  
each of you floats all over the pit  
of your own void – aspiring to be a God.*

<sup>59</sup>Jan Kowalik. *The Polish Press in America*. San Francisco: R and E Research, 1978, 3

<sup>60</sup>Zygmunt Krasinski (1812-1859) Polish poet of the Romanticism era

*And so, you dehumanize yourself.  
Because whoever in the world makes God of himself,  
on the return of his madness, slowly loses human traits.  
And he will be so inferior  
that, collapsing – he will become, possibly, a lowly fungus.”<sup>61</sup>*

Under still fresh impressions taken from participation in the 1864 Uprising Celebrations, I fulfill my duties as the correspondent for *Przyjaciel Ludu* and share with you details of the Ceremony. As I was leaving my house to join the commemoration, my heart was assured, that I was going to celebrate with my beloved brothers and sisters – all refugees in this land, an event that is one of the most important and the most painful event for us to remember; painful especially for those who due to this event lost their fathers, brothers and possessions. It is this exactly unfortunate event that made refugees and exiles out of all of us here in America. It is due to this Uprising we cry far away from our Homeland over the results of this catastrophe, in which the blood of martyrs and many victims contributed only to the squeezing of ropes spun around our fallen Homeland and to worsening of our situation. With hopeful feeling that we will honor this holy celebration with our tears and a sigh of hope, we carried in the snow and frosty weather to the altar, but, how bitterly we were disappointed! The temple of celebrations for this national event looked more like a country fair: business, trade, gossip, noise and whistling made this gathering look more like Targowica.<sup>62</sup>

Everything in the world, even very negative, can be by a certain group of cold egoists explained and even hidden under a veil of praise, but for a Polish heart, that beats only for the right, honorable cause, these activities, these efforts to confuse the minds of

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<sup>61</sup>Zygmunt Krasinski. "Psalm Zalu." *Poezje*, Lipsk, 1883, 48

<sup>62</sup>Targowica, symbol of betrayal, after Targowica Confederation, established by the Polish magnates in 1792 in Saint Petersburg with the backing of the Russian Empress Catherine II; the confederation opposed the Polish Constitution of 1791 and its text was written by a Russian general. In Polish historical and literary works Targowica became a symbol of scheming and betrayal.

simple people, are not only a buffoonery but a crime. During this important event, cursing at the Polish Catholic clergy by speakers is a transgression against the anniversary! It is also a transgression against the whole national cause! It is time to stop with these scandalous behaviors that corrupt Polish children. With what colors will Poland shine and present itself to the world outside if she abandons the Faith of her fathers? A nation without religion is like a cloudy day without the sun.

Why would an ardent liberal speaker burden the whole Clergy with responsibility for actions of an individual Priest? Who would the speaker (at the ceremony) anoint as the caretaker of the Holy Sacrament at an altar, if he calls for the total removal of “blasphemous” clergymen? And so, as a result of our so desired freedoms, we in America have strayed far away from the right path, if we are allowing for promotion of such shocking ideas. *Everything that is rotten on the outside, will end up destroyed, so are the laws of nature.*<sup>63</sup> Let the speaker take it as his motto.

Now we will give our readers a short summary of the Celebration, warning not to judge a group by mistakes of a few individuals, because in our community good Polish hearts prevail; hearts beating with the same pulse as the hearts of our forefathers. However, as it often happens, honest people are overwhelmed by a noisy party and prefer to stay silent in order to avoid confrontations.

The Celebration was started by Mr. Kucera who with short but appropriate for the occasion speech, thanked everyone for the well-attended assembly and introduced, as the President of *Gmina Polska*, Mr. Dankowski, one of the longest and most honorable members of this institution. Mr. Dankowski, greeted by us heartily, took his place after thanking everyone for entrusting him with the office and proposed the candidature of Mr.

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<sup>63</sup> Zygmunt Krasinski. “Psalm Zalu”, 76

Osach for the Secretary. Mr. Smietanka spoke next.

Mr. Smietanka's speech was filled with historical references to Jan III Sobieski,<sup>64</sup> Partitions of our Homeland, uprisings, Siberia,<sup>65</sup> chains, citadels and we have to admit that his speech, presented in a strong Mazowsze<sup>66</sup> dialect, would have been the best one, had it not been for his comments about the Clergy, that brought unwanted and unpleasant dissonance to our festivities.

There are among us people, who although not religious fanatics, would rather choose to be slapped on the cheek than have to listen to constant blasphemies against priests and religion; religion, in which they were brought up, in which their fathers died. So, if some people cannot partake in Christ's faith, they should at least spare their “wisdom” in front of Polish children, because this way they are harming our national cause. At the end of his speech the speaker added that he is not afraid of criticisms that he anticipates will appear in the Polish press. This we find superfluous, since the speaker cannot read well, so he should not fear a newspapers' wrath. His speech was followed by the choir of Polish youth singing “*Boze, Cos Polske.*”<sup>67</sup> Mr. Slominski spoke next.

Pointing to the Polish banner displayed over the speaker, Mr. Slominski in his speech went back in time to the days when the Polish youths, with weapons in hands and their banner “For Freedom of Poland,” marched to battles; Mr. Miskito, who with words filled with passion, reminded us of Kosciuszko<sup>68</sup> and moved the listeners with descriptions of misfortunes and flukes that happened to our Fatherland, despite the

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<sup>64</sup>Jan III Sobieski (1629-1696) king of Poland, famous for defeating the Ottoman Turks at Vienna in 1683

<sup>65</sup>Siberia, place of deportations for many Poles after the failures of Uprisings

<sup>66</sup>Mazowsze, region in northern Poland

<sup>67</sup>Boze, Cos Polske (God, Save Poland), Polish patriotic song

<sup>68</sup>Tadeusz Kosciuszko (1746 – 1817), Polish military leader who became a hero both in Poland and the United States

sacrifices and heroisms of heroes such as Kosciuszko, Pulaski<sup>69</sup> and others. Mr. Slominski's oration was characterized by patriotism and impartiality and easily touched listeners' hearts. After pointing out the need to establish the procedure of readings he encouraged the youths to commit themselves to education, especially to learning more about our literature and culture and finally, to strive to achieve desired by us all Unity.

A roar of applause rewarded Mr. Slominski for his speech, and we on our side, are joining with sincere thanks, also encouraging everyone to be guided by this spirit, and we are convinced that laurels that we hang on the monument of national glory, will blossom with eternal inflorescence. Mr. Odrowaz's reading followed. Next spoke Mr. Wilkorzewski. After stating that he did not prepare a long speech, he proved himself not only to be well prepared, but also armed in various “fiery” arguments. First Mr. Wilkorzewski condemned all Polish newspapers in America, without an exemption, declaring all of them of no value. Then he came up with a project of creating a new newspaper designed to unite all Polonia. These declarations at this Celebration we also consider inappropriate, knowing that the editors of all the main Polonian newspapers were not present and could not defend themselves. We think that a creation of a new newspaper here is futile: not so many newspapers are able to survive. Adding one more could be described as adding a new child to an already poor and large family.

Even if we had more than one publication, still it won't be able to address the arrogant proletariat, that after dressing in fancy hats, gloves and canes, shuts down every reasonable progressive idea! Adding one more publication will not stop the custom of sending poor articles to newspapers; articles, that are barely acceptable.

As long as our publications shy from adopting practices that would make the

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<sup>69</sup>Kazimierz Pulaski (1745-1779), Polish nobleman and military commander

articles decent and of high quality, there won't be any peace in the American Polonia. The current system allows for every simpleton to send their opinion to any publication to be published – a practice that contributed to real problems in our emigre press. In a situation when someone actually suggests an idea that is reasonable or introduces a reform in a matter that needs improvement, more than one hundred “wise guys” pop up all of the sudden and ridicule and destroy that idea. Mr. Wilkorzewski says even that these publications, during their existence here, did not teach us anything that we would not have already known.

We won't deny that this is the truth. The problem is, however, that nothing will guarantee that this new newspaper will have a beneficial effect, since among Polonia we don't know about a new, competent writer who would carry the task of teaching, moralizing and enlightening our community. Mr. Wilkorzewski calls to create a newspaper for which writers like Giller or Kraszewski would write. My God! How cynical these words sound! Even a nice layout and design are not a guarantee that their work will be published in an appropriate place. We need to improve the state of our press before we can invite writers of that caliber to participate in our work. We had great writers like Horacyń, Wisniowski, Sobolewski,<sup>70</sup> Bednawski, Kalusowski, whose contributions were beneficial for any newspaper, but we did not seek their participation. All these gentlemen helped in the beginning of *Gazeta Polska*, why are they not involved anymore? *Przyjaciel Ludu*, from all main four Polish periodicals, has the weakest support when it comes to correspondence. The high status of that newspaper has been achieved by wise decisions of Mr. Wendzinski, its editor. No one should condemn this newspaper considering what it went through. It is a paper with a mission, and serves our community,

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<sup>70</sup> Paweł Sobolewski, Polish-American writer, author of *Poets and Poetry of Poland*

not individual ambitions of editors or writers.

We learn now that someone thinks of establishing a new newspaper “on their own” (and maybe in their own interest – Ed.). Mr. Wilkorzewski, at the end of his speech, started evaluating our theatrical performances, and defended the critical reviews posted in *Przyjaciel Ludu*. Everything was going well in his speech, until we heard a scream coming from the throat of Mr. Dyniewicz, who with this noise disturbed the harmony of our gathering. Before the last accords of the hymn “Jeszcze Polska nie Zginela” (“Poland Has Not Perished Yet”) sounded, at the west side of the hall, by the entry door something moaned; people started to whisper and laugh, and, like a phoenix, but maybe in a shape of a bat, appeared our last speaker, Mr. Dyniewicz. Somehow not having a courage to make it to the podium, he stopped in the middle of the hall and, flapping his arms and with a voice worth Zeus, thundered the following oration:

*Brothers compatriots!* Although my legs are shaking, let me say a couple of words (here he wiped his forehead). Mr. Wilkorzewski says that the newspapers are like beehives filled with quarreling bees and that we need one more newspaper that would unite and appease all of us. But I am saying, we should have only one, so maybe we would be spared from reading some articles in *Przyjaciel Ludu* – clapping, uproar and laughing. You see, my dear Brothers and Sisters, what we have to deal with here, when we are being smeared in *Przyjaciel Ludu* – in an article that has been published in press in Chicago and in Europe - can we allow for that? I am protesting against *Przyjaciel Ludu* and all of you, Brothers, should support me against that injustice that happened towards me, the President (of *Gazeta Polska*).

We looked – was there a new Christ visiting us here with a whip in his hand ready to banish tradesmen and vendors from this temple of our Celebration? No.

After this performance of Mr. Dyniewicz, we left the commemoration with a heavy heart. We feel that that Celebration was supposed to be to commemorate the memory of all who died for the Homeland, but it wasn't. How can we achieve a serious mood with such spectacles? Instead of a solemn, national Celebration filled with a patriotic spirit, we saw a spirit of harlequins.

*T. Samolinska*

#### 4. Letter - Response to Criticism from Nationalists

The letter below continues the discussion on the split existing in Chicago's Polonia between the clerical and the secular camps. The division existed from the beginning of Polish settlement in Chicago, but it intensified in 1870's and 1880's. In the beginning, there were no Polish churches. The Polish immigrants frequented German or Irish observances, but hoped for their own national churches and parishes. The Polish Resurrectionist order<sup>71</sup> (*Zmartwychwstancy*) contributed to the creation of first churches in Chicago (St. Stanislaw Kostka, Sw. Trojcy) and many parishes, parochial schools and organizations. With the arrival of Polish clergymen and their activism, the Church gained a lot of control over the Chicago's Polonia. Priests, for example, had “free admittance to all meetings of the church societies, were able to approve all candidates for office and membership in these organizations and to approve all decisions.”<sup>72</sup> After they organized the Polish Roman Catholic Union (PRCU) in 1873, the protest against the meddling of religious leaders exemplified itself in the creation of the secular PNA.

The two ideas of Polonia appeared, two ways of existence evolved: one a Secularist, where the main group PNA fought for hearts and minds of Poles with their patriotic, secular ideas, and a second one, a Religionist, where priests like Wincent Barzynski<sup>73</sup> and PRCU saw the combination of Catholicism and patriotism as the only way for Poles to exist and as “the essence of Polishness.” Practically all relations within the Chicago Polish community have been defined by that fight between the nationalist movement that believed in a free and independent Poland, but did not see Poland as necessarily Catholic or under the rule of religious leaders, and the very powerful and organized Catholic front. The animosity between the two groups was so strong that certain national events they chose to celebrate on different days, so they would not mix with each other.<sup>74</sup>

Samolinska's political position was complicated: on one hand, she criticized Priests like Barzynski or Zalewski, on the other hand she favored religiosity as necessary for preservation of Polish culture, and she admitted non-Catholics to her organization.

In the below letter Samolinska is criticizing the writers of the secular camp for attacks on her in the

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<sup>71</sup> Resurrectionists, abbreviation for The Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

<sup>72</sup> Helena Znaniecka-Lopata. *Polish Americans*. New Brunswick 1994, 60

<sup>73</sup> Wincent Barzynski (1838-1899), the most influential Polish clergyman in America in years 1870-1899, a Resurrectionist, established St. Stanislaw Kostka Church, first Polish Church in Chicago

<sup>74</sup> Anna Jaroszynska-Kirchmann. “Memories of Greatness: American Polonia and the Rituals of National Commemorations before World War I.” *Polish American Studies*. Spring 2017, 27

press. After her critical and almost satirical description of speakers at the 1863 Uprising celebration, and after she mocked Dyniewicz' speech,<sup>75</sup> the offended men responded with criticism of her and her writing. In the below letter Samolinska answered to her accusers.

This letter is important because we can see Samolinska's continuing her discussion about the weaknesses in Polish community. She is vehement in her critiques and takes a particular delight in making fun of the men who offended her.

**Teofila Samolinska. "Open Letter to Nationalists." *Przyjaciół Ludu*. February 24,  
1881**

This is my open letter to Polish "nationalists," a circle of twelve "wolves" in a response to their open letter to *Przyjaciół Ludu*; to be specific it is my response to Mr. Kolakowski, Mr. Slominski, Mr. Dorszynski, Mr. Stabiecki, Mr. Osucha, Mr. Ostrowaz, Mr. Lebkowski, Mr. F. Sawadzki, Mr. Koziemski, Wilkoszewski, Rewerski<sup>76</sup> and Mr. Kucera, the President of *Gmina Polska*.

I read your crude protests against a woman-writer that is truly bringing you no pride in the Polish Alliance in America and I am responding to it here. Your protest opened ajar the gates of your vanity, and let the world see the insides plagued by gangrene and festering wounds of your deceitful acts of posing for patriotism and greatness. You are displaying and promoting a slogan of "brotherly love" and "forgiveness of trespasses," but your cowardly, choleric attack puts you in contradiction to the very ideals you are claiming to stand for.

Poland would have been lost, if her fate were in hands of people like you! Not for you to be writing about wiping tears of widows and orphans! Truly, I don't like intrigues

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<sup>75</sup> *Przyjaciół Ludu*, 24 January, 1881

<sup>76</sup> Men from Mr. Dyniewicz circle and from *Gmina Polska*

and I don't collect signatures to place under my work, to show support.<sup>77</sup> This situation I am in makes me a lamb standing against twelve wolves. The number even resembles the Apostles with Judas with a sack of his money. If you are so excellent, maybe you should devote your attentions and strengths to write a protest against Moscow, Germans or Austria; maybe these powers would tremble and flee in sight of such formidable foes? Our Poland, our old mother, that has been imprisoned for one hundred years would have been freed already from shackles by her American sons, if you put your efforts to it. Finally, we would break the constricting ropes of empires! We would be able then to send to citadels in Tobolsk and Roman catacombs the poor correspondents of Polish newspapers, whenever they produce a description of a national celebration that does not fit our vanity and does not present our “nationalists” in a glorious light. Would you, twelve barbarians, like to impress the world and bring the twenty thousand population of Poles in Chicago to your feet? If I cared for the number of signatures under my writings, I would have collected many more than twelve. I don't see it a reward for work of my pen to be paying attention to how many people sign under or agree with my opinions – I don't want to depend on someone's help or approval. If a person who makes a living by publishing in publications and newspapers cares about attaching a litany of signatures, any literary critic would consider him or her a cheap writer. I don't need a fist or an intrigue to accompany my writing. I am a Pole, although I have lived in America, but with principles learned in Poland, learned as a child from my mother – I don't lie in my writing. I am sure that the readers don't doubt the veracity of my words. What would be my motive for creating lies and false accounts and for confusing the public opinion?

You accuse me of lack of patriotism and against that unsubstantiated claim I

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<sup>77</sup> Dyniewicz's letter against Samolinska was signed by the men 12 she addressed in the beginning of her letter

protest. If only leaders of the Alliance, instead of following me and getting angry over my writings, could postpone their judgement and speak to our brothers and sisters in a “moderate tone,” I would not have ignored their responsible comments. I won't allow anyone to pin me to the ground with a brutal fist!

And a couple of words that you wrote in defense of religious principles in our times of wide-spread decadence, won't diminish in the eyes of the public harshness of your response. America, known for its beautiful institutions, is also a Paris of immorality and indecency. It is time to point to the young generation the necessity of cherishing teachings of a priest. I am far from taking a “high moral ground” or being in “high national spirits,” because my own position already allows me to preach what every Pole in the depth of his or her heart feels. You seek that “high moral ground” in a way that shows that you will never reach it!

Who will attest to the “moral superiority” of all twelve accusers? Maybe the President of the Alliance? No superiority here; you offended a woman-writer for being a harsh critic – it is an insult for me the more hurting that came from people that not long time ago greeted me with flowers on stage. I admit that I was very critical and harsh in my previous correspondence, and unforgiving in my descriptions of your attitude at the celebration,<sup>78</sup> but that should not have been a green light to call me publicly a half-wit. If I sinned with my writing, so did you, especially that not long ago, you were awarding that half-wit with a golden cross with symbols of *Gmina Polska* and paid respects and gave gifts publicly on a theater's stage; gifts signed by many donors – these gifts don't bring me joy any more when I look at them... I think that they came from Pharisees (I don't include here the *Kosciuszko Society* Award, that I will cherish) because these times remind me

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<sup>78</sup>Samolinska is referring to her previous letter where she was describing the celebration of the 1863 Uprising, in *Przyjaciel Ludu*, 24Jan 1881

now about your falseness. In your hatred, you denied me my rights, that every woman, even the simplest one needs for living.

Writing this, I want to let you know, that I won't show any grudge against you publicly and I am not going to avoid you at public gatherings; I am not afraid to be asked to leave, and will be exercising the rights under the Constitution of the United States available to me, a woman, to attend and to participate.

Why don't I see the most important person of the celebration, Mr. Danikowski, among the accusers? Was he not bribed to join you? You are upset that the place for the celebration I called "country fair hut" - I was inclined to use these words after all comments regarding new newspapers establishments. The speakers, severely criticizing *Przyjaciel Ludu's* articles and finally, the speaker Dyniewicz's unacceptable, undiplomatic speech delivered from the center of the room against all Clergy and Catholic fanaticism deserved to be criticized.

Also, the celebration's place was very poorly chosen. It took place in the basement of a large building, in a small room; not on the first floor as it should have. We were constantly disturbed by the sound of glasses from the adjacent inn – and finally, a stinking odor from the numerous cigars and smoking pipes.

How is it that our nationalists, who want to lead in "educating," are deaf to the health of women, who need to suffer in rooms filled with smoke to the point that you can't even recognize the faces of people around you? When women faint from lack of fresh air, then the windows are being opened, but the cold air makes many of us catch a cold.

