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SOUTHERN COUNTRY?
CYPRIAN NORWID'S ITALY
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GEOPOETICS

I

If treated literally, the question posed in the title appears quite the naive approach. The actual location of Italy in the south of Europe is obvious, and the fact cannot really be questioned. It was not questioned by Cyprian Norwid, either, as the writer was extremely far from the concept of “geography of fantastic lands”¹. But the deeper we dig into the variety of meanings of that “southernness” of Norwid’s Italy, the more precisely we project it on the map of 19th-century imagination (in terms of civilisation, politics, culture, literature), the deeper it is placed in the panorama of the then history of ideas and quite modern geopoetics² – the more effectively that first impression dissipates. Looking at the title question from such a perspective uncovers many intriguing problems and doubts, as well as discloses substantial gravity.

That is because the image of Norwid’s Italy is not exclusively a geographical or social concrete, but it also refers to the symbolic location of that country on Norwid’s “imagined map”. It is a question of the poet’s attitude towards one of the founding myths of European Romanticism, as well as his historiosophy, po-

¹ I am referring here to the title of a monograph by multiple authors *Geografia krain zmyślonych. Wokół kategorii miejsca i przestrzeni w literaturze dziecięcej, młodzieżowej i fantastycznej*, W. Kostecka, M. Skowera (eds.), Warszawa 2016.

² On the “spatial turn” in cultural research, within which geopoetics is developed, cf. E. RYBICKA, *Geopoetyka. Przestrzeń i miejsce we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach literackich*, Kraków 2014.

litical opinions and his vision of culture. It contains an invitation to reflect upon Norwid's attitude towards the models of beauty and aesthetic categories most important at that time (such as tragedy, loftiness or idyllism, as well as such notions as form, composition or originality). It makes one ponder on the current character of the dichotomy between North and South in his artistic imaginations. Finally, it allows to once again consider the place of this particular writer in the area of 19th-century literary trends, as well as political, aesthetic and cultural ideas.

That is quite a long list of issues for a small article, hence the study presented herein will be far from exhaustive. I will limit myself mainly to outlining the determinants of Norwid's position in that issue and supplementing that with a sketch of the historic and ideological background against which his concepts were shaped³. My main aim is to reflect upon Norwid's discourse on Italy in the context of his vision of Europe (or, in modern terms, his cultural narration of Europe), and to be more precise: to determine the location of the country within the literary cartography of *Quidam's* author and to outline the system of coordinates for his map of imagination. In this discussion, I will move mainly within the sphere of general ideas, and due to spatial limitations focus somewhat less on detailed analyses of specific texts.

II

I shall start with outlining the basics. In Romanticism, the category of South was an element of the fundamental opposition of two European civilizational models: Mediterranean (the South) and Germanic (the North)⁴. That opposition

³ The presented view was inspired by a lecture by Prof. Przemysław Czaplinski on modern literature *Poruszona mapa. Oś Północ-Południe w kulturze polskiej*, held on 20th March 2015 at the University of Rzeszów.

⁴ There is rich literature on the dichotomy of the North and the South. This article uses the following publications: Z. KUBIAK, *Północ i Południe*, [in:] IDEM, *Szkola stylu. Eseje o tradycji poezji europejskiej*, Warszawa 1972, pp. 127-140; M. ŚLIWIŃSKI, *Opozycja Południa i Północy w krytyce literackiej Maurycego Mochnackiego*, "Zeszyty Naukowo-Dydaktyczne Filii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w Białymstoku", 1973, issue 6: Humanistyka, vol. II, pp. 229-244; M. JOCZOWA, *Literatura Północy i Literatura Południa*, [in:] *Słownik literatury polskiej XIX wieku*, J. Bachórz, A. Kowalczykowa (eds.), Wrocław 1991, pp. 500-504; M. JANION, *Estetyka średniowiecznej Północy*, [in:] EADEM, *Prace wybrane*, M. Czermińska (ed.), vol. IV: *Romantyzm i jego media*, Kraków 2001, pp. 7-88; O. PŁASZCZEWSKA, *Cienie Południa i blaski Północy, czyli o literaturze i geografii*, [in:] *Persefona, czyli dwie strony rzeczywistości*, M. Cieśla-Korytowska, M. Sokalska (eds.), Kraków 2010, pp. 247-263; M. KOWALSKA, *Prowansja w pismach polskich romantyków*, Toruń 2015 (especially the chapter *Przyczyny zainteresowania tematem Prowansji w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku*, pp. 30-50).