I read in this behavior an example of how conceited, vain and uncaring for others you were. I don't belong to the category of false sycophants, who adulate the unworthy of adulation and disparage against those who actually should be praised, but I call to all

readers to the description of the celebration done by its secretary that was published a week later.

A woman, who sits quietly at a celebration, without a grudge in her heart, did not deserve the censure and critical allusions to her articles that were coming from the mouths of some speakers. You should not accuse publicly anyone of dirty work, because, really, my work is not the “dirtiest” in Polonia.

Long live the Republic, long live Poland!

*T. Samolinska*

### **5. Anti-Defamation Letter: Defending Polonia in the American Press**

Year 1886 was a tumultuous one in the history of labor strikes in the United States: numerous strikes and marches of workers that walked off their jobs and marched through cities calling on other workers to join them. Polish workers participated in many of them. For example, on May 1<sup>st</sup> 1886 about two thousand Polish workers walked off their jobs and gathered at St. Stanislaus Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with anger denouncing the ten-hour workday.

The article below is Samolinska's response to the article published in *The Chicago Tribune* on May 6<sup>th</sup> 1886 entitled "Riotous Scenes" that described riots in the city, in which Poles were participants. The newspaper condemned the rioting. Samolinska sees its descriptions of people throwing bricks or sticks as damaging to the image of Poles in the United States and she is attempting to put these riots in a bigger perspective – only a few Poles are "bad," do not judge all by mistakes of few, do not use "collective responsibility." Samolinska's defense of Polish honor did not go unnoticed by other Polish newspapers, and her response was reprinted in *Wiarus* with a title "Praise to the Noble Pole, that Defends the Honor of Polish Name."

In the letter below we see that Samolinska did not approve of the riots and in general had anti-communist, anti-radical views.

#### **Teofila Samolinska. "Letter to the Editor." *Chicago Tribune*. June 10, 1886**

Not very long time ago, many Poles that live in this city and outside of Chicago, read your opinion expressed on pages of your newspaper about the Polish community with delight. This article was reprinted in many Polish publications, not only here, but also in our "old country." Polish intelligentsia expressed a strong interest in the article and discussed it in the press.

So, it is with surprise that a couple of weeks later in your newspaper I find an article, republished from a New York publication, that irritated the feelings of many Polish patriots. In response to this article I would like to contest its findings and assure that Polish laborers have been always welcomed due to their friendly character and hard

work. Polish immigrants are not a burden for the American taxpayer because they did not arrive into this country to be beggars or to be a deadwood for the government; oh, no, they brought with them a pair of healthy arms, to use them to work for daily bread. If a Polish laborer gets together with some instigators, it must be from ignorance. The Polish laborer may not be able to recognize if the cause is right, and there is often no one to explain the danger and falseness of some causes. Yes, the Polish laborer usually respects his employers, but, no nation is free from corrupt forces; so is the Polish nation. The whole community cannot be blamed for transgressions of a few knaves, even if they paraded with red flags. The whole Polish enclave should not be responsible for actions of a few outcasts that participated in these strikes. The Poles were accused of participating in turmoils on 1<sup>st</sup> and Centre Ave., based on the fact that many Poles live in close proximity to these streets. But you have Czechs living there as well, why are only Poles blamed? We don't like when newspapers make malignant comments about us, because we are trying to be a society of calm, decent citizens. Even our strongest opponents in this country have not accused us of anarchism or communism, so I am hoping that someone gets to the truth about these events before we will be blamed. I am hoping that the American press will do the justice to the Polish community and will not try to tarnish our good name with unfounded accusations.

*Teofila Samolinska*

## 6. Letter – Response to Wladyslaw Dyniewicz

Wladyslaw Dyniewicz was one of main critics of Teofila's commentaries in Polonian newspapers. And what a formidable adversary he was! A Tolstoy-like personality, Dyniewicz was an immigrant from Poland who thanks to his work and resourcefulness established the first Polish newspaper in Chicago, *Gazeta Polska (The Polish Gazette)*. His house, built on 30 acres of land that he purchased, was filled with his eight children, family and acquaintances and also hosted a publishing room, bookstore and a dining hall frequented by the Parishioners of the Church located across the street. Throughout his life he printed Polish books and publications, making Polish literature available to his compatriots in Exile. His newspaper was called “Dyniewiczowka,” because it was known to be a platform where he liked to express his strong views and opinions.

Dyniewicz and Samolinska had known each other from the beginning of her arrival in Chicago. Jan, Teofila's husband, worked for McCormick where Dyniewicz was also employed. It is curious that Dyniewicz became such a strong critic of Teofila's work and contributions, especially that they both were members of PNA, *Gmina Polska* and were both secularists, taking the secularists' and nationalist side in the bitter quarrel that raged in Polonia in the 80's between two groups: the secular PNA and the religious Polish Roman Catholic Union. We learn from her letter that arguments between these two immigrant groups were accompanied by arguments between members of one group as well. The letter allows us to see the problems and internal discord within the secularists.

We know that Dyniewicz read everything that was published in the Polish immigrant press; he knew Teofila and her writing very well. It is possible that Teofila's literary, lofty style, often garnished with embellishments and also her unapologetic tone in voicing her opinions, annoyed Dyniewicz who saw it as a publicity-seeking behavior, and also a feistiness not expected from a woman.

After Samolinska wrote her letter about the importance of the Polish theater,<sup>79</sup> Dyniewicz in his newspaper criticized her article – her letter below is Samolinska's response to his comments. This exchange is important because it reflects on divisions between two newspapers and their editors (Wendzinski<sup>80</sup> and Dyniewicz). In this exchange we can see how deeply Samolinska was involved in every day political affairs of the Polish community.

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<sup>79</sup> *Przyjaciel Ludu*, November 5, 1880

<sup>80</sup> Ignacy Wendzinski, called “father of Polish journalism,” editor of *Polish Eagle*, played in the theater of *Gmina Polska*

**Teofila Samolinska. "Exhaustive Treatises." *Przyjaciół Ludu*. 9 December, 1880**

Dear Editor!

Please explain to us, kindly, the meaning of the title above; the words that are taken from Dyniewicz's newspaper, that was dropped by our kitchen door today. We stopped subscribing long ago to this publication, because we consider the editor a cheeky moneylender just like Shylock.<sup>81</sup> Only a Shylock would send us bills for subscription to a newspaper that we used to contribute our material without even asking for any compensation!

However, we would have easily forgotten about his newspaper, if it were for his constant teasing us that we have been trying to ignore, knowing that many decent people have been objects of his mischievous attacks. Thanks to Providence, we don't need to support ourselves with our pen, so whenever Mr. Dyniewicz sees our articles published, let him be assured, that we don't do it for promotion of our "brand" or to make a name for ourselves but to discover the truth!

In our Polonian newspapers the literary submissions are not subjected to anyone's control or correction! These submissions could never be corrected by someone like Mr. Dyniewicz, who should first hit himself in his very limited head, before he dared to criticize and correct literary work of people whose writings in the past have been edited and examined by recognized and established literary critics.

Persons of Mr. Dyniewicz caliber cannot imagine and accept that someone from his compatriots in America dared to be more educated and talented than he is.

He keeps losing sleep over the fact that our compatriots from outside of Chicago have a positive opinion of our work. It is a thorn in his back that he cannot destroy our

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<sup>81</sup>Shylock, a cunning character from the Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*

reputation? – he keeps up his attacks in his newspaper, as the readers are aware, seeking revenge, we suppose, not even knowing by himself what for.

We are not going to be noble towards someone boorish and rude, because our nobility would never be understood or appreciated!

O! Wise man! Philosopher! On which planet did Muses give birth to you? You are forcing yourself to use expressions that neither you nor your colleagues understand! – Do you know what an “exhaustive treatise” is? And do you want to teach people rules of poetry and writing?

Who criticized you in respect to the Theater? You are defending your opinions, but be aware that not all viewers may share your sentiments. You were not personally criticized so you should not be responding in that matter.

In our critique, we were not addressing anyone particularly, we were not naming and blaming specific people: we only said what the actors should know but maybe not want to.

Also, why is Mr. Dyniewicz assuming that our article is addressing him directly? Is he our friend, and knowing us, could attest to our character?

“You will know them by their fruit”- this maxim we like to use to evaluate our relations here in Chicago and with this motto open eyes of our accusers. Then Mr. Dyniewicz says that there aren't many of us here and that one doesn't know the other person's vices. This we need to comment on: Mr. Dyniewicz looks down at the couple-thousand Poles in Chicago stating that this is just a few!

When it comes to the knowledge of other people's vices, Mr. Dyniewicz seems to be keenly aware of them. We read in his paper many times chicanes that “this editor has a squint, or is infirm,” or that has a “big nose” and other epithets, that should've never been

used publicly in reference to people that we know or don't know. Anyone, who knows these gentlemen (editors) personally, would most likely assure that these men, described so disgracefully, didn't deserve his slanders.

Mr. Dyniewicz accuses me of being mean in describing ladies' legs "crooked" - please note that we don't know anyone who got offended. It wasn't a mischievous intent on our part, as we did not name anyone by first or last name. We wanted to point out, that when you are staging a ballet piece, you need to pay attention to esthetics and use for ballerinas' parts actresses that...look like ballerinas.

When he calls us a "wasp," we are not offended by it; we see it as a complement. Then Mr. Dyniewicz writes that it would be better if articles in Polish newspapers were written incognito and not signed by names. Why, we ask him? Does he consider our last name so hateful, that he sees it like a "wasp's needle"? "What is in a name" – asks Juliet in Shakespeare's play. Other readers are not against names under articles, why is Mr. Dyniewicz against them?

Let's look at Mr. Dyniewicz through a magnifying glass! Who will count tears and curses thrown at him from so many disappointed families? Who got thrown out from so many societies? Who was helping so much for the Polish Theater, Wendzinski or Dyniewicz? And which newspaper is working hard now to help the Polish scene?

And now is enough,

*T. Samolinska*

## 7. Letter – Speech at the Funeral of J.I. Kraszewski

J.I. Kraszewski, who lived in exile in Germany, was a spiritual father for Polonia in America. He was one of the most prolific Polish novelists. He produced more than six hundred volumes of literary works (novels, short stories, dramas, poetry), over one thousand six hundred paintings and drawings, and about forty thousand letters. That's not counting his journalistic works, which can amount to at least one hundred additional volumes. But it is not the quantity but the content of his work that made him so popular in Polish circles in Chicago's Polonia: Kraszewski was a realistic writer creating historical novels that glorified the history of Poland, gave his readers, especially Polish nationalists, hope and lift their spirits.

In her speech Samolinska argued again for her idea of importance of unity in Chicago's Polonia. We see that she admired J.I Kraszewski for his devotion to the cause of Polish independence and for maintaining contact with the Polish Exiles in Chicago.

We also see that Teofila considered contributions of writers very important for the Polish independence movement. She insisted here that the Polish writers, painters, artists keep Poland alive through their talents and artistic creation, and that their contributions were vital for preserving Polish culture as efforts of politicians to bring Poland back on the map.

### **Teofila Samolinska. “Speech of T. Samolinska, Presented at the Funeral of J.I.**

#### **Kraszewski Presented on 18<sup>th</sup> of June in Chicago.” *Wiarus*, July 13, 1887**

*“Lift ----not the body!---  
Lift—ah!the spirit!”*

Last words of J. I. Kraszewski

*“Poor exiles from Poland”*

When a devastating fire scorches the roof over our heads, when a powerful flood splits in half one of our father's homes, when an angry hurricane destroys all of our field equipment, then we stand with torn hopes and in despair, and raising our eyes filled with tears we cry to heavens:

*“God, why did you punish us?”*

However, often some time passes, our wounds heal and pains are forgotten, and we wake up from a painful lethargy and we try, with attentive work, to rebuild what we lost in our sad catastrophe... but we still will not feel satisfied.

And feeling the vanity of all that's worldly, even when surrounded by family and living in affluence and feeling happy, still one feels that something is lacking.

*“The happy man needs still something more,  
only then he blissfully feels – when he sighs to heaven!”*

said Malczewski,<sup>82</sup> maybe not being completely convinced. If we in our happiness turn our thoughts to heaven, how much more sincere and ardent our prayers to the Creator when we are in a worry! So are the tears and despair and complains of very heart-broken family, that over a coffin of a beloved father or mother or sibling shows their bitter laments and displays bitter sorrows.

Material possessions, money, all can be returned, but when an unforgiving death took from our embrace a beloved person, that we loved over anything in our lives, in who we placed our hopes, we know, that we lost her or him forever, we know that they will not be returned!!

Departure from this world of a member of private family causes grief and sadness of a small circle of family and friends – but how different in scope is a loss, that the whole country feels, in death of one of best of our country's caretakers! When one of the brightest stars in the national firmament expires, when one of the best guardians of the oppressed peoples dies, what then?

Poland now does not exist on a map, she exists only through talents and genius of

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<sup>82</sup>Jacek Malczewski (1854-1928), one of most revered Polish painters

Polish people; if we knock out from her hand (Poland) a pen, a palette, a chisel, she will be a moaning Prometheus chained to the rock...

Therefore, when the Creator called to Him the late Mr. Kraszewski, and the news about the death of this Beloved Father spread in the world, we felt that the heart of the nation ceased to beat for a while...

Poland's dispersed children gathered together and went to the cemetery, so they could attest that Poland is mightier when she is in pain. The sorrow brought in hearts of Poles the gold, that shines from underneath the cold shell. The shiny, golden hearts protested against the false idea that the Poles cannot be united. It is over the coffin of Kraszewski that Poland, in unity, stood in tears.

For the funeral many people arrived, people from far away, from various parts and from various backgrounds: Catholics, Jews, serfs and noblemen; they all participated in thousands at the funeral that was led by the glorious multitudes of Polish clergy; the Rabbis arrived and the representatives of the press from Cracow, and uncountable wreaths from all districts of Poland, from all brothers and sisters exiled in parts of the world, from France, England, Switzerland, Italy and South America: they all were a proof that sooner will the Atlantic touch the Tatra<sup>83</sup> than our nation would forget Kraszewski's name.

Not only in Poland, but also in the foreign press, he was acknowledged; he was compared to Lope de Vega<sup>84</sup>, Dumas Pere<sup>85</sup>, and even, when it comes to poetry, to Victor Hugo.

Enormous work and virtue of the noble heart of Mr. Kraszewski, our Nestor of Polish literature made him immortal even when he still was alive. Proof of that was his

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<sup>83</sup> Tatra, mountains in Poland

<sup>84</sup> Lope de Vega (1562-1635), outstanding dramatist of the Spanish Golden Age

<sup>85</sup> Alexander Dumas pere (father) (1802-1870), French writer

50th Anniversary of literary work. Collections of his works that he donated in his will to the National Museum in Rappersville will be at his Mausoleum for immortal Glory. His fame is shining on all of Poland. We are proud of him in the world, in our country and abroad – Unfortunately! Kraszewski is gone!

With this chaplet of our bitter tears, Poland and the Polish Exiles placed the last garland of flowers on the fresh grave of our beloved statesman...With this chaplet of tears we, Polish women in America, bid goodbye to the Person, who “taught us to think and read in Polish.” To the Dear Teacher! O! Our country will not have a more hurting loss! We know that the Polish daily newspapers and journals will not bring us his fresh correspondence, that we liked to read so much. The bookstores will not publish any new novels by him. The communication channel that we had, thanks to him, between Poland and our Exile here has been broken. Will we have now a spiritual stagnation?

He is not coming back. Proof of it is the empty chair in the Dresden villa, from which he was taken to prison; the chair that he was not allowed to come back to, will be empty. Proofs of it are opened, unfinished books, papers waiting for his signatures, and an unwound clock; finally, his pen, that slipped from his finger, without the spirit, just like its master. He went to finish his work for his Poland in heaven... His magnificent spirit was not prepared for the powers of the body.

Our Beloved Writer! Send us from heaven, from time to time, caring caretakers for our Homeland. Let them help us fulfill the last wish of our Master, that we, united with one thought of Community, Love and Brotherhood, clasp our hands and form a brotherly circle, and “lift our spirits”, because only in fulfillment of this wish of that poet-writer lies a lever that will lift us nationally; in it lies the Resurrection of Poland.

Brothers! “Lift your spirits”! Let the fierce competitions between our fractions be

replaced by Community and Brotherhood.

The late Ignacy Kraszewski died as an honorary member of *Gmina Polska* in Chicago. It was a small but distinguished honor that our community bestowed on him during his 50th Anniversary, sending him at the same time a silver goblet as an anniversary gift from his Brothers in America. It was all that our humble and poor hearts could afford at that time in Exile. *Gmina Polska* also celebrated beautifully his anniversary here. The honorable man received all these gifts with characteristic modesty. He was also a member of the Polish Society in California and many other societies in other towns where Poles established their communities.

He corresponded with prominent men of our intelligentsia in America and followed the Polish life in Exile very closely. He was the soul of the whole dispersed Polish nation. He readily gave information, and replied promptly on letters. Even for a small thing, he thanked kindly and returned favors. He did not offend anyone.

Among others, I also was privileged to receive a couple of his letters, two of them included his signed photographs, also his illustrated edition of the *Old Fable (Stara Basn)* – this signed work was a repay for me sending him to Dresden an Anthology of works of the late Pawel Sobolewski.<sup>86</sup>

For my plain poem that I sent to him for his Jubilee, I received a letter from him that is very dear to me, and which I will allow myself to quote here – because this letter is an example of his writing that connected, like with a golden thread, all our brothers everywhere.

The letter of Kraszewski:

Dresden, 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 1879

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<sup>86</sup>Pawel Sobolewski (1816-1884), Polish translator, writer and activist of Polonia in the USA, Samolinska praised his work

Dear Madam,

With a big emotion, I opened your letter with a pretty poem "From Polish Women in America." Although I am not sure if this letter will find you, I want to send my thanks to Chicago either way. You described the goals for the future beautifully! "Pen is the sword of nations" and together today's duties we fulfill with our pens. Yes, this is our only weapon and we believe that with it we successfully will fight and win. Please receive from me, for this gift for the Album of Wielkopolanek, a heartfelt "thanks." I wish you, over there in a foreign land, a cloudless sky over your head,

Grateful Servant

*J.I Kraszewski*

I think that no one is surprised that I value this, and other letters, so much. They are an evidence for the gentle heart of this great man, who loved everyone evenly. He devoted himself to humanity, encouraging even the meekest talents to work, to activity. His name will never expire from the memory of the nation that he devoted his life and work to. Although he left for us and posterity much that we can use to live on and nourish our spirits, the awareness of his work and activity for Poland is gone.

So now we can only repeat for ourselves, that the pain, that after his death grasped our nation, is the most beautiful wreath for his glory!

*Teofila Samolinska*

### **8. Letter - Response to Criticism by Father Zalewski**

The note below is a proof of the tension between Samolinska and the top religious leaders in Chicago's Polonia. We see here that she was called a “pagan actress” and her poetry dismissed unless it pertained to religious topics. Samolinska was not only arguing with her fellow secularists, but also battled the leaders on the religious front. Although she openly never dismissed the importance of Faith and religion for the Poles, she was under an attack from individual members of the Catholic Clergy (Barzynski, Zalewski) for being too independent.

#### **Teofila Samolinska. “Letter.” *Wiarus*. March 8, 1888**

Priest Zalewski, in whose hands Father Barzynski entrusted all souls of unfaithful “Bambrow,”<sup>87</sup> unnecessarily started paying attention to the soul of Mrs. Teofila Samolinska. He already started scolding her from his pulpit, condemning her poem “To the Glory of America.” He suggested, that she should write poems that glorify God instead. If Priest Zalewski didn't just get off the boat, he would have not uttered such a nonsensical accusation – he would have known that Mrs. Teofila has written in the past many hymns glorifying God, Eucharist and Faith. These poems, that were printed in the press, were so beautiful that Priest Zalewski could never write a similar one.

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<sup>87</sup>Bambrow, a derogatory and funny name for Poles, that Samolinska likes to use, derived possibly from a village of Bambrow

## **Theme: Feminism.**

### **Notes in the Press Regarding the Creation of The Central Association of Polish Women (CAPW)**

Samolinska's creation of her society in 1887 at the age of 41 began a new phase in her life and activism. She became involved in her group's meetings, discussions and also in theater performances. Her society was revolutionary in the Polish community; it was the first woman-only, secular Polish women's organization in the USA. All previous Polish women's societies were sponsored by priests and affiliated with parishes, churches or other organizations and men oversaw them. We see from her correspondence that she was done with the dominance of men in Polish secular and religious organizations. After years of membership and service in PNA, Sokoly and *Gmina Polska*, she was never offered a leading, managerial position. It is no wonder that by the late 1880's she decided to form her own organization, independent, and free from interference from men and other parties.

CAPW was established on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1887 at the residence of Teofila Samolinska, with 128 members. The women voted for Teofila to be the President. The first meeting took place on 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1887 at 3 p.m. at the Hall on the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Center Avenue in Chicago. The announcement about the establishment of the society was printed in *Zgoda* and *Przyjaciel Ludu*. From the very beginning the group was successful: already in September of 1887, after 6 months of existence a note in *Zgoda* (20 September 1887) informed that due to the growing numbers of members, the meetings have been moved to the Vorwaerts Hall (at 12<sup>th</sup> and Halsted Streets). The meetings took place on every second Sunday of each month at 3 p.m. (in later years on the first Sunday). In September of 1887 CAPW also announced that it created an "Amateur Theater" that will start presenting plays and performances. The first performance was on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> of October: a play by Polish-American writer Joseph Conrad (Jozef Korzeniowski) *Wasy i Peruka* (*Mustaches and Wigs*). By 1899 her organization reached around 200 members. It had a feminist platform (women in charge), educational (speeches, lectures), cultural (theater performances) and financial (insurance offered starting in 1902).

Samolinska hoped that her organization will be for the Polish women what the Polish National Alliance has been for the Polish men. She hoped that more and more women will join and her organization will possibly grow nationally. Samolinska wanted CAPW to have its own newspaper, but later in 1888 she announced that she will use *Zgoda* as the newspaper to publish CAPW-related articles and notes.

In 1892, after five years of existence, her group also started offering life and "sick" insurance. In 1900 every member had to pay 10 cents a month for life insurance and 35 cents for "sick" insurance. In case of a member's death, the family was paid \$300 and costs of funeral carriages were covered. Between the years 1893-99 her society paid

\$1,780.00 to sick members or to families of deceased members.<sup>88</sup> It was the only Polish women group that offered insurance at that time.

Year 1898 was a tough year for CAPW and for Samolinska: a competitive society *Zwiazek Polek w Ameryce* (*Polish Women Alliance in America*) has been established on May 22, 1898 by a thirty-three years old seamstress only seven years in America, Stefania Chmielinska. Samolinska and Chmielinska were both members of *the Falcons*, but most likely did not get along: instead of participating in Samolinska's organization, a practical and entrepreneurial Chmielinska preferred to start her own. Her organization had the same goal as Samolinska's: to create a national Polish women organization that would match the Polish National Alliance in scope and influence.

Notes about the establishment of Chmielinska's *the Polish Women Alliance* appeared in the Polish press in 1898. Chmielinska not only called individual women to join but also directly addressed all existing Polish women groups to join as groups-members. Her organization wanted to be an umbrella for all other Polish women organizations. In her call to Polish women and Polish women societies she stressed the financial aspect: she offered to provide a life and "sick" insurance and by that to allow women to work and be independent. Since (apart CAPW) all other Polish organizations (such as *Gmina Polska*, *Falcons* or PNA) allowed women to be insured only through their male member, Chmielinska's organization answered a need for financial security and independence among the Polish women. By the end of 1899 *the Polish Women Alliance* reported in *Zgoda* that it had a growing number of members and already eight Polish women groups joined them.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1900 CAPW called for an "emergency meeting" ("nadzwyczajne posiedzenie") that took place on 8<sup>th</sup> of April at 1:30 p.m. at the Pulaski Hall (Hall for *The Falcon's* meetings).<sup>89</sup> The note said that "every member needed to attend because important issues will be discussed." In December of 1899 and January and February of 1900, CAPW increased the number of ads in *Zgoda*, reminding the readers of its contributions to the Polish community and especially about their insurance plans. They listed all members that have so far received financial support from CAPW.

In the fight for Polish women's memberships, Samolinska's organization lost to *the Polish Women Alliance*. In April 1901 Samolinska, for the first time in 15 years, was not the President of her organization; moreover, she wasn't even listed in its management. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 1901 CAPW voted for Wiktoria Szymanska (a long-time member, also previously a cashier for CAPW) to become the President.<sup>90</sup>

Despite the fact that Teofila left the management of her organization in 1900's, the establishment of CAPW was pivotal for the Polish women movement in Chicago. The creation of *Zwiazek Polek*, that became a national leading

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<sup>88</sup>*Zgoda*, 14 December, 1899

<sup>89</sup>*Zgoda*, 5 April, 1900

<sup>90</sup>*Zgoda*, 14 June 1901

Polish women organization in America, would not have been possible, had it not been for Teofila's group, that showed a way for Polish women how to be directly engaged in the Polish community's affairs and how to organize. Teofila's intelligence and knowledge of the Polish community led her to recognize a need for a woman-movement within the Polish diaspora already in 1880's! Her group had an impact on many Polish women already in 1880's who started to create their own, small, similar societies which offered a combination of patriotism and feminism. The *Star of Victory* society, that Samolinska discussed in her Statement in this paper, was one of these copycats.

From the very beginning Samolinska's CAPW met fierce opposition from conservative circles. The announcements below from *Wiarus* show, for example, denouncements from Father Vincent Barzynski. Unfortunately, Barzynski was the most influential Priest in the Polish community at that time. As a pastor of the gigantic parish of St. Stanislaus Kostka, a church that during holiday celebrations had an attendance of even 50,000 people, Barzynski tried to damage Samolinska's reputation by calling her a "pagan actress" in charge of a "pagan society." Barzynski was known for fighting any secularist movement in the Polish community, especially the PNA, to which Teofila belonged; a secular, woman-only group was for him a heresy. As the founder of the leading religionist group, the Polish Roman Catholic Union (PRCU), and of the first Catholic newspaper *Gazeta Katolicka*, and the first Polish daily newspaper *Dziennik Chicagoski*, he was a formidable adversary.

Rooted in her community, Samolinska was doing what the American feminists were doing in America at that time. We don't know how much she was inspired by the activism of Polish women in Poland or by the American suffragists in Chicago. Maybe it was just her defiant spirit that rejected women's secondary roles in Polish men dominated organizations. As we can imagine, Samolinska's organization could not join a bigger American feminist group; a Polish women's organization with its patriotic, nationalistic agenda of preserving Polish language, culture and institutions would not be consistent with its goals, and as we can see in her letters, her feminist ideas were inseparable from her feminism. She was deeply engaged with the Polish nationalist movement and her feminist ideas were insuperable from her patriotism.

Her notes proved that Samolinska was very proud of CAPW: she defended its status as the "first Polish-women organization" against competing claims from a sister organization *Star of Victory*. She even had a book published "History of the Central Association of the Polish Women in America" that she sent to the 1894 Lviv Exhibition as a gift.<sup>91</sup>

When did Samolinska become a feminist? Already in Ohio, right after arriving to the United States in 1865 at age of 17, she wrote the play *Emancypacja Kobiet* where she mocked husbands' controlling attitudes towards wives. But it took her two decades to completely reject the control of men and declare herself a feminist by creating an

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<sup>91</sup>*Dziennik Chicagoski*, April 13, 1892

organization that defied the standard rules of Polish communities at that time. She wanted the control by herself and she realized that she can only have it if she carves it out for herself by creating a platform that would be her own. In creation of CAPW we see that Samolinska came to her own as an autonomous, independent woman who rejected male-dominated platforms and established her own that would even compete with the men organizations. First and foremost, it will be an outlet for her and for her feminist and patriotic activism. She also wanted to nurture creativity by including a theater group as one of the society's programs.

A couple of Samolinska's poems can be described as a feminist. In poems such as "Reka" ("Hand"), "Ponczoszka" ("Stocking"), "Ludwika Michell" ("Ludwika Michell") she wrote about women's experiences. Her most radical poem "Biedne Kobiety" ("Poor Women") questioned traditional notions about women in society. She depicted the position of a woman in contemporary society as a precarious one: women are not appreciated for their intellect. They are mocked for "rozum niewiesci" (female brain), and at the same time they are expected to work, raise family and be morally strong. Samolinska complained that women were constantly under public scrutiny and attacked by men for being "too dumb – too proud – too smart." At the end of the poem she suggested as solution that men switch places with women and let them "walk in woman's shoes" to teach them appreciation for women's work.

***Wiarus, March 17, 1887***

### **WAR of Women with the Priest!**

It does not come easily to me to start a confrontation with a Priest, but I am doing it, because none of the men will confront him, out of fear to anger this influential figure. So, I am doing it myself, I am standing against this despot publicly, because I cannot turn my eye away from damage that this tyrant does to a circle of local women. We need to defend freedom of our patriotic activities and the honor of Polish women who conduct them.

Why is Father Barzynski trying to destroy the newly established in Chicago the Society of Polish Women? Why does he throw thunderbolts and insults at the patriotic Polish women, why is he spreading lies from his pulpit, why is a Polish priest corrupting his parish members and why does he combat our national feelings?

One Sunday Father Barzynski thunders from his pulpit, shouting warnings to

people not to associate themselves with *pagan actresses*; on another Sunday, he offers them as meeting place his own parish because he finds Nalepinski Inn inappropriate for women, a “scandalous place.” But everyone who knows the Polish neighborhood around St. Stanislaus Kostka Church will know that local Poles have no better meeting place than the hall at Nalepinski Inn – there is even a separate entrance to it so you don't need to walk through the inn. The hall upstairs is completely separate from the Inn and should not be called “scandalous.”

After his thundering speech, some of the women followed his advice, some felt offended.

The End.

***Wiarus*, March 24, 1887**

**the CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF POLISH WOMEN IN AMERICA**

Written in Chicago on 15<sup>th</sup> of March, 1887

I ask dear editors of *Wiarus* to kindly place in your newspaper the following announcement:

On 13<sup>th</sup> of March at the home of Mrs. Samolinska a new society of Polish women was established that took a name of “Central Association of Polish Women in America”.

The administration of the association consists of:

Teofila Samolinska – president

Julianna Pokrzywinska – vice-president

Anna Morzynska – finance

Michalina Ciesielska - cashier

128 members signed up.

The first meeting will take place on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March at 3pm at the Hall: corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Central

Hoping for the most numerous attendance,

The Management

***Wiarus*. May 20, 1891**

**Statement**

I state publicly that regarding the Central Association of Polish Women in America, it has not been established AFTER the Society *Star of Victory* was created. As most of my Compatriots in Chicago are aware, CAPW is not only the most numerous association of women, but also the oldest.

It has been legally created and incorporated in Springfield, Ill, on 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1887 – the *Star of Victory* group shone nine months later (and still has no character).

Why are these mistakes being done, hard to tell. I am not blaming anyone, but being authorized by CAPW I am sending that explanation to this newspaper.

P.S. The Certification of CAPW hangs, framed, at Vorwaerts Turn Hall, Halsted and 12<sup>th</sup> street for anyone to see.

*T. Samolinska*

***Dziennik Chicagoski*, April 13, 1892**

**The Central Association of Polish Women in Chicago and the Lviv Exhibition:** On behalf of The Central Association of Polish Women, its President Teofila Samolinska sent for the Lviv Exhibit a book: a history of her society, beautifully published, plus \$15 for the Polish pavilion. Thank you for the donation. The society was established in 1887 and today it has 190 members. The groups motto is “God! Faith! Old Country!” During its meetings the group holds discussions and readings on history of the Poland and world

history. The society takes part in all Polish celebrations.

### **Theme: Polish Theater**

Teofila Samolinska was one of Polish amateur theater's most dedicated advocates of its significance to the Polish nationalist movement. The significance of the letter below lies in fact that Teofila very early, only in 1880, realized the importance of amateur theaters in preserving Polish identity, fostering the native language, patriotic feelings and community togetherness. She stated it directly in her letter below. According to her, the amateur theaters became, besides the church, fraternal societies, meetings and observances, an important part of the Polish immigrant experience. In the letter below she presented herself as an ardent defender of the theater. She argued that theater is a cultural and educational medium worth supporting. She also indicated that *Gmina Polska's* support of the theaters exemplifies the leadership role of the Polish gentry and intelligentsia in fostering Polish national consciousness among all masses of Polonia.

We also see that she was very aware who the audience for the Polish theater was. She realized that the Polish audience was composed of poor, displaced men and women from Poland that were hungry for entertainment. She knew that the theater satisfied the emotional needs of these people who very often never saw a play back in their homeland. Here, in Exile, through the Polish language repertoire, they were being educated and connected to Polish culture in a celebration of community and shared experiences. In the letter below she described the audience as “ruddy peasant girls” who are not choosy when it comes to repertoire, but still able to distinguish a good play from a bad one. Most of the plays staged were by Polish authors, they always were played in Polish and they became a celebration for Polish culture and Polish spirit.

Samolinska's life-long alliance with the Polish amateur theater began long before she arrived in the United States; in her correspondence, she indicated that she used to see plays on Poznan's stage. In the United States, she began writing plays very early, when she still lived in Ohio. There, her *Emancipation of Women* was presented on stage before she moved to Chicago. When she arrived to Chicago around 1872, she was already a published author, and a celebrity of Polish amateur theater. It is unfortunate that *Emancipation of Women* is lost. Only the *Three Floras*, translated into English here for the first times, remains.

She did not only write plays but also shared leading roles with other actors and sung songs. The amateur theaters in Polish communities in America gave opportunities for her creativity that maybe she did not have back in her old country and she took advantage of the burgeoning Polish theatricals of 1870's

Chicago with a great vigor.

As actor-manager-director-playwright her energy was extraordinary. Her comedies established her as a popular playwright. Wladyslaw Dyniewicz, in his paper *Gazeta Polska* noted that:

Mr. A.J. Richter had made a special 600-mile trip from Kentucky to Chicago, just to attend the performance of Samolinska's *Emancipation of Women*.<sup>92</sup>

Polish amateur theater groups were common in every Polish settlement in the East and Midwest and other parts of the US, wherever the Poles settled. They always performed in Polish and often offered a similar repertoire. They were also popular among other East European immigrant groups: we know that Czechs joined the Poles in crowded hallways and balconies to watch the performance of *Emancipation of Women*. These performances served as celebrations of community and after each performance a ball would follow. In theatrical performances Poles celebrated their love for their language, history and culture. The plays familiarized the audience with many of Polish playwrights such as Anczyc<sup>93</sup> or Fredro.<sup>94</sup> Samolinska was one of very few “homegrown” Polonia playwrights and the only woman playwright the Polish-Americans had.

In the Polish immigrant world women had limited opportunities. It is even more remarkable that Samolinska used her education and talent to rise to the position of Chicago's main Polish playwrights.

These Polish amateur theaters originally were organized around parishes, pious societies and benevolence groups, but in 1873 the first official Polish Theater *Teatr Polski* opened in Chicago, sponsored by *Gmina Polska*. Since Teofila knew the management of *Gmina Polska*, she knew firsthand the challenges and the importance of running a theater and she described some of these difficulties in her letter below.

The letter tells us a lot about the Polish amateur theater and Polish immigrant culture in America at that time. We learn that the actors or prompters were amateurs and they worked without any monetary compensation. We learn about the difficulties of a job of a prompter or an actor. We see that the theaters had little support from the fraternal organizations and Samolinska argued for a better organization of the theater, for a reform. She asked *Gmina Polska*, the owner of the only official Polish theater in Chicago, to start paying prompters and to reform the system of running a theater company. She was very critical of that immigrant organization and the way it has been managing the theater. In her criticism of their method of

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<sup>92</sup>Wladyslaw Dyniewicz. “*Emancypacja Kobiet na Scenie*.” *Gazeta Polska*. 15 April 1875, 3

<sup>93</sup>Wladyslaw Anczyc (1823 – 1883) Polish poet and translator, author of popular plays *Chłopi Arystokraci* and *Marsz Strzelcow*

<sup>94</sup>Alexander Fredro was a very popular comedy writer in Poland

choosing Board members we see a lot of Teofila's feistiness.

Samolinska wrote her letter as a reaction to Ignacy Wendzinski's move from Chicago to Milwaukee. Ignacy Wendzinski was an important figure in the Polish community in Chicago. He was called the “father of Polish journalism” in the United States. He was not only an editor, but also a writer, teacher and a lecturer. Just like Samolinska, he was a Polish patriot. In 1848 took part in the Polish insurrection against Germany and imprisoned, later was released. In 1863, again he took part in the Polish insurrection against Russia. He and Samolinska had a lot in common: he also arrived into the United States after the fall of the 1863 Uprising. From 1876 to 1880 he was the Editor of *Przyjaciół Ludu* in Chicago, later he was the Editor of *Zgoda* and Samolinska's supporter.

Wendzinski has been performing prompter's duties for the Chicago Polish theater, and after his departure to Milwaukee, Samolinska became concerned that there was no qualified volunteer to replace him. She wrote the letter in order to convince *Gmina Polska* to hire a full time prompter with a salary. Therefore, she described the importance of the prompter's duties for the successful production of plays.

It is logical that Samolinska chose to submit her letter to *Przyjaciół Ludu*, since she spoke so highly about its Editor (Wendzinski) and his contributions to Polish “national interests, elections and theaters.”

### **1. The Condition of the Polish National Theater in Chicago**

**Teofila Samolinska. “Letter to the Editor.” *Przyjaciół Ludu*. November 5, 1880**

Dear Editor!

The world often learns the true value of a man, long after he is gone. We have a sad example in the story of the editor of the *Przyjaciół Ludu* and the damage that has been done after he left this newspaper and moved from Chicago to Milwaukee. His valuable contributions to *Przyjaciół Ludu* in the area of our national interests, elections and theaters, although well known to everyone, have never been appropriately acknowledged and appreciated. Many have considered his constant efforts and work performed for the benefit of Chicago's Polonia as something natural and obvious, a task that any editor of

any major newspaper should do. Many, also, with heads filled with their ideas referring to editors' duty in assisting in national causes, kept constantly overwhelming him with mundane tasks, that he, with a stoic patience, fulfilled, often not receiving for them any recognition. Situations like that happen often in the world, when good deeds pass unnoticed...

The sour results of Mr. Wendzinski's leave we feel even more now, because it effected our Theater that had in him an excellent critic and a prompter<sup>95</sup>. Without him, no theater can function any longer, especially a theater without a director. Currently it is Mr. Majewski, who, despite losses in his own business, undertook the duties of a prompter during plays, but he is not able to attend the rehearsals, so they take place without a prompter. That method leads to a very poor quality of spectacles!

A prompter! What is a prompter? – will ask one of many of our ruddy peasant girls, that, after arriving to this country, and getting a taste of the theater, constitute most of our audience. We are certain, that most of our compatriots, are not even aware of the existence of a prompter. Let's explain that a prompter is a mysterious person that plays all roles and is present throughout the whole performance, unnoticed and unheard. However, he is not an automaton or a ghost magically cursed by a spell and invisible, o no! – only the audience can not see him! The actors are lucky to see him as a cut off head with a manuscript placed in front of it on a small saucer with a lit candle placed right in front of his nose. Truly, prompter's situation is pitiful...