may be the one which played the biggest role in setting the poles of Romantic geopoetics. Promoted by Madame de Staël at the onset of the 19th century in a famous treatise *On Literature* (1800), it soon started to function as the *locus communis* of the European cultural discourse, used by many writers and scholars of that time. They included e.g.: Jean Charles Léonard Simone de Sismondi and Wilhelm von Humboldt⁵, as well as Charles Victor de Bonstetten (author of a treatise *The Man of the North and the Man of the South: Or, The Influence of Climate*⁶ published in 1824). That opposition was mainly supposed to order various phenomena in European literature according to clearly defined, dichotomous criteria. Quite naturally, it covered distinctions related to history, politics, law, anthropology, psychology of social life, culture and – as could be expected – landscape⁷.

Let us thus briefly recall how the then writers juxtaposed the main elements of that dichotomy. Its basis was quite naturally the climate: mild and warm in the South, cold and severe in the North. The former was supposed to create practically idyllic conditions for existence. Conducive to the idyll were the gentle, rich and picturesque nature of the South, “vivid”⁸ and full of variety, with typically summer scenery (as “the seasons disappear in perennial verdure”⁹), high temperatures, gentle, mild wind, “coolness, woody glades, clear streams”¹⁰, clear, cloudless, azure skies during the day, and during nights shining with a “mantle of stars”¹¹. Southern nature was presented as being rich and sensuous, easily accessible and understandable, as if cut to size for human comprehension, where “the boundaries of earth and sky seem to commingle”¹² and which reflects an undisturbed harmony between people and nature:

⁵ Cf. O. PŁASZCZEWSKA, *Cienie południa...*, pp. 252-253.

⁶ Cf. C.W. DE BONSTETTEN, *The Man of the North and the Man of the South: Or, The Influence of Climate*, New York 1864; see on the same topic: M. BRAHMER, *Włochy w literaturze francuskiej okresu romantycznego*, O. Płaszczewska (ed.), Kraków 2015, pp. 77-78.

⁷ In her treatise *On Literature* (1800), G. de Staël declared her wish to “examine the influence of religion, customs and laws on literature, and the influence of literature on religion, customs and laws”. A.L.H.G. de STAËL HOLSTEIN, *On Literature Considered in its Relationship to Social Institutions*, [in:] *An Extraordinary Woman: Selected Writings of Germaine de Staël*, transl. by V. Folkenflik, New York 2010, p. 176.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁹ C.W. de BONSTETTEN, *The Man of the North...*, p. 13.

¹⁰ A.L.H.G. de STAËL HOLSTEIN, *On Literature...*, p. 176.

¹¹ C.W. DE BONSTETTEN, *The Man of the North...*, p. 13.

¹² *Ibid.*

the gardens bloom throughout the year; olives are gathered in winter; the sea is almost always accessible, and birds are so abundant as to supply both the poor and the rich. Honey might be consumed at all times, as the bees are constantly busy. [...] Let us add that in the South the sun and the labours of the field are substitutes for clothing and fuel.¹³

People living in such a friendly environment were to be particularly sensitive to the sensuous side of the world, sociable, cheerful and joyful, living for the moment, in the present, not caring for tomorrow. They were also seen as emotional, sensitive to sensory impressions and with vivid imagination; passion was expected to override sense. Their manner of expression was viewed as emotional, animated and rich (the languages originating there: Greek, Latin, Italian or French, were viewed as particularly well developed with respect to lexis and syntax), but the manner of thinking as rather superficial, for too strongly bound to material concretes.

The Romantic view of the North was a negative of the South. It was formed of gloomier scenery – cool climate with severe autumn rains and winter blizzards, sky clouded over the better part of the year, “always grey [during the day], and, approaching the pole, as lifeless as the desert soil beneath it”¹⁴, with a night where “only stars of the first magnitude are visible, placed, as it were, on a background of grey”¹⁵; add to that gloomy “seashore, amid the howl of winds, on the wild heath”¹⁶, darkness and vast, open, empty spaces.