Imagine a convict sentenced to death by hanging, hooded and with a collar around his neck, whispering his last player. He waits for the stool to be kicked off from underneath his feet - now you have a picture of a prompter's job, who, in our opinion, is

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<sup>95</sup>Prompter, a person seated out of sight of the audience who supplies a forgotten word or line to an actor during the performance of a play.

the most important function in any theater, and especially in an amateur one, where in a play you have people of often dubious talents.

The prompter's box, not visible for the audience, is a magical domain of prompter's suffering worthy of Laocoön.<sup>96</sup> He hangs on a scaffold placed underneath the stage, constructed just for him, and sticking his head through a hole above the stage's floor, he whispers loudly (and you need strong lungs for that) to “ungrateful” actors throughout the time of performance. Do we need to add that sometimes, due to a very small opening in the floor, he needs to use the help of his tongue to turn the pages of the manuscript? It may be strange for those aspiring in the theater's laurels, that I called the actors “ungrateful” and I would like to explain why: whenever the play fails, the actors tend to blame the prompter for that failure, accusing him of not prompting well.

In Ancient Greece, the cradle of theater and fine theater arts, a prompter was placed above the stage on a prepared scaffold and through the acoustic pipes disguised as stage decorum he reminded the actors the words, often directly into an actor's ear. There is even a legend, that during a staging of *Antigone* in Athens, when a famous artist Kefiana spoke her part, the audience heard a crashing sound and on a beautiful actress fell a pale prompter with a manuscript in his hand, killing her on the spot. So, we see that duties of a prompter are important and difficult, and as old as the theater...

If a prompter wants to play a trick on an actor, he has for it every opportunity. During the play, the actors must be careful not to repeat prompter's lines that belong to another actor. From our couple of performances, we witnessed situations, where an actor asked his partner a question - a line that belonged, actually, to the other actor. That small mistake confused everyone on stage. Repeating a line taken from someone else, mixes

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<sup>96</sup> Samolinska refers to the story of Laocoön and his sons from the Greek Myths; he and his sons were attacked by sea serpents

everything up; the prompter is not guilty here, if he said fairly loudly what he was supposed to say.

We see the responsibility that lays on the shoulders of each prompter, and his importance for the actors - if he misreads the texts, the actors, like parrots, would repeated right after him. In our Polish theaters, the prompters have been fulfilling their duties in an exemplary manner and for this they have not received yet any tribute. In theaters established on a permanent basis, the prompters are usually paid. Maybe *Gmina Polska*, the only owner of the permanent Polish theatrical establishment in Chicago, could introduce a better system for hiring prompters, a system that would not turn a prompter into a beggar, the way we have now?

A theater should have a full time prompter with a salary. Especially that we all observe that our Polish national theater became, one can say, the most important national institution in America for the exiled Poles. The Polish Theater in Chicago brings its own income, that could be easily used for hiring prompters, without relying on volunteers. Hiring them would be beneficial for the whole institution of the Polish theater nationwide; it would be a sign of appreciation for our theater that so far, in such extraordinary way, responded to our audience's needs.

And what about our audience? - they have the right to demand quality in our performances. Although our audience may not be choosy, we do see differences in their opinions regarding weak or good performances, so they would also notice and appreciate improvement in staging of plays.

Our Polish national theater in America stopped being just an entertainment, it became a tool for moral development of Polonia, and it needs to be treated seriously. We need a new director that would insure that this strong position of the theater will continue.

The current system of electing a Committee of seven council members responsible for the Theater from the body of *Gmina Polska* is not working. Most of these members have little or no experience in management or leadership or even knowledge about theater itself. The system is truly useless, as all the members have the same power of vote and same rights for making decisions and this leads to conflicts and discord among them. Sometimes, after some performances the committee is completely dissolved due to disagreements and the Theater is left in “God's hands” until the next Committee is chosen...

Last Sunday, an amateur theater society *Harmonia*<sup>97</sup> performed a play. Mr. Blazek played quite favorably, the main role was in the hands of Mr. Baczkowski, who is so skilled in the field of comedy that he is equal to Mr. Hening<sup>98</sup> in Poznan. Mrs. Dorszynska, as scatterbrained Salusia, put on a good performance. Miss Pierzynska, whose appearance favors serious roles, played the role of the aunt beautifully. Mrs. Olbinski, Kowalski, Rzeszotarski and Osuch added the quality to the play; especially Mr. Osuch in his performance was excellent. When it comes to Masurians<sup>99</sup>, in their dirty cloths we would advise not to include them anymore – that motive is stereotypical and overused. We should just leave it to be played on streets by children. We also would advise the ladies to pay more attention to the length of their dresses. The audience's gaze rests easily on a beautiful, aesthetically pleasing picture, but from exposed crooked legs the audience turns the gaze away!

The Central Committee for *Gmina Polska* is planning a performance not seen here

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<sup>97</sup> *Harmonia (Harmony)*, one of Polish amateur theaters in Chicago

<sup>98</sup> Edward Henning (1821 – 1874) actor, director; primarily worked for the Polish theater in Lvov, performed also in Krakow. In years 1871 – 1873 played in Poznan where he became popular primarily for his leading roles in Polish comedies

<sup>99</sup> Masurians (Mazurzy), a sub-ethnic group in Poland in present-day Warmish-Mazurian part (North) known for a very distinctive strong dialect

before: *Chlopi Immigranci (Peasant Immigrants)*<sup>100</sup> by Anczyc. It won't be a small performance. We are told we will see on stage a carriage (with a harness) brought here from Tarnow<sup>101</sup> just for this play. The Native Americans are supposed to be played by people from the Sioux tribe, and the Chinese will be represented by people from Hong Kong. This and other displays that are unheard of, that no one has so far seen in their entire life are supposed to be presented on stage in that play. In all Polish theaters this play has been so popular, it has been played over one hundred times in all Polish theaters after being submitted to the Cracow contest in 1876.

Responding to requests of my friends, I will take an opportunity in the future to give to *Przyjaciel Ludu* articles about the progress of Polish theater in Chicago. Hoping that my compatriots accept my opinions about that cause that my conscience compels me to address,

Sincerely,

*Teofila Samolinska*

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<sup>100</sup> *Chlopi Emiganci (Peasant Emigration)*, written in 1876 by Wladyslaw Anczyc, a play about peasant-migrants that hope to make great profits in America

<sup>101</sup> Tarnow, city in Poland

## 2. *Three Floras*

The play *Trzy Flory* is not a great work of literature – it is, however, remarkable for other reasons. There were no other Polish immigrant women writing plays in the USA, there were no Polish women writing plays and staging them in Poland at that time either. The play is important for us because it tells us Samolinska's attitudes towards women and women's liberation, her attitudes to men and different classes in Polish society at that time. The play is not original in a literary sense, as it uses typical comedy devices such as mistaken identity, coincidental timing etc.

In one of commentaries for the *Three Floras*, the play was described as a “farce,”<sup>102</sup> a play that uses buffoonery, horseplay and ludicrously improbable situations. There is no truth in that statement. Yes, the characters are stereotypical and overdrawn, but the described situations are still probable and the characters, although simplified to a couple of vices and virtues, quite possible. We need to remember that Samolinska wrote for the stage, thinking about her audience that expected a comedy and entertainment. All exaggeration, manipulation of characters, situations and language were the tools for her for creating comism.

*Tree Floras* is a conventional neoclassical play, it follows a well-established formula that demands the unity of place and time. The action of this 5-act play takes place in fewer than 12 hours. The central elements are love and intrigue. For plot development Samolinska used stereotypical, overused methods such as mistaken identity, pretending to be someone else and identical names leading to mistakes. We also see a range of characters typical for comedy: a grotesque, comic servant Blazej, an overbearing, autocratic and over-stern father Ukrop, a mean, calculating stepmother Mrs. Trzcinska, a naive, indulgent husband Mr. Trzcinski, their sentimental, naive daughter Flora, a lawyer Astolf, a social climber, and a shallow and spoiled banker's daughter, Flora Ukrop.

The play is concentrated around a private affair, an amorous misunderstanding that led into complications implicating all characters – complications that were later solved in the last act with a happy ending. Although it seems to be just a romantic comedy, it is also a social commentary as it offered us a look inside two families' structures, and described, in a condescending way, certain behaviors and manners of the Polish middle-class family in Warsaw. Samolinska also presented dynamic relationships: wife-husband, father-daughter, girl's father-future son-in-law.

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<sup>102</sup>Karol Estreicher. *Bibliografia Polska XIX Stulecia, Lata 1881-1990*. Krakow 1916, 112

The two families are contrasted: in the Ukrop family the father is the figure of power; he holds authority over his wife and daughter. The scene where he dictates the letter to his wife exemplifies his status of the head of the house that dictates to others what to do. It is obvious that he is the owner and the manager of the family's property and his daughter's fate depends on his approval of her lover.

The Ukrop family is juxtaposed with the Trzcinskis where the stepmother describes herself as the head of the house, and often mocks her sensitive, emotional husband. Mrs. Trzcinska objects to being relegated to an observer in the family, she wants to be the decision-maker. But the societal rules are against her: we see this in the situation when Astolf comes to talk to Flora's father, and Mrs. Trzcinska is asked to leave the room. She reluctantly does, but re-enters the scene a couple of minutes later to take charge. In the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Trzcinska, Samolinska breaks the stereotype that men are rational and women emotional; we have here the exact opposite.

Mrs. Trzcinska and Ukrop not very likable, but they still don't fit the mold of villainous characters. All of the characters are actually likable; we don't have lascivious liars and hypocrites. The two young men, Astolf and Edward, are hardworking, noble young bachelors in love with their Floras. The only "charlatan" would be Flora U., who purposefully pretended to be Flora Trzcinska and listened the Astolf's proposal, because she found it amusing. But even then, she was not morally repugnant or evil, but just a teenager that liked to make "affairs" and have fun. In the play, she is the source of the intrigue and pays for it at the end.

The characters are simplified, presented through a couple of features: Ukrop is energetic and impulsive, Mr. Trzcinski is weak and naive, Mr. Trzcinska angry and plotting, Flora idealistic, good-hearted and sentimental, Flora U. funny and spirited. Although we see the characters on stage often weak and ignorant, self-delusional or in despair – we still have sympathy for them. We learn that even the worst characters had experiences in their past that hurt them and made them prejudiced: Blazej hates women and does not want a woman in the house because his heart was broken when he was a "farmhand," Mrs. Trzcinska is bitter and disillusioned about love, because the love of her life left her and she married Mr. Trzcinski out of necessity.

The play presents a generational conflict: Flora U. defies her father by getting engaged with the only person he forbade her to marry: an apothecary. Flora Trzcinska has to listen to her parents and to her cold, unloving stepmother and tries to reason with her.

The play is also about two families that have a different dynamic, and are not free from problems.

We see how the Trzcinski's are trying to impress Astolf so he would marry their Flora. Mr. Trzcinski is unaware of his wife's true mischievous nature and wrongly interprets her motives (“she has a heart”); there is a disconnection between the wife and husband and their life is a pretense, a show for the public. The Ukrop couple is also in dissonance, and the family's unity is saved by the sacrifice and attentiveness of Mrs. Ukrop who patiently deals with her husband's despotic behavior.

The comical effects are usually introduced by the servant Blazej, who speaking in a dialect (and talking a lot) seems to be sometimes an idiot, but a sympathetic one and devout and loyal to his master.

The play takes place in Warsaw, Poland, in rooms of two middle-class families, with issues and problems that the audience could relate to. We can imagine that *Three Floras'* audience watched the misfortunes of others and was satisfied with the happy ending, a celebration of love and marriage.

Samolinska knew that her audience was mainly a lower-middle class or peasant Polish immigrants; she must have known that presenting troubled upper-class Warsaw families would play well with that audience. Also, Mrs. Trzcinska talked about marrying not for love, but out of necessity – an important immigrant theme many in her audience could relate to.

On Polish soil the debut for *Three Floras* took place on April 29, 1876 at the Cracow's Theater in Cracow (Teatr Polski w Krakowie). The play was presented many times by various theater companies in major Polish cities: in Lublin in September of 1876 by the Kopystynski Group, in Warsaw in year 1877 by theater “Alhambra,” in Poznan in October 1877 by the Polish Theater, in Kalisz in 1878 by Trapsza Group, in Plock in 1878 by the Kremski and Wojcicki Group, in Lvov by the Lvov Theater in May of 1880, in Warsaw again in 1881 by the Small Theater, and in Lodz in January of 1891 by the Lodz Theater. In Poznan (1877) and in Kalisz (1887) her play was presented under a faulty name of “Smolinska.” The play was also played in Chicago. We see by the sheer number of performances of *Three Floras* by the Polish theater companies that Samolinska was appreciated in Poland.

The below translation is based on the prompter's copy found in the Archives of the Raczynski Library in Poznan, Poland.

**Three Floras - a Comedy in Five Parts**

*Three Floras - a comedy in five parts*  
by Mrs. Teofila Samolinska in America

CHARACTERS

Mr. Trzcinski, *a banker*  
Mrs. Trzcinska, *his wife, Flora's stepmother*  
Flora, *their daughter*  
Mr. Lucki, *a lawyer*  
Blazej, *his servant*  
Karol, *jeweler's apprentice*  
Mr. Ukrop, *a bookseller*  
Mrs. Ukrop, *his wife*  
Flora, *their daughter*  
Edward Wist, *apothecary*  
Messenger  
Statue of Flora

*Play takes place in Warsaw*

**ACT I**

*(stage presents a room in lawyer's house, in the back a door, the other on the side)*

SCENE I: BLAZEJ

BLAZEJ<sup>103</sup>. *(polishing shoes)* I got sweaty like a crackling over a fire, but they shine, they shine... *(looking at shoes)* I bet over anythin', if you hang them on a wall, a young girl with a rut on her head would see herself in them like in a mirror... How curious..., when ya fix the leather, it is no good to just walk on a street and step into the mud; I've worked so hard on 'em, my eyes are about to pop, I could polish like all wrath, I say, put them in a closet and just look at them *(ringing)*. Dash! What devil brings some coot again, from early morn'g, they ring and ring as of someone was on fire, they come to Mr. Astolf to congratulate him, but I can't wake him up from his slumber, he snores like a locomotive *(opens the door and sticks out his head)*. Whose there?

*(Voice from behind the door)* Mr. Lucki at home?

BLAZEJ. At home, but not for guests...come back later.

*(Voice behind the door)*. Please give him this note.

BLAZEJ *(takes the paper and closes the door)*. What to tell him, what to tell him? Maybe he invited people; should I go to get wine? *(knocking on door)*. Who's there again? *(he hesitates)*, I will let him in but he needs to knock three times *(continues knocking, BLAZEJ opens the door)*

KAROL. May I see Mr. Lucki?

BLAZEJ. No.

KAROL. So he is not home?

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<sup>103</sup>Blazej speaks in a dialect

BLAZEJ. He is.

KAROL. I only need five minutes..

BLAZEJ. Not allowed.

KAROL. But why?

BLAZEJ. Because it is not allowed.

KAROL. Is he sick?

BLAZEJ. No.

KAROL. *(on the side, whispering)* what a dunce, how to outsmart him? *(loudly)* So, brother, if he is home and not sick..

BLAZEJ. Don't call me that, I did not drink bruderschaft with you...

KAROL. *(giving him money)*. Here, my friend, show me your Master, because I need to see him urgently.

BLAZEJ. *(with anger)* Brimstone and fire! You silly hobbledehoy, do you think me Master is a bear, so I would show him off for money? Scoot, or I will use me fist to show ya the door!

KAROL.*(surprised)* Listen, fat man, I could punish you for your attitude towards me, a gentleman.

BLAZEJ.*(slapping him)*.Now, ya have that! And out of this room before I have a conniption fit!

KAROL. *(behind the scene)*. Wait, you onery fellow, I won't forget it.

#### SCENE 2: BLAZEJ

BLAZEJ. *(opening the door and sticking out his head)* Oh, wake snakes, ya're daft as a brush! Do you want more? Blast my old shoes! I am not afrid of these city dunces like ya...my Master is a nobleman and a lawyer, 'nd if you want to sue me, he'll tear you into pieces like a rabbit, and ya'll cry in the accent of keenest torture! now ya know. *(closes the door, takes a stick for cleaning frock coats and and takes the coat that is hanging on the wall)*. It must have been quite carryings-on at that wedding yesterday. In Mercy's name! If only the old Master was alive, my Master would be getting cruel beatings from him, 'cause these parties waste men. Yea, jist this morning at 5 am the wild-cat came back home like a b'hoy and fell on the bed, still dressed; I took off his shoes and pulled his tail-coat off. Now he has been sleep'n for hours *(looking at the wall clock)*, my God! So late! I really need to wake him up *(opens the door on the side)* Master..Master Astolf! Hey, Master Astolf! Time to get up!

#### SCENE 3: ASTOLF, BLAZEJ

ASTOLF. *(sleepy, still in stockings, no frock coat, just a vest, yawning)*.

BLAZEJ. *(holds his stomach, and looks like he is in pain)*. Oh, my tummy, my tummy!

ASTOLF. *(yawning)*. What now, are you mad?

BLAZEJ. I am finished, I am finished!

ASTOLF. What is the matter with you, what are these hysterics?

BLAZEJ. What have ya done to me!

ASTOLF. He got mad...Blazej, stop that comedy and tell me why are you howling?

BLAZEJ. Me stomach almost burst in half after ya kicked me as I stood by your bed.

ASTOLF. *(bursting with laugh)*. No, No, stop being funny and give me my clothes.

Someone visited today?

BLAZEJ. Oh, yeah, almost a dozen of people, one even wanted to pay me so he could see ya.

ASTOLF. And who would that be?

BLAZEJ. Some rouge on spindly legs, wanted to give me money so he could see ya, but I send him out.

ASTOLF. But who could this be?

BLAZEJ. He was holdin' a small chest in his arms.

ASTOLF. I can not think of anybody (*to Blazej*), why didn't you wake me up, dammit!

BLAZEJ. I was waking ya up a couple of times, I even got sore throat from call'ng ya – but ya slept and snored so hard, that they could hear ya in hiven.

ASTOLF. (*not believing it*). So I slept so hard...

BLAZEJ. Yes, ya must have drunk a barrel last night..

ASTOLF. You are mumbling, old man; I'm no drunk – nothing of that sort, night like this could happen to anyone.

BLAZEJ. (*picking up a piece of paper from the table*). One of them brought that note, on which it says to go and bring a champagne..

ASTOLF. (*reading*) Congratulations! (*surprised*) What are they congratulating me for?

This must be a prank. Blazej, where is my coffee?

BLAZEJ. Is comin', is comin' (*on the side*), to the devil, I forgot about coffee.

#### SCENE 4: ASTOLF

ASTOLF. (*alone*) God damn last night's spree! The company was good, but we drunk like there is no tomorrow! The groom, despite his age, led the party and first fell under the bench. Great times! Until the dawn...I don't remember how I made it to the house... and when? – maybe someone brought me and put me in bed...curious thing. How do I look (*looks in the mirror*), well, not that bad, lips a bit chopped and black circles under the eyes – but this makes my pale face more charming – women love the “suffering” look. But still, if only I were not ignorant as to the source of this melancholy!

#### SCENE 5. ASTOLF, BLAZEJ

BLAZEJ. (*sticks his head trough the door*) Serve coffee now?

ASTOLF. Serve it.

BLAZEJ. Yeh, yeh, and so I won't forgit; there was also another man, polite and he also wanted to see ya.

ASTOLF. What he wanted, didn't you ask?

BLAZEJ. I ask'd, he said that he wanted to pay ya respects...

ASTOLF. Did he tell you his last name?

BLAZEJ. Of course, he did.

ASTOLF. What was it??

BLAZEJ. But I forgot.

ASTOLF. (*loosing patience*). What did he look like?

BLAZEJ. His shoes shone like cat's eyes in the dark and his waist coat was clean and well aired...

ASTOLF. Give me my coffee, you fool!

*(Blazej leaves)*

SCENE 6. ASTOLF

ASTOLF. *(alone)*. What are they congratulating me for? I did not get a promotion, my superior keeps promising me a new job, and all I do is wait and worry – maybe some of my colleges died and the position opened and they come to congratulate me on the new position...and so Flora, divine Flora will soon be my wife. I will go today and ask for her hand – her old folks look at me favorably – and she...*(he is thinking)*, well, I haven't given much thought to what is that she is thinking... When she talks to me she smiles and blushes and in her gaze I see, that she loves me back...but sometimes a woman's gaze can be saying so much, but actually it doesn't say anything at all...but I should not be afraid of a refusal, especially after my promotion...no, no refusal.

SCENE 7. BLAZEJ

BLAZEJ. *(carrying a tray with a coffee grinder. Puts it on the table)*. How this coffee's aroma smells beautifully...! makes ya want to drink it right away; in old times we did not have such smart instruments to make coffee *(looks at the grinder)*

ASTOLF. Aha, you came in time, my friend, I would like to share with you a secret

BLAZEJ. Yea, now “friend”, and later he will call me “fool”.

ASTOLF. Oh, don't bring it up! You know all my vices and I know yours, you got used to me and I to you... and more likely a shoe would exist without a sole, than us without one and another. Listen to what I say.

BLAZEJ. *(putting his hands into pockets)*. I am listen'g.

ASTOLF. I am in love with a certain young lady.

BLAZEJ. That's nothing new..

ASTOLF. It is important because it is my first love!

BLAZEJ. But not for me, because, my Master, when I still was a farmhand, the girls were in dozens following me, and I was in love with a couple of them as well..

ASTOLF. *(drinking coffee)* I don't want to follow your example – I love only one, and I will be faithful.

BLAZEJ. Well, many before ya have said the same; denying the pleasure, Master, is acting like a frog denying muddy wanters – I traveled the world with ya late Father and I have seen a lot...

ASTOLF. My fiance is a goodness, an angel; I am telling you, you will adore her when you meet her. I wanted to prepare you; soon we will have a woman living and managing our household...

BLAZEJ. That is the end of our freedom! It is well known that when a woman enters a house, she turns it upside down. The end of our little freedoms *(crying)*, and even ya won't be able go on evenings partying or ya cigar smoking with a lady in the room? - she won't like it at all! – and this house is such a mess! My God! Just open a closet and half wardrobe falls out..

ASTOLF. *(placing an arm around Blazej)*. My old friend! You are mistaken that all women bring unhappiness into households! No, don't be afraid; as I told you, my fiance is an angel of good, and apart from maybe small improvements, everything will stay in the same order...

BLAZEJ. (*with resignation*). If this is God's will and ya will, so go and get married – I will be listen'g to a wife-doormat in my old age!

ASTOLF. Now I need to rush to pick up my nomination, and then, like a bird, I will fly to her. Oh, had I known sooner about my new position - I had a great occasion to confess my love, but before we could not even exchange with each other a couple of words... some old banker was so taken by her, and you could not pull him away! I was just drinking to lift my spirits after the dinner – didn't I sit next to her by a window...Damned be my head! If only I drink one glass too many I have no memory of what's going on around me.

BLAZEJ. (*cleaning up and listening*). Well, it has happened to me many times as well...

ASTOLF. I am suspecting that I did not say “goodbye” to her, but without a word I left for my house, oh, this would have been awful!! - I remember something like in a dream – that I was in a room filled with thousands of shiny objects, where everyone was addressing me very cordially...

BLAZEJ. Even street lights will bow to ya, if ya have too much in your head..

ASTOLF. What will Flora think of me? Blazej! Give me my coat, I need to immediately go downtown (*looks in the mirror and fixes his tie*) To all devils!! What is that? (*he is staring at the ring on his finger*).

BLAZEJ. (*coming closer*) Looks like a ring.

ASTOLF. I see that, that its a ring, but how, damn it, made it to my hand – it does not belong to me.

BLAZEJ. Of course it belongs to ya if it is on ya hand.

ASTOLF. Who pranked me? must be one of the wedding guests, but who??...it looks like a girls' ring. Where did I see a similar one? Blazej, call a cab (*Blazej leaves*)

This is peculiar; first time after a night spent like that I feel I am in Egyptian darkness – the best when I give that ring back to the host, if someone lost it, surly they will be asking the host for it...

BLAZEJ. Cab is waiti'g.

ASTOLF. Good, I am coming (*takes a hat and gloves – at the door appears Karol*)

#### SCENE 8: BLAZEJ, KAROL, ASTOLF

BLAZEJ. (*pointing to Karol*) Master, this is the dunce who wanted to bribe me...

ASTOLF. (*to Blazej*) Tell the cab driver to wait.

KAROL. Mr. Rock wished you a good morning and sends..

ASTOLF. Who is Mr. Rock?

KAROL. The best jeweler in this city.

ASTOLF. Jewelry maker? What is his business with me?

KAROL. He sends you rings, from which you wanted to chose one – you were checking them out last night...

ASTOLF. (*surprised*) Me, last night...what the thunder! It was the jewelry store shining in front of my eyes...(to Karol) do you remember, what was my purpose for buying these rings?

KAROL. Of course, you said they were for your fiance.

ASTOLF. For..my...fiance??

KAROL. Yes, this ring was supposed to match the one that you have on your finger

ASTOLF. (*happily*) so it is from her! And I, a complete idiot, don't remember it! (*to Karol*) please show me your treasures, I will choose one immediately (*takes one ring*), o, how

much for this one?

KAROL. Price is on the tag attached to the ring; you don't need to rush with the payment – your good name and reputation is enough for us...anything else for your fiance?

ASTOLF. Of course, it is obvious - the most beautiful jewelry that you have, the most beautiful – today I will visit your business.

*(Karol bows and leaves)*

#### SCENE 9: ASTOLF

ASTOLF. O! You happy Astolf! Flora is your fiance! What joy! I would have given ten years of my life to remember the moment when she said “yes”, when she made me the happiest of men with her gift of love *(looks at the ring)*, dear gem, I would not part with you for all treasures of the world!

#### SCENE 10: BLAZEJ, ASTOLF

BLAZEJ. Master, the cab has been waiti'g so long...

ASTOLF. *(embracing him)* Be happy my friend, I am already engaged!

BLAZEJ. Why would I be happy from ya engagement?...

ASTOLF. Can you imagine, this ring is from Flora!

BLAZEJ. As ya can see, miracles still happen on this world...

ASTOLF. Upon my word, it must have happen in a dream, otherwise I would have remembered...let's hope my promotion won't disappear like in a fog!

BLAZEJ. But it was almost guaranteed, ya told me.

ASTOLF. Maybe the congratulations refer to my engagement, not promotion...

BLAZEJ. Ya were happy too soon!

ASTOLF. Quiet you fool!

BLAZEJ. Now ya call me a fool, and earlier a friend...

*(he leaves)*

ASTOLF. I need to run to her *(runs to the door; a messenger with a letter arrives)* A letter...my nomination! *(shaking)*

O, happiness! *(reading)* “Dear Mr. Lucki, last night at the wedding you dared to declare yourself, in presence of everyone, to my daughter Flora in a very inappropriate manner, maybe even rude” *(he throws the letter on the floor)*. But what if you daughter approved of the proposal, and this ring is its proof?– I don't care if they send a thousand letters like that, Flora must be mine, no, no, Mr. Father, but maybe this is not Father, maybe its her Mother *(picks up a letter and reads more)*, “in a state that is a disgrace to any well-brought up being”, a disgrace – let the hell open and swallow me! So I proposed...drunk? - what a horror! “in your rudeness you even took her ring off her finger, my daughter, being afraid of scandal, let you have it. We are not calling you to a duel, knowing that you were half-unconscious and drunk but we ask for an immediate return of the ring! Flora's Father”.

Oh, my Lord! Now I know what trouble I'm in!

#### SCENE 12: BLAZEJ, ASTOLF

BLAZEJ. My Master, the cab driver, he curses like mad!

ASTOLF. Oh! Let everyone curse me now; you and the whole world – nothing for me now, nothing, no friends, no nominations; I spat on my dreams of happiness. God, my god! Hope no one will ever need to pay so much for a couple of hours of an innocent party!

BLAZEJ. *(coming to him)* What's with ya, my Lord?

ASTOLF. Oh, this letter, this letter bereft me of everything.

BLAZEJ. So what, the girl does not want ya?!

ASTOLF. Worse, worse, read it yourself, I am the most deranged of all people!

*(takes his hat and leaves)*

### SCENE 13. BLAZEJ

BLAZEJ. When my Master is unhappy, so am I *(crying)*, this secret letter brought this unhappiness *(takes letter from the table)*, trouble only with letters, better if people did not write any..

End of Act 1.

## ACT 2

*(a room in Trzcinski's house)*

### SCENE 1. MR. TRZCINSKI, MRS. TRZCINSKA.

*(Mr. Trzcinski walks around the room with a sad face, Mrs. Trzcinska is sewing up a stocking)*

MR. TRZCINSKI. This is all my fault and my loss; it really hurts *(a sobbing is heard from the adjacent room)*, do you hear it? Oh, how this child is lamenting?

MRS. TRZCINSKA. I hear it.

MR. TRZCINSKI. And who would expect something like that from him? I have to admit that I liked that traitor Lucki! I was even looking forward to have him as my son-in-law... you must have been feeling the same, you were hosting him so nicely in this house, as if he already belonged to the family...

MRS. TRZCINSKA. I wanted to show him that we are distinguished people. I liked him like I like every young airhead that crosses through this door, but I never expected him to be our son-in-law...I recognized right away that he is not a man of consequence.

MR. TRZCINSKI. He is a traitor, a traitor, no doubt about it! After coming here for so many months, confusing our child, he brought such shame and pain on her now – how dare he! in the presence of all society, declare himself to another?!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Let's wait, he will come back, and he will find out!

*(she listens to the crying in the next room)*

Is she still sobbing?

MR. TRZCINSKI. Let her cry, after a good cry she will feel better..

My love, we should do something for this child! at least to wipe her tears!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. If you feel so sorry for her, you can cry with her – you both have weak heads; all wounds are healed with time, you should know..

MR. TRZCINSKI. My dear, you have no heart..

MRS. TRZCINSKA. No, just the opposite; I have more heart than both of you combined! Because I understand the insignificance of the thing you are lamenting about!

*(Flora's voice in the background)*

MR. TRZCINSKI. Oh, no! I need to go to her, poor child! I will bring her here, cheer her up!

*(leaves to Flora's room)*

## SCENE 2. MRS. TRZCINSKA

MRS. TRZCINSKA.

O! my husband! My dear God, if I didn't manage the house, no one would even know that a man lives here! Instead of helping the girl to forget about this silly business, he, with his attentions, will spoil her! – and I need to watch it without saying a word. However, I will let her know my opinion and my responsibilities towards her won't be denied to me. And this lawyer... I hoped he will take her from the house; I can't stand that girl too much longer in the same household with me, either her or me! *(she leaves)*

## SCENE 3. MR. TRZCINSKI, MRS. TRZCINSKA, FLORA

*(Flora enters, supported by her father; she holds a handkerchief to her forehead and walks unsteadily)*

MR. TRZCINSKI. Here, here, my dear, on that armchair, *(takes her to the armchair and sits her there)*, wait little angel, I will fetch you a pillow *(leaves and comes back with a pillow, that he places under Flora's head)*.

FLORA. Oh, how good my Father is! when will I repay you for your care? *(crying, with a handkerchief at her eyes)*

MR. TRZCINSKI *(attentively)* Don't talk about gratitude now, my dear, rest, do you feel any better?

FLORA. After what happened yesterday, I don't think I will ever feel better. If I only could forget about him *(crying)*

MR. TRZCINSKI. *(holding her hand)*. Don't think of him anymore, my child, and you will forget sooner. Don't you have a bit of love left for us, for me, that despite my advice, you sob and cry without an end? Don't you remember your doctor told you to avoid worrying too much?

FLORA. My God, my God, this is more than I can take; I can't do anything else but think about him.

MR. TRZCINSKI. That is very bad, my child, very bad. Oh no, you have fever!...

FLORA. Maybe everything will end soon...

MR. TRZCINSKI. *(in despair)*. Don't say that my child! My dear! My pumpkin, I don't know what I would do without you! *(sobs)*

FLORA. *(squeezing his hand)* My dear Daddy, don't worry, everything will pass, will pass.

MR. TRZCINSKI. Would you like to drink some lemonade?

FLORA. I am a bit thirsty, but..

MR. TRZCINSKI. Wait, I will bring it for you...

FLORA. Stop, don't leave, I don't want to be alone with her...

MR. TRZCINSKI. But why?

FLORA. O, a silly, childish wish on my part, but I would like you to be always close to

you, my dear Father!

MR. TRZCINSKI. (*addressing his wife*) Could you, Kitty, go to the cupboard and bring us some lemonade?

SCENE 4. MR. TRZCINSKI, MRS. TRZCINSKI, FLORA

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*Mrs. Trzcinska is chewing on nuts, with a dust brush in her hand, moving around the room*)

(*to Flora*) You got up? It isn't that bad, thank God!

MR. TRZCINSKI. (*to his wife*) Why did you come back, Kitty, you should have told me, I would have..

MRS. TRZCINSKA. What are you saying? Can't I enter the room freely without consulting with you, when you with your pretty daughter are plotting against me?

FLORA. Mother!

MR. TRZCINSKI. (*surprised*) Kitty, what you... what is...

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Good, good, everything good now!

FLORA. Mom, I didn't request from you...

MRS. TRZCINSKA...to enter this room; I know that you do not wish me in this room (*still chewing*), I entered this room to prove to you that I can and that's it!

MR. TRZCINSKI. Good, good my Kitty, stay here with her, I will bring it myself.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. What will you bring?

MR. TRZCINSKI. Lemonade for our Flora, of course...

MRS. TRZCINSKA. And what for?? So her fever would get worse? Doctor did not advise it!..

MR. TRZCINSKI. (*to himself*) How caring she is, after all, she has a heart...

FLORA...but I did not ask for lemonade.

MR. TRZCINSKI. What a good woman (*loudly*) Kitty, I need to leave now for a moment, to go to the bank; take care of her for a bit...

FLORA. Father, I would rather be alone...

SCENE 5. FLORA. MRS. TRZCINSKA.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*still chewing on nuts; she is dusting and moving furniture around*) These idle people! They say they dust, but when I move the furniture, dusty everywhere!! How is it possible? (*stopping in her motions and looking at Flora*) why aren't you answering, are you thinking I am not worth answering to?

FLORA. (*pleading*) Och, mommy, I thought...

MRS. TRZCINSKA....that you could treat me with a contemptible silence? (*with a fake interest*) How are you feeling?

FLORA. Much better, only my head hurts a bit, but it will pass...

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Of course, it will pass, no one so far died out of heartache, unless he hangs himself...

FLORA. O, mother what a blow for me!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*to herself*) ..and for me too, I don't know if anyone else would want her (*loudly*) He was not worthy of your love.

FLORA. (*painfully*) But, I can not forget about him, o, Mother, even today I would throw

myself in an abyss just for him!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. No, No, don't you ever say things like that, if someone would hear you, there would be gossip in the whole city that you got mad from love...

FLORA. (*getting up and staring at her mother*) Mother! How can you have this take on my tragedy? Although he.. betrayed me, I, in spite of all world and the city, won't deny my affection for him

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*eating nuts*) I swear, she is reciting like in a theater...

SCENE 6. MRS. TRZCINSKA, MR. TRZCINSKI.

MR. TRZCINSKI. So, my child, is your fever gone?

FLORA. (*quietly and with despair*) O, if I only could die..!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. My child, a grave won't open for anyone on a command... when I was younger, I was in love (*chewing still*) with all my soul, and not being loved back, I wished myself death!... but I still lived, and as if in spite of my feelings, I never looked better! and what? and then I met your father, and I made my mind to marry him, and today all this love drama is just funny to me...

FLORA. O! If I could only forget him...

MR. TRZCINSKI. I think sending her to Italy or somewhere by the sea would be beneficial for her state of mind, what do you think Kitty?

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Oh, we can definitely spare that!

MR. TRZCINSKI. But, my lovely wife, at least in the first days I should leave with her, to avoid...

MRS. TRZCINSKA. What is meant to happen, will happen, and sooner or later, even vacations and travels will not help.

MR. TRZCINSKI...but imagine, Kitty, if she bumped into him on the street! that truly may happen here!

FLORA. O, no! I don't want to see him.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*to her husband*) You are saying nonsense, my dear Husband, Flora does not need to go anywhere. A girl, brought up well, should be able to control herself – she should look at the culprit with contempt! Or, she should proudly look to the side, or, even better, close her eyes, and pass him, slightly squinting!

MR. TRZCINSKI. But how come this? With closed eyes on the street? - what an absurdity! She could fall under a cab or someone could bump into her... and then even Mr. Lucki himself would try to assist her so she would not fall down..

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*coming to the window*) That would be an unforgivable insolence on his part..ach! If only he came here (*looking through the window*),ohh... some carriage stopped in front of our house – who is it coming out of it? (*with a scream*) It is him! Holy Mary! It is him!

MR. TRZCINSKI. (*with surprise*) It's him?

FLORA. (*trembling, scared*) My God! There is no end to my suffering!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*to Flora*) Go, go child to the other room.

MR. TRZCINSKI. (*to wife*) ...and you leave to the other room, too.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*offended*) How come? What are you thinking here? I am representing the girl's dead mother and it is my duty to tell “pater noster” to your daughter's seducer!

FLORA. What is he still demanding?

MR. TRZCINSKI. Leave, both of you.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*putting her hands on her hips*) And if I refused to leave, what would you say to it?

MR. TRZCINSKI. That you don't care for the honor of this house and you want to discredit yourself in everyone's eyes – I am the head of this house!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Since when?

MR. TRZCINSKI. It is my paternal duty to talk things over with this man.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. So?

MR. TRZCINSKI. Yes

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*to herself*) what a change (*loudly*), good, I will leave now, but in a couple of minutes, as if accidentally, I will come back; I need to show him my contempt for him (*leaves with Flora*)

#### SCENE 7. ASTOLF. MR. TRZCINSKI

ASTOLF. (*hat in hand, bowing to Mr. Trzcinski*) Please forgive my boldness, I know you are surprised, as I see, that after yesterday's events I dare to come here personally...

MR. TRZCINSKI. I don't deny that...

ASTOLF. You are offended by me...

MR. TRZCINSKI. You think...

ASTOLF. I know that my relationship with your household...

MR. TRZCINSKI...will never be the same, and even your visits would be not necessary anymore.

ASTOLF. O, Mr. Trzcinski, I will never forget all these precious moments spent in your family's company...

MR. TRZCINSKI. (*solemnly*) I am forced to tell you openly, that after what happened last night, your presence here bears us another offense (*to himself*) Now I told him!

ASTOLF. My God! This is not the same man anymore; usually so kind and friendly...

MR. TRZCINSKI. I am asking you, Mr. Lucki, to forget that you ever knew my daughter – she will also forget, and, although due to yesterday's event she still feels ill, she will recover soon!

ASTOLF. (*scared*) Flora got sick? My God, my God!

#### SCENE 8. MR. TRZCINSKI. MRS. TRZCINSKA. ASTOLF

(*Mrs. Trzcinska with offended face rushes to the door, passing by Astolf, she bows her head coldly*)

ASTOLF. (*extending his hands to Mrs. Trzcinska*) O, my good, kind Lady!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. What do you want?

ASTOLF. Your mediation between me and Mr. Trzcinski, whose crudeness towards me ...