Everything about the dwelling of the man of the North betokens loneliness [wrote Charles Victor de Bonstetten]; there is no sound but the monotonous moan of the blast; the eye rests on no object except the grass-covered tombs of ancient Scandinavians. The traveller hastens accordingly to seek comfort in the most attainable retreat.¹⁷

Those unfavourable climatic conditions and bleak images formed a “battle-ground for the raging elements”¹⁸ and for constant human struggle against the surrounding nature. They were also the source to which the specific, philosophical type of sensitivity of Northerners traced its origin. Their particular mental disposition was born from the sense of world’s mystery, and referred to an experience

¹³ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁶ A.L.H.G. DE STAËL HOLSTEIN, *On Literature...*, p. 175.

¹⁷ C.W. DE BONSTETTEN, *The Man of the North...*, p. 19.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

of eternity, "carrying the soul, weary of its destiny toward the future and another world"¹⁹, in the words of Mme de Staël:

The imagination of Northerners shoots beyond the limits of the world they live in, flying through the clouds edging their horizon which seem to represent the dark passage between life and eternity²⁰.

Such was the archetypal Northerner, as well: gloomy, with a tendency for melancholy and philosophical contemplation, open to experiencing the infinity of the world, used to loneliness, conversant with the hardship of existence, suffering and death, less subject to sensual passions²¹ and instead leading deep inner life²², and more liable to "experience passion and emotion more strongly"²³.

The spaces of North and South were also characterised by opposite aesthetic values. The South was viewed as the dominium of beauty, and the North – of loftiness. According to the romantic spirit of the time, the Southern lands were viewed as a perfectly developed, but quite conventional, static and predictable space. The North, in turn, was at that time considered to better correspond with the then sensitivity – due to that very stamp of natural wilderness, infinity and mystery of the world enclosed in its landscape. Bonstetten wrote:

Now pass the Alps from South to North. On entering Switzerland, the traveller is struck with the repose of its grand masses of mountains; their summits in the midst of the clouds appear no longer to rest on earthly foundations. Deep valleys with their mysterious recesses, and crests of mountains lost in the sky, form a solitude in which life is, as it were, suspended; water is transformed to rock, confirming the general aspect of immobility. The overhanging seas, composing the glacier region, exhibit the forms of waves, but waves without action, like all that appertains to the kingdom of death.²⁴

That dichotomy, built on a juxtaposition of diverse climatic conditions, was followed by deep literary opposition. Homer's poetry was considered the source of the literature of the South, its splendour dating back to antiquity (in particular

¹⁹ A.L.H.G. de STAËL HOLSTEIN, *On Literature...*, pp. 175-176.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

²¹ "[I]n the North religion confines itself to the future, drawing on the past for its lessons and solely preaching to man the empire of reason over the passions". C.W. DE BONSTETTEN, *The Man of the North...*, p. 37.

²² "[T]he feeling of the man of the North is deeper," wrote C.W. de Bonstetten (*ibid.*, p. 56).

²³ O. PŁASZCZEWSKA, *Cienie Południa...*, p. 258.

²⁴ C.W. DE BONSTETTEN, *The Man of the North...*, pp. 14-15.

Hellenic and Latin) through the “classical” literatures of modern Europe (especially Italian, Spanish and French), and its matter – to the pre-Christian (Greek and Roman) mythology of the Mediterranean Basin. Whereas, the literature of the North “began with the Scottish bards, Icelandic fables, and Scandinavian poetry”²⁵, expressed to the fullest in Ossian’s poetic visions, the “Gothic” literature of the Middle Ages, and the works of English, German, Danish and Swedish writers, its inspiration being the mythology of the peoples of northern Europe²⁶. It was believed that the poets of the North tended more to “love to dwell on the beauties of nature” (i.e. the wonders and peculiarities of nature) and “devote themselves to this much more than the poets of the South”²⁷ (the beauty of the “regulated” nature of the South was considered more banal at that time, being sensual, finite and tamed).

The opposition of the North and the South was descriptive and organisational in nature, but it also evaluated those two areas in cultural and aesthetic terms. The writers of that time soon used it to describe two literary trends: the classical and the Romantic, matching the former with the South, and the latter with the North. In the “Northern”, gloomy “Romanticism” they saw the features of modern literature, full of freedom, associated with loftiness, open to mystery, disregarding the ancient literary norms, gloomy and grim. The Romantics usually took the side of the North, viewing it as the source of their artistic identity. In the “Southern”, idyllic “classicism” they saw a predictable order, as well as literary values perceived as outdated at the time: imitation, adherence to rules, and conventional allegorisation.