MRS. TRZCINSKA...is absolutely understandable, however I have to admit that any resolve in Mr. Trzcinski's behavior must come as a surprise!

ASTOLF. So there is no more hope, all hearts are hardened!

MRS. TRZCINSKA (*to Mr. Trzcinski*) Dear Stan, how can you let someone make scenes in our house?! These people from low spheres don't appreciate our generosity...

ASTOLF. Dear Madam! Don't repeat again an insult like this! It was a folly to come here, and I paid my price for that decision, as for all mistakes everyone must pay a price; I will

just utter my last wish, that I could beg Flora for forgiveness!

MSR. TRZCINSKA. *(with a sneaky smile)* Ha! Ha! Ask for forgiveness! *(putting her hands on hips)* How we, Trzcinskis, would be offended by such people? Only our equals, you understand, only our equals could offend us!

ASTOLF. *(shocked)* Did I loose my mind? Are these the same people that I have known for months? The case is finished! I am leaving and parting with this place, not long time ago so dear to my heart. Flora, I am saying goodbye to you! *(coming towards the door he remembers about the ring)* Oh, I am sorry, I almost forgot *(takes off a glove and then the ring and gives it to Mrs. Trzcinska)*

MR. TRZCINSKA. Mister!

ASTOLF. Is my hand too repulsive to you?! No problem *(he puts the ring on the table)*.

MRA. TRZCINSKA. What's that supposed to mean?

ASTOLF. Your husband will explain it to you.  
*(he leaves)*

#### SCENE 9. MRS. TRZCINSKI, MR. TRZCINSKI

MRS. TRZCINSKA. *(surprised)* You?

MR. TRZCINSKI. Me?

MRS. TRZCINSKA. He said that you will explain...

MR. TRZCINSKI. I don't understand what that man wants from me...

MRS. TRZCINSKI. I have no clue either, maybe our Flora will explain it to us...  
*(she runs to the door and opens it)* Flora! Come here for a moment!

#### SCENE 10. MR. TRZCINSKI, MRS. TRZCINSKA, FLORA

FLORA. Has he left already?

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Yes, thank God! What an impertinent! He dared to even ask us for forgiveness!

MR. TRZCINSKI. After all these sweet moments that he spent here...

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Nasty man.

FLORA. Please mom, don't say such ugly things about him!

MR. TRZCINSKI. And I am telling you, I faced him with energy and resolve that he never expected!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. That's not true! I heard everything through the door and if it wasn't for me...only I don't understand why this ring?

FLORA. A ring? What ring?

MRS. TRZCINSKA. It's on the table.

FLORA. *(taking the ring into her hand)* This is the same, exactly the same.

MR. TRZCINSKI. Child!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Do you know it?

FLORA. Yes, if I am not mistaken, it is the ring exactly that Astolf took off Flora's finger and put on his left hand. O! It was a horrible moment for me, oh, how triumphant were Flora's eyes when she was looking at me! How knowingly she was smiling! And I, my God, considered her to be my best friend! Och! What a bitter disappointment – I got up right away and left the room, only to hear, on my last step there, the toast for the engaged couple! My spirit was like extinguished, I don't know how I made it back home – och! I

spent a restless night!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Isn't that a shame for a young lady to go crazy like this over a man; who taught you to love this way?

FLORA. (*she is looking for a moment, moves back one step, and with a hand placed over her chest says*) Heart.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Och!

MR. TRZCINSKI. But it is very unorthodox that he left that ring here, and, additionally, he tells me to explain everything? I don't know about anything...so bizarre.

FLORA. I don't understand it as well.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. That is a sneer.

MR. TRZCINSKI. Someone is coming...

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Maybe its him again?

FLORA. (*close to passing out*) God, give me strength!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. It's some lady talking to the cook downstairs – it's Flora Ukrop!

FLORA. Flora Ukrop?

#### SCENE 11. FLORA, FLORA U., MR AND MRS. TRZCINSKI

FLORA U. Good Morning, Everyone! (*she greets everyone*) and what, why is everyone looking so bitter like pickles in a jar? Fyu, fyu, I am happy I find everyone at home; you have to admit, it is quite a comedy!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. We don't know about any...

FLORA U. Just please, don't deny it! I don't think Flora would hide things from you...(*to Flora*) And you, friend, where did you disappear so quickly? I was looking for you everywhere, but today first thing in the morning I could not wait any longer, and here I am. Tell me, Flora, what do you think about last night's affair?

FLORA. Nothing.

FLORA U. Nothing. That's funny... “Nothing”, and your face looks swollen up, and you have tears in your eyes, and your head probably hurts too, no?

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*mischievously*) Well, good that you, young lady, are in such happy mood, but no wonder...

FLORA U. I am sure you also will be... after I tell you all this comedy!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. You are interested in comedies, I see...

FLORA U. And who wouldn't if you only can laugh from them! Listen now and sit down all of you, no one should stand while listening to a play, even if it was a masterpiece! (*sits everyone down and then she sits down herself*). Listen, have you heard about babies switched at birth?

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Sometimes, by Gypsies...

FLORA U. Gypsies switch only little kids, but in my excellent comedy, the two kids that have been switched are already planning to be married. Don't be scared if I tell you that one of these children was your daughter Flora.

MRS. AND MR. TRZCINSKY. What? (*get up from their chairs*)

FLORA U....and the second child was me!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Are you trying to sneer at us?

FLORA U. Not at all – sit down here, because soon the curtain will fall and we will be deprived too soon of the main point of my comedy! (*everyone sits down*) Last night at the wedding, I convinced Flora to put on an identical dress to mine, so, you see, it is no

wonder... It was almost 10 pm, I, tired from dancing, sat down in one side of the room, when all of the sudden someone comes up to me and calls me with a trembling voice “Miss Trzcinska” and sits down next to me without a much ado – I recognized Lucki right away. My first thought was to get up and leave, but I was too curious how the scene will develop, so I stayed...

FLORA. *(to herself)* How she tortures me..

FLORA U. Mr. Lucki took my hand and ... *(turning to Flora)* I don't want your lawyer, I love my own boy, by the way...He took my hand and, calling me “the dearest Flora”, he took off my ring of my finger.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. And you allowed for that?

FLORA U. What should I have done? Who wouldn't be amused by such quid pro quo – ha! I was trying to signal Flora, looking at her with meaningful eyes, but she, eaten by jealousy as I suppose, run away!

MR. TRZCINSKI. And what next?

FLORA U. Then he said...*(turning to Flora)* but dear Flora, you are sitting like through a torture..

FLORA. What do I care that someone was confessing his feelings to you?

FLORA U. Because you care for him, that's why it vexes you so – you left yesterday's party so early, that you didn't see that all gathered got the mistake and, as a banter, they drank a toast for us!.. because they thought it would make you laugh! But you, like a stone in water, just gone *(she is looking at the table and notices the ring)* Ha! And what is this here?

MR. TRZCINSKI. What? Where?

FLORA U. Ghost, ghost, a phantom! *(then she bursts with a loud laugh)* How funny it is, ha! Ha! Long ago only ghosts wandered in the world, and now rings wander! *(takes the ring in her hand)* So, you made it to this house, my little jewel? And I was afraid that that lawyer lost it somewhere...

MR. TRZCINSKI. *(hits his knee with his hand)* Kitty!

MRS. TRZCINSKA....and Mr. Lucki was sure that the ring belonged to our Flora because he brought it here!

FLORA U. *(knocking her forehead with her finger)* He was yesterday not right up there!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Fe, horrible man!

FLORA U. Only, please, don't talk badly about him, he was so sweet and polite and courteous.

FLORA. *(turns away from them)* Hmm...

FLORA U. Look, everyone, how jealous she is!

FLORA. Not at all.

FLORA U. He said “don't, don't have it against me that I tell you how I love you”!

FLORA. Stop it, I don't want to listen anymore!

FLORA U. You are childish, he considers you “an angelic Flora”.

FLORA. Let's suppose that everything that you have said already is true, why did he so fast return the ring? The ring that he thought was from me? He even brought it back himself.

FLORA U. Listen then, until I finish. You know how impetuous my Father is. This morning I was telling him all this story, and my Father, raising in anger, jumped like on a spring! And than he immediately wrote a letter to Lucki, in which he demanded the return of my ring. He forgot to sign it with his name, and sent it to Lucki – no wonder that he

thought the letter came from here!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*elbowing her husband*) Husband!

MR. TRZCINSKI. (*bringing up a handkerchief to his eyes*) He stood over there and said how this place was precious for him!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. He did not deserve how you treated him!

MR. TRZCINSKI. But I wasn't very hard on him, it was you!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. But, but, but, I wasn't here the whole time; only at the end I added a couple of words...

MR. TRZCINSKI. But what kind of words...

MRS. TRZCINSKA. (*speaking kindly*) enough, enough, my dear, go to him and ask him to come for dinner, tell him, that I, hmm, I am asking him to dinner!

MR. TRZCINSKI. I am afraid to go there, maybe its better to send a footman?

MRS. TRZCINSKA. God forbid! That would be in bad taste! You alone, personally should go, apologize that you insulted him in your hastiness...

MR. TRZCINSKI. But it was you who...

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Just don't deny it now, you yourself were boasting about it; how you "showed him your resolve"!

MR. TRZCINSKI. I will go then, but the worst part, how do I start...

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Tell him that I am asking...

MR. TRZCINSKI. She truly has a heart!

FLORA. Mom! he loves me!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. You look better now, do you feel less sick?

FLORA. Much better, not sick at all actually, I could go downtown by myself (*to Flora U*), so you are giving my Astolf back?

FLORA U. But you know that I did not take him away from you!

FLORA. (*hugging Flora U*) O, my golden girl! I wasn't mistaken about you, ach! I feel strong now, like a fish in water!

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Didn't I say that no one ever died of heartache...

(*Two Floras are embracing each other*)

End of ACT 2

### ACT 3

(*a room in Ukrop's family house*)

#### SCENE 1: UKROP

UKROP. (*holding in hand an opened letter, walking irritated*) This is unheard off, to have the audacity to ridicule me like that; to philander under my roof without my knowledge and permission! Wait, my daughter, I will knock these romances out of your head! What a scoundrel, to betray me and her Mother like this! Her Mother... (*he is thinking*) but, who knows maybe her Mother knew about it all along, because this is the way this female tribe always keeps together, plots against us, even husbands! But wait, I will get to the bottom of that thing and then, woe! (*he rings*)

(*a footman enters*)

UKROP. Go fetch the Lady (*the footman leaves with a bow*) If I allowed for everything, they would...

## SCENE 2. UKROP. MRS. UKROP.

MRS. UKROP. So acidy again...what's new this time?

UKROP. What? This letter (*squeezes it*), letter, that you and your little darling well knew about, where is she?

MRS. UKROP. She left to Trzcinski's house for a while.

UKROP. A-ha! To Flora, and more likely to some Floridian<sup>104</sup>, but wait, I will show her when she gets back!

MRS. UKROP (*folding her arms*) Man, did the evil posses you again? What do you want from that child? Isn't she allowed to even leave a house?

UKROP. Ey, woman! I am telling you, if you know about her trysts and keeping them secret from me, I will show you both!

MRS. UKROP. But, my dear, at least tell me what this is all about.

UKROP. (*giving her the letter*) Read!

MRS. UKROP. (*reading*) "My dearest Flora! The news that I just received smite me like a lightning".

UKROP...he refers to my letter

MRS. UKROP. "how could I renounce you, my dearest, I would rather commit a murder."

UKROP. ...on me, of course

MRS. UKROP. "I can not believe in my misfortune, unless I hear it from my angel's lips - the verdict, that would make me the most unhappy of all men...One more time I need to see you, my dearest, and immediately".

UKROP. Jackanapes "needs to see her"!

MRS. UKROP. "Today after lunch at 3 pm, during your father's afternoon nap..."

UKROP. (*clenching his fists*) Oy, I will be sleeping!!

MRS. UKROP. "I will expect you at the Flora market, there..."

UKROP. Now the best part...

MRS. UKROP. "where we pledged an eternal love for one another"

UKROP. And what you to this, ha?

MRS. UKROP. "from your lips only I want to hear, that you are the first one to break our promise – in case of you not showing up, something terrible will happen. Your Edward".

UKROP. (*taking back the letter*) "Something horrible will happen", did you hear it? Horrible! He is threatening to murder me! On the basis of that letter, I could have him arrested. But I am not afraid of such imbeciles, and I will show him, what Ukrop name means!

MRS. UKROP. How did this letter get into your hands?

UKROP. Ha! You wish I just gave it to your daughter without breaking the seal?

MRS. UKROP. If it wasn't addressed to you...

UKROP. Two thousand devils! A father has the right to read his child's letters, no?

MRS. UKROP. Please calm down!

UKROP. What stories come to light! This little goose this morning tells me about her fatigue with such an innocent face, that only a devil would have suspected that it was all a play! Thank God, I did not forget to ask right away for the ring back, and the little lawyer, right away writes her back, without suspicion that his letter will get into my hands!

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<sup>104</sup>Floridian – masculine form derived from the feminine Flora

MRS. UKROP. He does not say anything about the ring...

UKROP. But I was explicitly asking him to give it back...It will be truly dandy, if she gave it to him willingly and he will claim some right to it. What a disgrace! I should, from my shame, pull all my hair out of my head!

MRS. UKROP. But, dear husband, don't fret, maybe it is some misunderstanding, our Flora never hid anything from us.

UKROP. Silence! Don't defend her. If you don't know anything, which I am doubting, that means you were lied to too; it means that when she says she goes to a friend, she will be in an embrace of a seducer; but this letter revealed their plotting!

MRS. UKROP. And what are you planning to do with it?

UKROP. For now it will be in my pocket, and after lunch I am to the market to stand face to face with Astolf Lucki.

MRS. UKROP. For the love of God, you don't even know that lawyer Lucki!

UKROP. I am planning on meeting him.

MRS. UKROP. Dear Wincent, remember our past! Weren't we also forced to hide with our love?

UKROP. Yes, we had to, but our daughter does not need to; I don't care if he is a shoemaker, a tailor or a poor laborer, only not an apothecary! Is she truly so desperate to have a husband, she should at least present him to us; I am not made out of stone!

MRS. UKROP. Poor child, she is probably afraid of your wrath...so she prefers to be silent, at least temporarily.

UKROP. How these women keep together, unbelievable! You are her mother; instead of scolding her, you are ready to give her lessons on love affairs! But I won't allow for this, as long as I am the head of this house!

MRS. UKROP. (*crying*) My God, what I have to go through since early morning!

UKROP. No, no, please stop, don't cry Magdzia, you know, I am so edgy and jumpy and you irritated me – I will improve, I promise, solemnly declare, and to prove it I will kiss your hand (*he kisses her hand*) because tell me yourself, my love: Does our girl need to make acquaintances without our knowledge? I have told her long time ago, she can choose whoever she wants as long as he is not an apothecary, because I have confessed to you, that these chemists... I can not stand!

MRS. UKROP. Why such antipathy?

UKROP. Eh, you see, these apothecaries are the biggest swindlers in the world; they take twenty percent for their goods, and they stink! I need to clog my nose with tissue to be around them!

MRS. UKROP. But you, booksellers, are the same; if you can make a profit somehow, you will do it, you were telling it to me yourself...

UKROP. Ba, ba, ba! Booksellers are different! We need to do it, because we sometimes sell so few books and the rest sits on shelves!

MRS. UKROP. Aren't apothecary's goods perishable? They spoil when not sold on time!

UKROP. And look, my love, in my bookstore... so many mice in the best departments! They chew through the best volumes, leaving behind only chaff; but a chemist will use even rotten herbs for his medicines and sell it.

MRS. UKROP. Well, let's not argue more. We know she is not in love with an apothecary and if you could just a bit hold your horses, she would have professed everything to us.

UKROP. Very well, I will control myself, you will see, but first of all, sit down here by the table, I will dictate to you (*he brings ink, paper and pen*).

MRS. UKROP. What's that?

UKROP. Write down that at three o'clock even I will be at the Flora market. Then as a signature put "F" and four periods.

MRS. UKROP. (*unhappily*) For God's sake, what's that suppose to mean?

UKROP. It is the answer from our Flora for the rendezvous request.

MRS. UKROP. What are you trying to do?

UKROP. Write, write without arguments - I will send the letter to Lucki so he can come to the meeting at the arranged place and time.

MRS. UKROP. God!

UKROP. Write!

MRS. UKROP. Exactly what time?

UKROP. Three o'clock.

MRS. UKROP. "...at 3 pm I am at Flora market, F..."

UKROP. (*looking at the letter*) Good, I am sending it right away.

MRS. UKROP. Do you know what idea came to my head?

UKROP. How am I supposed to know, a Holy Spirit wouldn't know what sometimes get's into woman's head.

MRS. UKROP. Lucki is, most likely, poor, so they are hiding with their love...

UKROP. That's not good - a poor man should not engage in love affairs, and especially should not love a pretty girl - because the prettier, the most costly!

MRS. UKROP. We need to really find out, only be kind to her, and sooner or later she will tell you herself.

UKROP. I will control myself, you will see (*behind the wall Flora is singing*).

MRS. UKROP. She came back singing.

UKROP. She is singing!

### SCENE 3: FLORA U. MRS. UKROP, UKROP.

FLORA U. Here - I am back again, ach, my dear Daddy, what a beautiful day! I completely freshened up by being outside - such walk I should do every day, it is so revitalizing, especially for young people.

UKROP. And where did you go so early, my dear little cuckoo?

Flora U. (*throwing an embrace at him*) that you have to call me these names, that are so far away from what I really am!

UKROP. According to the tradition, a woman is not a human, but a rib.

FLORA U. How you are sometimes pesky with your deductions, my Daddy, thank God, not everyone shares your views.

UKROP. (*remembering something*) Listen, Miss Flora, tell me, but don't lie, where did you go this morning?

FLORA U. I was at Trzcinski's - I had to explain to them that yesterday's rumpus at the wedding.

UKROP. You "had to" - hm, a funny duty. And where were you later?

FLORA U. Straight back to the house - I stopped only by the kitchen, the roast is beautifully brown, it will be delicious...

UKROP. (*impatiently*) Well, I just wanted to know why your lawyer did not send back the ring.

FLORA. (*showing a ring on her finger*) It's here.

UKROP. Ha! You Beelzebub's daughter!!

FLORA U. Are you well, Father? You seem to be so absentminded...

UKROP. So, did you meet him on the street?

FLORA U. Of course not, such occasions don't happen so often, not as often as we wish.

UKROP. So you wished for that meeting?

FLORA U. (*laughing*) But you became an inquisitor, my Father! and if I did not want to answer that question?

UKROP. (*trying to control anger*) I would not ask any more (*to his wife*) Is that good? (*Mrs. Ukrop nods her head*) But if you decided to tell me, please tell me later – I need to leave for a moment

(*he is leaving*).

#### SCENE 4. FLORA. MRS. UKROP.

MRS. UKROP. Flora, can you still look into my eyes?

FLORA U. What does it mean, mom?

MRS. UKROP. Ungrateful child, why didn't you confess to me, your mother?

FLORA U. I will tell you everything later, Father is coming!

#### SCENE 5. UKROP.MRS. UKROP. FLORA U.

UKROP. Thank God, my business is done, and now, my daughter, if you made up your mind, my child, tell us your story, I gladly will listen.

FLORA U. Very well, Father. You know that I left the house early in the morning..

UKROP. You know, maybe not, don't tell anything, I don't want stories where a listener doesn't know how much truth is in the whole story.

FLORA U. Father, but I am not planning on not telling you the truth!

UKROP. Ha! Ha! Ha! You should have been a witness how I, just a minute ago, sent away a fellow, who came to congratulate you on yesterday's engagement!

FLORA U. What does it all mean?

UKROP. It means, that yesterday's scandal is being talked about in the whole city, and everyone is believing it.

FLORA U. Let them believe, Father, we are not guilty of anything bad.

UKROP. And so, knowing of your innocence, I thanked the fellow and sent him away.

Before that I assured him that your acquaintance with Lucki has been long and in secret.

FLORA. (*clapping in her hands*) It's perfect, Father, I need to kiss you for that!

UKROP. No need – you know, that I even told him that on the Flora market, you know where, at the end of the park, you both pledged love to one another.

FLORA. Ach! Father, but how did you know?

UKROP. (*facing Flora, with hands on hips*) Coment Mademoiselle?

MRS. UKROP. (*coming between them*).Husband, calm down!

UKROP. (*with thundering voice*) Move to the side!

MRS. UKROP. For God's sake, Husband! What are you doing?

UKROP. Silence! Both of you are worth less than a pipe of tobacco!  
(*he leaves, enraged*)

#### SCENE 6. MRS. UKROP. FLORA U.

FLORA U. (*crying she approaches her mother*) Mom dearest, who betrayed me, who?

MRS. UKROP. Child dearest, what have you done? I don't want to excite your father's anger, but in his absence, I am telling you that he is right. My God! What a wretched Mother I am! Why didn't you tell me the truth?

LAURA U. I did not want to worry you, Mommy...

MRS. UKROP. Does this man have debts?

FLORA U. As much as I know, no debts, but he lives very sparingly, despite his good income. But tell me, Mother, how did Father find out about the Flora market?

MRS. UKROP. In your absence a letter came to you from Lucki. Father, suspecting something, broke the seal and read it.

FLORA U. But, how Lucki's letter could betray me?...

MRS. UKROP. The letter starts "dearest Flora, message that I received struck me like a lightning"...

FLORA U. (*with surprise*) Is it signed by Lucki?

MRS. UKROP. No, just "Edward".

FLORA U. O, my God! So it was from Edward!

MRS. UKROP. He does not want to give up on you, and says that terrible things will happen if you won't be at three pm at Flora's market. Father, as you can imagine, after reading it became very angry, and with his temper... he decided to go by himself at three pm to this place.

FLORA U. My God! This will end badly! I don't care about Lucki! I am in love with Edward, the apothecary, Edward Wist..

MRS. UKROP. An apothecary?? Poor child!

FLORA U. Someone must have told him about my engagement to Lucki, which was a farce and nothing more. Now he thinks that I have been unfaithful... I need to see him, I need to see him at once... even if this brought the most severe consequences.

MRS. UKROP....but an apothecary"?

Flora U. So what, that he is a chemist?

MRS. UKROP. O, my Savior, how will this all end?

LAURA U. I don't know - but of one I am sure (*thinking for a moment*), we need to outsmart Father; he knows neither Lucki nor Edward. If Edward could for a couple of minutes pretend to be Lucki, I would bet my father would get to like him (*with exaltation*) because he has such a great presence that you would, my mom, love him dearly, if only you met him!

MRS. UKROP. This all will be for nothing, because Lucki, after receiving the letter from your Father, will be there as well...

FLORA U. Is that invitation signed with my name?

MRS. UKROP. Only "F" and four periods.

FLORA U. So Lucki will think it is from his Flora Trzcinski, and he will surely show up.

MRS. UKROP. We need to ask Flora Trzcinska to come as well...

FLORA U. I will write to her immediately and ask her to be there at three on the dot; I am sure that with them present, my Father will be nicer to my Edward.

MRS. UKROP. Go, write quickly and I, in the meantime, will change the clocks 15 minutes late, then I will go to Flora's market and warn Lucki.

FLORA U. (*kissing her*) You are so good, my mom...Father is coming, I am leaving (*departs to the left side*)

## SCENE 7. UKROP, MRS. UKROP.

UKROP. And where is this little dove; has she confessed?

MRS. UKROP. You will be surprised when I tell you something else than you actually expect!

UKROP. Say then.

MRS. UKROP. Flora swears that she does not love Lucki.

UKROP. God, like on a carousel!

MRS. UKROP. She does not care for him at all.

UKROP. I don't believe her, and I don't believe you either. If I told her that I allow for that marriage, she would be jumping from joy; but she sees that I am not joking here, so she is trying her quibbles.

MRS. UKROP. But I know better...

UKROP. Don't you, women, always "know better"? What if I changed my mind and said that I like this Lucki as my son-in-law? Because, you see, I read his letter a couple of times, and I see this young man has integrity! Some other man, in his place, would be crying and complaining, but he's got a plan! With such a man you could have a conversation, a discussion even, because with you, cry-babies, when there is trouble, no way I can talk properly.

MRS. UKROP. So you don't believe that Flora does not think about Lucki..

UKROP. (*angrily*) of course not! And where is that scamp?

MRS. UKROP. (*runs to the side door*). Flora! Come here for a minute!

## SCENE 8. FLORA U., UKROP. MRS. UKROP.

UKROP. Oh, sweet daughter of mine, you pulled the wool over your Mother's eyes, but not mine! Answer, do you love Lucki or not?

FLORA U. No, I don't love him.

UKROP. Kneel here and swear.

FLORA U. I solemnly swear that I don't love Lucki!

UKROP. (*covering his ears, screaming*) Blasphemy! Blasphemy and cowardice! I don't want to have to do anything with this anymore! If you have said "I love Lucki" I would have agreed on your marriage. But now, I don't have pity for you, or compassion for you anymore!! Now I swear (*he is kneeling*) I swear that I would rather have my head chopped off than to allow for your marriage with Lucki! (*he is leaving*)

## ACT 4

(*room in Astolf's house*)

## SCENE 1

BLAZEJ. (*with a broom in his hand*). Well, he's still not back, maybe they decided to keep him... in his young lady's house, maybe he managed to get their forgiveness..or maybe he went somewhere...

## SCENE 2. ASTOLF, BLAZEJ.

ASTOLF. (*walks in with resignation, does not notice Blazej at all*)

BLAZEJ. (*looking at Astolf from the side*) Oh, I see how the things are...(*he is screaming*)  
Master!

ASTOLF. What now?

BLAZEJ. He did not show up here agin..

ASTOLF. Who?

BLAZEJ. That one that I was supposed to keep here.

ASTOLF. I don't care about it anymore...

BLAZEJ. So then, I don't care either...

ASTOLF. So this is how they treated me..

BLAZEJ. (*to himself*) They had to really tell him off, judging by his melancholy (*to Astolf*)  
Master, I will go to them..

ASTOLF. What? Where? What for?

BLAZEJ. Where they beat ya down so severely, I will show them!

ASTOLF. Oh! I am shaking from anger on memory of their treatment – a bootblack could not have been treated worse!

BLAZEJ. Ah! A bootblack! If I only were there! I also demand satisfaction!

ASTOLF. Oh – you are stupid, you. I need to root her out of my heart and the case will be closed.

BLAZEJ. Oh, this does not come so easily...

ASTOLF. What comes?

BLAZEJ. Rooting ya love out from ya heart – I know that...

ASTOLF. You? How come?

BLAZEJ. When I was a farmhand, from all girls I truly liked only one, Danusia, but since I left her, I could not look at any other girl the same...

ASTOLF. Couldn't you get an agreement with her?

BLAZEJ. How could I agree with her, when she married another?

ASTOLF. She cheated on you?

BLAZEJ. Even if she cheated on me, I still would have liked her.

ASTOLF. (*a bit surprised*). She did not want you?

BLAZEJ. Maybe she would have...I did not ask her.

ASTOLF. What then??

BLAZEJ. You see, Master, it was like this. Danusia worked at the same household with me, and I was the bootblack for the students; they had there room and board. Somehow, it happened a lot, when I was going up-stairs, she was going down, enough, that I fell madly in love with her... three months I secretly loved her, and I suffered, and I lost so much weight and finally, in the forth month I said, I can not take it any longer, I have to start talking to her, but how? It was spring at that time, so I cut some field flowers and, to make a bouquet bigger, I added some parsley and feathers. I gave it to her when she was walking downstairs, she stopped, laughed, grabbed the bouquet and run upstairs with it. She used to sit in her room by her window and sew, so I went outside to see her, but I saw a squirrel chewing on my bouquet...I swore violently, I felt awfully bad and I never went back to that house, I left rather hurriedly. A week later I hear that she married some soaplock student...

ASTOLF. (*who listened quite patiently*) Blazej, take out from the cupboard a bottle of wine and two glasses, we need to cheer ourselves up..

BLAZEJ. (*scratching his head*) but, Mr. Astolf, how can ya with ya footman drink a

bruderschaft?

ASTOLF. Ah, not a footman, but with a decent man everyone should raise a glass.

BLAZEJ. Ba!

ASTOLF. The parents of my fiance already think I am a drunk.

BLAZEJ. Let them think whatever they want, they also probably won't refuse a drink.

ASTOLF. (*slapping him on shoulder*). Yes, yes, Blazej, so I thought on the way here, that Flora does not love me truly; she wouldn't made such a fuss with her parents about everything.

BLAZEJ. Toast to women – they are to blame!

### SCENE 3. EDWARD. ASTOLF. BLAZEJ.

(*Blazej standing in the middle of the room with a flask and two glasses, opens his mouth in surprise*)

EDWARD. Mr. Lucki?

ASTOLF. To your service – with whom I have the pleasure?

EDWARD. (*pointing to Blazej*) I need to talk to you alone.

ASTOLF. This is my footman...

EDWARD. Please, tell him to leave us for a moment alone.

ASTOLF. Blazej, leave wine and glasses on the table and leave for a while.

BLAZEJ. (*looking at Edward with open disdain*) Yea, this way I won't have even a drop from this flask left for me (*leaving*).

### SCENE 4. EDWARD, ASTOLF.

ASTOLF. (*moving a chair towards Edward*) So, Mister, we are alone, how can I help you?

EDWARD. (*not sitting down*) You will probably recognize me when I tell you that I am the apothecary Wist.

ASTOLF. Oh! Apothecary Wist, I know, of course, from ads..

EDWARD. ...and maybe from somewhere else?

ASTOLF. I regret to admit, but no.

EDWARD. So, to the point. I came here to announce that if the rumor that spread in the town is true, one of us needs to die today.

ASTOLF. Wow, but you would be that one.

EDWARD. We will see about that.

ASTOLF. Of course, that we will find out.

EDWARD. You got engaged yesterday?

ASTOLF. Jeweler Kirk can assure of that.

EDWARD. Oh, I will find out from various sources, what tricks you used to seduce her, and then we will fight with a handkerchief as the distance between us!

ASTOLF. The width or the length?

EDWARD. For me it does not matter.

ASTOLF. Really?

EDWARD. Yes, really, if you are not a mean coward...

ASTOLF. The last cliché that you expressed, plus the troubles you have to cause your handkerchief, it all trifles me, but please, tell me, why do you trouble yourself so much coming here?

EDWARD. I have first rights to your fiance.

ASTOLF. First..rights...to Flora?

EDWARD. Yes, to Flora. I have not seen her for last eight days, but I have her word since last fall, and as long as I live, Mr. Lucki, you will not lead her to the altar, unless after my dead body!

ASTOLF. Since last fall, you are saying?

EDWARD. I will tell you even more, we promised each other eternal love at the Flora market, and I will see her today at three pm; I am sure she will come, although she betrayed me...

ASTOLF. (*calming down*) Please sit down, try these cigars.

EDWARD. Mister, do you want to insult me in your own house?

ASTOLF. Not at all, your visit is important, very important...first of all I need to assure you that you have no obstacles in marrying her, my engagement to her is already broken.

EDWARD. (*surprised*) broken?

ASTOLF. You can see it from this letter (*gives him the letter that was on the table*).

EDWARD. "Mr. Lucki!" - yes, this looks like the old man's handwriting (*he is reading*), until comes to "in the state" - what does it supposed to mean?

ASTOLF. Read more and you'll find out.

EDWARD. (*reading to the end*) Thank God! Flora is innocent!

ASTOLF. About that we will talk later...

EDWARD. Mr. Lucki, I want to shake your hand, apologize for my rashness.

ASTOLF. (*with disdain*) Let's not talk about it any more...

EDWARD. And that ring, that they talk about, where is it?

ASTOLF. Go for it to Flora's parents, I returned it there.

EDWARD. Oh, God forbid! I was never in their house, the old man can not stand apothecaries – and if he knew about my relationship with his daughter – and knowing his violent personality – God knows what he would do?...

ASTOLF. "Violent personality" - no, I never noticed that...

EDWARD. Oh, yes, and this letter proves it.

ASTOLF. Maybe it was dictated by his neurotic wife, who obviously, is the boss in that house.

EDWARD. I don't know...Flora has been always telling me that her mom is an "angel of goodness"

ASTOLF. No, I have been visiting them all winter, I saw it myself, she's no angel.

EDWARD. "All winter" ..and Flora never mentioned about it?

ASTOLF. And now we reached that "innocence" moment – you were saying about a meeting with her?

EDWARD. Yes, in desperation I demanded from her a meeting today at three pm during her father's afternoon nap.

ASTOLF. You are wrong here, her Father never sleeps during the day.

EDWARD. These were the only hours I could see her, when he had his nap...

ASTOLF. I visited them so many times for lunch and stayed until dinner and her Father never slept..

EDWARD. But that Flora was hiding your visits from me, why?

ASTOLF. Because she is a wicked coquette!

EDWARD. (*with anger*) Mister, take it back!

ASTOLF. (*with irony*) What, are you going to threaten me with your handkerchief again?

I need to tell you openly, that I have been in love with her for a very long time, and she has been giving me many signs that she felt the same.

EDWARD. What? She? It is impossible – it is jealousy speaking through you!

ASTOLF. If you know your medicines as well as you know psychology, then I feel sorry for your patients.

EDWARD. Watch it, because I will end you.

ASTOLF. (*opening the door*) Blazej! This gentleman is feeling ill, take him outside for some fresh air (*Blazej folding up his sleeves*)

EDWARD. (*moving his hat to the back of his head*) To thousand devils, Mr. Lucki, we will make an appointment for later! (*leaving hastily*)

#### SCENE 5. ASTOLF. BLAZEJ.

ASTOLF. I am hoping for it. (*to Blazej*) Close the door. She is in love with this man, congratulations!

BLAZEJ. (*looking at the bottle of wine at the table*) I never was as thirsty in all my born days. Mr. Astolf, there was a messenger here (*takes a note out of his pocket*) and wanted to give ya that letter.

ASTOLF. For me? (*reading*) “At 3 pm on the dot I will be at Flora's market”. Signed “F” and four dots. What's that suppose to mean? It must be from Flora (*he is thinking*) this is something terrible, to call me to the place where she wants to meet with him...(*hits his forehead*) this is unheard off! She fell so low in my eyes already, but this beats everything...I am not going, but will a lowly person like that understand silence as an answer? I will go and revenge myself terribly. Blazej!

BLAZEJ. (*who was moving closer and closer to the table*) What, what my Master?

ASTOLF. Drink that bottle by yourself.

BLAZEJ. But, Mr. Astolf

ASTOLF. Drink, drink it to my health! I need to go downtown.

BLAZEJ. May I ask where is Master going?

ASTOLF. I need to be at Flora's market, you know where...

BLAZEJ. I know, I know, where a stone statue of a girl stands in the park, but please be careful...

ASTOLF. I need to tell you one thing (*he is taking his hat*) now the banker could be giving me his daughter on a plate, and I would not take her! Zoroaster lived alone on an island only so he could not see women (*he leaves*).

#### SCENE 6. BLAZEJ.

BLAZEJ.

To live for twenty years alone...(shakes his head) I could never do that...that he did not spoil his stomach in this lifestyle , O, how many unexplainable things in this world (*taking the bottle*), but we understand each other, my flask, I am your Master now...(knocking on door) Is someone knocking?

#### SCENE 7. BLAZEJ. MR. TRZCINSKI.

MR. TRZCINSKI. Good Morning.

BLAZEJ. *(talking to himself)* First time I see him, his shoes are polished, and quite well dressed...

MR. TRZCINSKI. May I speak with Mr. Lucki?

BLAZEJ. No, because he's not home.

MR. TRZCINSKI. It's too bad – do you know where I could find him?

BLAZEJ. I know, I know, on some market, but I think I forgot, he was supposed to meet a lady, I forgot her last name.

MR. TRZCINSKI. My name is Trzcinski, banker Trzcinski.

BLAZEJ. You have the daughter that my Master was hoping to marry?

MR. TRZCINSKI. So you know, brother!

BLAZEJ. *(drinking)* I wanted to tell you that you are an awful, awful man.

MR. TRZCINSKI. What? What? Who are you?

BLAZEJ. I am Mr. Lucki's friend and I will repeat again that you're an awful man *(drinking more from the flask)*.

MR. TRZCINSKI. What am I hearing? *(he grabs his head in disbelief)*

BLAZEJ. Ya see wine, ya hear truth.

MR. TRZCINSKI. You are drinking his wine, that does not belong to you.

BLAZEJ. Because I can, you need to know that Lucki and I are like one body, one mind *(screaming)* and even if you were to give us your daughter on a plate, we don't want her!

MR. TRZCINSKI. To insult me like that! Flunkey!

BLAZEJ. And didn't you insult my Master? I will pay you back, you vile creature! *(taking his broom and is hitting Trzcinski with it – Trzcinski runs away)*

## ACT 5

*(Market in the park with Flora statue, bushes around the statue, some benches)*

### SCENE 1. MRS. UKROP, Astolf

MRS. UKROP. *(veiled, looking around, finally she sees someone approaching)*. It's him, it's Lucki – not any other – according to Flora's description it must be him.

ASTOLF. *(looking at Mrs. Ukrop)* Someone is sitting there, looks like a woman, ah, how I can't stand any of them now *(he comes to sitting Mrs. Ukrop and taking his hat off, stands in front of her)* Excuse me, Madam, that I dare to disturb you, but my duty tells me to warn you about the incoming storm. Look above you, at the dark clouds gathered right over your head...

MRS. UKROP. I don't see the danger yet, Mister.

ASTOLF. You don't see it from your bench, but you can clearly see the clouds when you go to the other side of this park *(pointing towards the center of the park)*. Trust me, I know a lot about such symptoms of nature. Look over there, on the road, a cab – I will stop it and you could get in...

MRS. UKROP. Truly, too much civility on your side.

ASTOLF. I am doing what everyone would do *(wants to run)*.

MRS. UKROP. *(getting up)* If this storm really is coming...

ASTOLF. Unmistakably.

MRS. UKROP. So you also won't make it in time under a roof... so I will get in the cab, but only with you.

ASTOLF. *(to himself)* Damn it! *(loud)* Madam, don't trouble yourself with me – I am a

gentleman, I would even admit to you, that I like to be outside when it rains; additionally I made up my mind to be today in the park.

MRS.UKROP. Same here.

ASTOLF. But, dear God! You don't even have an umbrella with you!

MRS.UKROP. Neither you do.

ASTOLF. My wardrobe is made especially for such occasions. I simply love weepy, melancholic nature: thunders, lightnings, thunderbolts – it's my poetry!

MRS.UKROP. You are talking as if an earthly thunder stroke you.

ASTOLF. What do you understand by that, Madam?

MRS.UKROP. If I am not mistaken, I have in front of me Mr. Lucki?

ASTOLF. How come I am known to you, Madam?

MRS.UKROP. Well...you got engaged yesterday?

ASTOLF. Strange, that everyone is so much into this...

MRS.UKROP. Maybe you can explain things to me, I am Flora's mother.

ASTOLF. Flora's mother? You will excuse me, Madam, ha, ha, ha! I never say mean things to ladies, but I need to tell you that you are lying, because I have known Flora's mother for months.

MRS.UKROP. (*looking around*) Are you assuming, that one needs to be only Mrs. Trzcinska to be “Flora's mother”? By the way, Mrs. Trzcinska is only a stepmother.

ASTOLF. (*surprised*) Madam, please explain yourself! So you are the real mother of Flora?

MRS.UKROP. Yes, I am a real mother of my Flora.

MRS.UKROP. Are you sure that you proposed to Miss Trzcinska?

ASTOLF. Ach! Now the veil is falling off my mind! Oh, me stupid! So it is your daughter that I insulted!

MRS.UKROP. Let's hope my husband is not coming soon...

ASTOLF. So it will be your husband that will strike my head like a thunder.

MRS.UKROP. My husband thinks, that the letter written by Edward Wist, in which he asks my daughter to come here at tree pm, comes from you – as a result of my husband's letter that you received this morning. And he forced me to write this little note with four periods at the end, that you assumed came from Flora.

ASTOLF. (*wiping his forehead with a handkerchief*) My head is spinning.

MRS.UKROP. He will come here, instead of your Flora, to demand from you satisfaction. And what do you say to that? Now I am warning you about the incoming storm...

ASTOLF. I am surprised myself that I did not collapse yet over the multitude of events, that like a thunderbolts have hit me on the head; you, your husband, his letter, your note, finally Mr. Wist, all so perfumed (*he is holding his head*).

MRS.UKROP. He is coming, my husband...Mister, don't tell him I was here, he does not know...I will in the meantime hide in the bushes... (*she disappears in bushes*).

ASTOLF. One last thing, Madam, your last name?

MRS.UKROP. Ukrop.

ASTOLF. (*sitting down on the bench, thinking*) How delicate his stride! The ground is shaking...

(*a cuckoo heard in the background*)

SCENE 2. UKROP.

UKROP. (*catching his breath*) They say that when a cuckoo calls, a heart starts beating faster, but mine is thumping like a hummer (*he is looking around and sees Astolf*)

### SCENE 3. ASTOLF, UKROP

Aha! Here he is! Not so badly dressed as for a lawyer – does he see me or he does not want to see me? (*coming closer to Astolf*) A beautiful bird, a cuckoo, don't you think Edward? (*Astolf is looking at him with disdain*) Voice like that, it echoes in your soul, don't you think?

ASTOLF. Are you talking to me?

UKROP. Yes, Edward.

ASTOLF. How dare you address me with such familiarity, I don't know you!

UKROP. (*taking out a letter from his pocket*) See, this letter, Mister? This letter made it to my hands!

ASTOLF. What do I care about someone's letters?

UKROP. Look at it closely.

ASTOLF. I am not familiar with that handwriting.

UKROP. (*screaming*) But this is a tremendous rudeness, Mr. Lucki!

ASTOLF. Mister! Do you know who you are dealing with?

UKROP. What a question is it? Do you know who you have in front of you?

ASTOLF. No, people like you don't interest me, leave now.

UKROP. What, am I supposed to leave?

ASTOLF. Yes, and right away, because I am meeting here with a lady.

UKROP. “with a lady” - with my daughter, Edward!

ASTOLF. Dear Mister, so you know and you came to disturb us, that is really tactless.

UKROP. (*breathing heavily*) This is really too much, I need to sit down (*sitting down*)

ASTOLF. It was a great idea on behalf of the town council that they invested in these benches.

UKROP. (*jumping away from the lawyer*) Mister! Did you make an acquaintance with a devil?

ASTOLF. I don't know, maybe.

UKROP. No, that is so bizarre, a never met a man like that before.

ASTOLF. Same here

UKROP. (*getting up*) Listen up, here, I am telling you with solemnity, that until they bury me, you won't get my daughter as your wife.

ASTOLF. You can even put it in your will, that I won't get her after your death, I could not care less.

UKROP. I won't do it, just to vex you!

ASTOLF. You won't do any damage to me by that, rest assured.

UKROP. Mister, stop provoking me, I am ready...

ASTOLF...what for example?

UKROP. To force my daughter to marry another.

ASTOLF. Let your daughter choose him by herself.

UKROP. Because, she would choose you, I understand!

ASTOLF. I, on my hand, wish her all the happiness.

UKROP. And did you love the girl at least?

ASTOLF. I did not say it.

UKROP. I need to lay down, I feel nauseous.

ASTOLF. And who told you I am in love with your daughter?

UKROP. You have a date with her here, damn it!

ASTOLF. You are only assuming that...

UKROP. You want to confuse me, I know, it is written here, black on white (*showing him the letter*)

ASTOLF. I told you already once, that I did not write it, only an apothecary would have such horrible handwriting.

UKROP. An...apothecary?!

SCENE 4. ASTOLF, UKROP, EDWARD.

EDWARD.(with anger) Yes, an apothecary.

UKROP. (*to Astolf*) I will kill you!

EDWARD. I will kill him too – not only you called Flora a lowly flirt, you also come here sooner so you could be with her alone and turn her father against me!

ASTOLF. I did not come for your Flora here.

EDWARD and UKROP. “Our Flora”?

ASTOLF. But, is there only one Flora in this world? (*pointing at statue*) this is also Flora.

UKROP. I don't understand it at all – upon my word, I don't get it (*to Astolf*) Did you Mister go mad? Which one of you is Edward?

EDWARD. It's me.

UKROP. An apothecary?

ASTOLF. Yes, you could have recognized it from far away.

EDWARD. (*hissing to Astolf*) you will pay for this (*to Ukrop, kneeling*) Mister Ukrop, I love your daughter.

UKROP. (*runs away*). I don't want to hear about anything!

SCENE 5. EDWARD, FLORA U., ASTOLF.

FLORA U. Edward, my Edward! (*she runs to him*)

EDWARD. Flora, I see you again, I am so happy, so all this is a lie?

UKROP. (*separating them*) You, wicked child! (*in this moment, from bushes jumps out Mrs. Ukrop*)

MRS. UKROP. Husband!

UKROP. (*surprised*) What is this? you are coming out from bushes like some salamander! Where the devil will not go, he will send a woman...what was I saying?

Flora U. Mr. Lucki, today at Flora's parent's house I spoke strongly in your defense, I am sure, that all is well, Mr. and Mrs. Trzcinski have almost forgiven you.

ASTOLF. So, they know, how this whole thing played?

FLORA U. From A to Z

ASTOLF. And how about Flora?

FLORA U. Very happy, beside herself.

ASTOLF. (*squeezing her hands*) How will I ever repay you?

FLORA U. Advocate for me to my Father!

ASTOLF. Madam, that will be a challenge...

UKROP. (*who was walking around and listening*) I am speaking frankly: as a Father, I

need to know everything!

ASTOLF. *(to Ukrop)* Who do you think will be a better husband for your daughter? me or this one? *(pointing to Edward)*.

UKROP. That's enough. First, I need to consult my ladies...they are responsible *(talking to his wife and daughter)* And who turned the clocks in the house? Hm? Is it respectable to make a fool out of me and plot behind my back? You went so far that you forgot, that I am the head of this house? Don't even dare to show yourselves to me, I don't want you back in my house, I don't have a wife and daughter anymore, you shamed our name forever! I don't want you in the house anymore *(leaving)*.

MRS. UKROP. Husband, think what you are doing! *(leaves after him)*

SCENE 6. FLORA U., EDWARD, ASTOLF.

FLORA U. *(crying)* What are we now going to do?

EDWARD. Don't cry dearest, I will never leave you, you and your Mother can be with me.

FLORA U. Never, never I would marry you without my Father's blessing!

ASTOLF. Why didn't you defend the honor of your profession better?

EDWARD. It is my business.

SCENE 7. FLORA U., EDWARD, ASTOLF, BLAZEJ.

BLAZEJ. *(almost completely drunk, laughing)* Mr. Astolf, he, he, he.

ASTOLF. What do you want Blazej?

*(to others)* please excuse me for a minute, it is my footman. Where are you coming from?

BLAZEJ. From the house, ha, ha.

ASTOLF. You are completely drunk, you idiot!!

BLAZEJ. And I told him, ha, ha, that... if he wanted to give his daughter on a plate, he, that we, Master, we don't want her!

ASTOLF. Deranged!

BLAZEJ. He was so shocked, I had to throw him out using a broom.

ASTOLF. You monster! What have you done? I am ruined, ruined!

BLAZEJ. My Master, yesterday did not know what he was doing, and same today! I rushed here, I flew like a bullet to bring him some happiness and this is how he repays me? I could have gotten pneumonia *(offended, leaves)*

SCENE 8. ASTOLF, FLORA U., EDWARD,

FLORA U. *(coming to Astolf)* My God, what happened, why are you so pale?

ASTOLF. My footman destroyed my happiness, he offended Trzcinski in my house, I can not have any hope now.

FLORA U. Maybe your unhappiness is not sealed yet – look over there! *(points inside where Trzcinski and his daughter are)*

ASTOLF. Oh, who I am seeing, mercy, mercy, I am pleading for mercy.

SCENE 9. MR. TRZCINSKI, ASTOLF, MRS. TRZCINSKA, FLORA U.

MR. TRZCINSKI. Don't beg, Astolf, we offended you too.

ASTOLF. Flora! *(they embrace)*

MR. TRZCINSKI. And, my dear, please forgive my wife her rudeness.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. Take our daughter, this all delights us, please receive our paternal blessing. Please kneel dear children *(Astolf and Flora are kneeling, Mr. Mrs Trzcinski held hands over their heads)*

FLORA U. *(to Edward)* My God! What a happy assembly, but what about us...

MR. TRZCINSKI. And so, our happiness is complete.

MRS. TRZCINSKA. *(with a false note)* we have a daughter and a son!

MR. TRZCINSKI. She has a heart after all!

SCENE 10. MR. TRZCINSKI, ASTOLF, MRS. TRZCINSKA FLORA U., EDWARD.

FLORA. If only I could help you Flora, please don't cry.

FLORA U. I am so sad...

EDWARD. Don't cry, dearest.

FLORA U. Why is my Father so stubborn and unforgiving?

MRS. TRZCINSKA. How come?

EDWARD. He hates apothecaries, and he won't give us his blessing.

SCENE 11. UKROP, ASTOLF, EDWARD.

EDWARD. *(extending his hand to Ukrop)* Mr. Ukrop, I will never abandon you daughter.

UKROP. Me too.

EDWARD. My Lord, where is this antipathy to chemists coming from?

UKROP. You, know, I am allergic to chamomile, and all apothecaries smell of it *(all burst laughing)*

EDWARD. But if you got very ill, what place would you go for help? What if we did not have apothecaries?

UKROP. Not to you – you would poison me.

EDWARD. We don't poison people's hearts like the products of booksellers often do.

UKROP. I would probably say that's true. *(to Edward)* You are an impertinent, therefore I will give you as a gift this devil *(puts Flora's hand into Edward's)*.

FLORA U. Dear Father, thank you!

MRS. UKROP. God, thank you that I managed to convince him.

SCENE 12. ASTOLF, FLORA U.

ASTOLF. *(holding two wreaths in his hand)*

BLAZEJ. *(to Trzcinski)* I take back what I said, ya 're not a vile creature, we will take ya'r daughter now *(all laughing)*.

ASTOLF. *(gives wreaths to both Floras)*

FLORA U. *(with pathos)* Finally, we found our happiness but not to us belong these wreaths. We are placing these flowers by the feet of the statue of Flora.

*(all gather in one group, two Floras put wreaths at the statue, in the background you can hear a cuckoo – ku kuh,ku kuh. Bengal fire. Picture)*

**The End**

## **Samolinska Through the Eyes of Others**

***Wiarus*, February 2, 1888**

The Editor describes his visit to Samolinska's home:

Who, from among all Poles in America, that has been reading our paper, doesn't know Mrs. Teofila Samolinska? She is, after all, our beloved writer, whose articles have been admired not only the Poles in America, but also the literary circles of Cracow, Warsaw and Poznan. I myself did not read everything that Mrs. Samolinska wrote, and I am no authority in judging her work and talent, but the single memory of her piece written to commemorate the death of J.I.Kraszewski tells me to bow before her literary talent. In previous years Mrs. Samolinska wrote more, but, thinking that the general public seems to be jealous of her fame (that she never cared for much herself), she stopped writing and now she picks up her pen only for special occasions or when she needs to defend herself in public.

Being led to the house of this famous Polish woman by my long-time friend Mr. Smelkowski, I feared that maybe it will happen to me what happened to the Doctor Slesza, for whom his American Deotyma, upon seeing him on her doorstep, closed her doors in front of his nose. I was greatly relieved when I was received in a welcoming and friendly manner. I could not but to be impressed by her Polish hospitality, humility, tolerance and many other virtues truly democratic.

I started by apologizing to her for the insult that happened to her from the hands of Mr. Chrostowski from Brooklyn in his "Memories from the Last Congress." Mrs. Samolinska likes to adorn her speeches with witty comments, in writings as well as in conversations, so if you are put off by her unusual for a woman energy and bold opinions, her jokes and wit will make up for it. I would like to see, you "lion of Brooklyn" now,

what would happen to your hardened heart if Mrs. Teofila threw you one of her looks? You would not be disarmed by the austerity of that look, but by the calmness and serenity. Then you would cry “Mea Culpa!” Mrs. Samolinska is not that trivial person that would strive for fame, but that type of a person, that is so hard to find here in exile but still often exists in the old country: a type of a Polish woman who while quietly working in the house, does not let the household duties prevent her from her first and foremost duty which is to have a beneficial influence on the less educated around her, - who finds fun activities to be a break from work, not a goal in life, - who, if writes a play or a poem for a newspaper she does it because it gives her pleasure and provides an entertainment and teaching for her compatriots, not because she wants to be popular. Mrs. Samolinska's charity and benevolence has been expressed in devotion of her time, talents and money to her organization The Central Association of Polish Women, whose one of goals is to collect *Polish Penny* for rebuilding of Poland.

My visit at Mrs. Samolinska's will benefit our newspaper *Wiarus* because I was given by her some of her work that will print in our paper. I wanted also to take with me Mr. Samolinski and I had him already at Mr. Rismer's, planning to take him from there to the station, but he slipped from my embrace. “I apologize, he said with a trace of reproof, but if I could not see my wife for even a week I would die from longing. A good wife is like a crown for her husband's head – says a proverb – but I value mine even more. Just like a king values his crown, so I proud myself that my wife is respected by people around; I am proud that the people's respect for her comes not because of our money, but because of all that she has done for enlightening Poles in America and generally, for Poland.” - Wisely spoke a happy husband!

(to be continued).

*The following issue of Wiarus (Feb. 9, 1888) with the continuation of the story, is unfortunately missing.*

***Wiarus, February 23, 1888***

Open your ears and listen, compatriots, what wrote about Teofila Samolinska the *Dwutygodnik dla Kobiet* in Poznan, after printing her poem “To the Glory of America”: Mrs. Samolinska takes the highest place among the intelligentsia and our compatriots in America; she takes an active role in Polonia's literary life. Love for Poland and longing for her old country, so beautifully expressed in verses of her poem, are shared by many Poles that are scattered around the world and bear witness to the famous words by Adam Mickiewicz “My country! You are as good health! How much one should prize you, he only can tell Who has lost you.

***Dziennik Chicagoski, May 18, 1894***

The main Chicago correspondent for *Przyjaciel Ludu* (in the 80s) was Teofila Samolinska. She was an energetic, almost “masculine” writer. The Chicago societies, described in her correspondence, were almost palpable; her humor and sarcastic remarks sparked sometimes sharp protests; but she was not afraid to fight with the adversaries. She wielded her pen like a sword – and often won.

## Conclusion

On the American soil, the Polish community created its own stars, its own writers, lyricists and activists – Teofila Samolinska was one of these stars. The Polish immigrant amateur theater offered an outlet for her creativity and artistic aspirations; the Polish press offered a platform to discuss ideas and arguments for a better community. She was one of few Polish women leaders at that time and the most talented woman poet and playwright Polonia created.

She was a feminist, but Polish nationalism and identity were her first concern. She believed in the importance of women activism in preserving and survival of Polish culture in the USA.

She was a poet, writer, a person of culture, a “woman of letters.” From descriptions of her marriage, including her husband's words, we can assume that she did not play a traditional domestic role and had freedom and equality within that relationship.

She had a very strong ego and often felt better educated and superior to her contemporaries. She liked to dress in her best gowns, speak at mass meetings, gatherings, and to attend plays, trips and dances. She loved being on stage and be admired by her audience. Even as she criticized Polish-American men for their eagerness to be the center of attention and adulation, she had little hesitation about seeking attention and adulation for herself and she was a master at achieving both.

Reading of Teofila Samolinska's poems and letters revealed to me that she was a figure that mattered to people, a figure that aroused many different and various responses. She was not someone about whom people were neutral: she was either an object of admiration or vehement hatred. Out of her writings and poems we could slowly attempt to construct her life story, of a woman-immigrant who was both a leader and a hero, but also

a person filled with contradictions, admirable and dislikable at the same time, of great talent and ambition, but also possibly too critical of others.

She was a great observer of life; her writings were always connected to what was going around her. She was on every point connected to the politics or cultural events of her time, acutely aware of needs and direction that her community was taking.

Next step could be to attempt to write a biography of Teofila Samolinska, assuming that further research will provide with more biographical and literary material. That biography should incorporate how she saw the world and the world saw her, and possibly, register events in her life and events that happened at that time that had impact on her. That biography should not be an idolized portrait of a Polish national woman-hero, but rather a historically grounded biography of a progressive woman, that despite prejudices that she aroused, promoted her idea that women need to be in public space and the need for better education and arts in her community.

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### Poems

Here is the list of her poems with dates of their publication:

- 1870 - "Do Rodakow" ("To My Compatriots")
- 1879 - "Od Polek z Ameryki" ("From the Polish Women in America")
- 1880 - "Z Moich Bajek: Osa i Kowal" ("From My Fables: The Wasp and the Smith")
- 1881 - "Grob Wygananca" ("Grave of a Refugee")
- 1881 - "Czynu, nie Piesni, Immiennikom Kosciuszki" ("Deeds, not Hymns")
- 1881 - "Chce Byc Psem - Odpowiedz Gazecie Dyniewiczza" ("I Want to Be a Dog - Answer to Dyniewicz' Gazette")
- 1883 - "Jan III Sobieski" ("John III Sobieski")
- 1883 - "Na Drugoroczne Urodziny Zgodzie" ("For the Second Anniversary of *Zgoda*")
- 1883 - "Wiara" ("Faith")
- 1883 - "Wiosna" ("Spring")
- 1883 - "Biedne Kobiety!" ("Poor Women!")
- 1883 - "Ludwika Michell" ("Ludwika Michell")
- 1883 - "Ponczoszka" ("Stocking")
- 1883 - "Wyspy Grecyi" (trans. From Byron) ("Greek Islands")
- 1887 - "S.P. J.I Kraszewskiemu" ("For the Late J.I. Kraszewski")
- 1887 - "Wiersz na Otwarcie Teatru CAPW" ("Poem for the Opening of Theater of CAPW")
- 1888 - "Pogrzeb Na Wagnaniu" ("Funeral in Exile")
- 1888 - "Na Czesc Ameryki" ("To the Glory of America")
- 1889 - "Hymn Zwiazku Polakow w Ameryce" ("The Hymn of PNA in America")
- 1889 - "Reka" ("Hand")

1889 – “Oda dla Wspolczesnej Chwili” (“Ode for the Present Moment”)

1889 – “Niespelnione Pragnienia” (“Unfulfilled Desires”)

1890 – “Nowy Rok” (“New Year”)

1891 – “Na Posterunku” (“On Guard”)

1891 – “S.P Edwardowi” (“For the Late Edward”)

1892 – “S.P. Ksiedzu Chowancowi” (“For the Late Priest Chowaniec”)

1892 – “Tryumf Columba” (“Triumph of Columbus”)

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James Garfield albo Praca i Cnota

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*Katolic*, 1893

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