The cultural oppositions and symmetrical divisions contained in the North-South axis were quite often used in creating the space of literary works of early 19th century²⁸. The divisions between beauty and loftiness, sensuality and depth, light and darkness, idyllic and tragic character which completed the picture formed the basis for its artistic attractiveness and ideological dynamics. August

²⁵ A.L.H.G. de STAËL HOLSTEIN, *On Literature...*, p. 175.

²⁶ Mme de Staël wrote: “There are two completely different kinds of literature, it seems to me, Southern and Northern: the literature that comes from Homer and the literature that starts with Ossian. What I am going to call Southern literature includes the Greeks, the Romans, the Italians, the Spanish, and the French of Louis XIV’s time. English works, German works, and a few writings of the Danes and Swedes must be classified as Northern [...]”. A.L.H.G. de STAËL HOLSTEIN, *ibid.*, pp. 174-175.

²⁷ C.W. DE BONSTETTEN, *The Man of the North...*, p. 54.

²⁸ It must be stated here that the opposition was authored by representatives of Western Europe, for whom the concept of Europe was most often limited to only the western part of the continent.

Wilhelm Schlegel (who, in fact, for many years had a close relationship with Madame de Staël) made that dichotomy the basic operational category in his Berlin *Lectures on Fine Art and Literature* (*Vorlesungen über schöne Literatur und Kunst*, 1801-1804) and the later Vienna *Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (*Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, 1809-1811). Stendhal referred to the dichotomy in his treatise *Racine et Shakespeare* (1823). Within the Polish reality, Kazimierz Brodziński used the concept in his famous essay *O klasycyzmie i romantyzmie, tudzież o duchu poezji polskiej* (*On Classicism and Romanticism, or about the Spirit of Polish Poetry*, 1818), and Adam Mickiewicz did so in *Przedmowa* [foreword] to the first volume of his *Poezje* (1822). It was on that dichotomy that Maurycy Mochnacki built his concept of the sources of Romantic literature in the then animatedly discussed article *O duchu i źródłach poezji w Polsce* (1825), and referred to it also later in the polemic text *O krytyce i sielstwie* (1830). Joachim Lelewel disputed that vision in his treatise *O romantyzmie* (1825). Antoni Malczewski showed the contrast between the landscapes of the South and the North in the poem *Maria* (1825). It formed the canvas for Adam Mickiewicz to depict the discussion on painting and the beauties of Polish landscape contained in his epic poem *Pan Tadeusz* (1834). Zygmunt Krasiński juxtaposed the North and the South in the symbolic genealogy of the title protagonist of the drama *Irydion* (1836). The harsh nature and cruel customs of the Northern peoples were presented by Adam Mickiewicz in *Ustęp* in *Dziady* part III (1832) and by Juliusz Słowacki in *Lilla Weneda* (1840). Similar examples could be listed in large numbers.

III

Inherited from his predecessors, the North-South opposition also organised the thinking of Cyprian Norwid. The writer used it frequently, problematized it in various manners, and connected it strongly with the Italian area. The problem consisted in the fact that he knew the country well; after all, he had lived there for some years, he loved it even, so the Romantic dichotomy (and the positively valued North) had to chafe him and cause a dissonance. In effect, he often reproduced the established models of Romantic imagination (particularly at the early stage of writing), but grew to oppose them more and more clearly with time.

In the beginning it often happened that he referred to the idea in a straightforward manner. A large dose of Italianism is found in Norwid's works particularly in the 1840s and 1850s, strictly connected with the Italian part of his biography.

At that time, Norwid's Italy had likely the most in common with the Romantically defined land of the South. I present some examples below.

First, in the 1840s and 50s, the writer referred to the "Southern" climatic reality, stylising Italy according to the above described model and contrasting it to the land of Romantic North. It is probably no coincidence that he did so mainly in his letters, which by their nature involve everyday, colloquial style and stereotypical images. He wrote e.g.: "Na południu upał mię obala, a na północy wilgoć szkodę zdrowiu przynosi [...]"²⁹ [In the South the heat staggers me, and in the North the moisture brings harm upon my health]. In a different letter, describing his stay in Berlin, he added: "*Klimat* jednakże pod tę porę do tyła mi był nieprzyjaznym, iż *musiałem w zamknięciu pozostawać* około dwa miesiące, aż nie widząc, ażeby zdrowie się moje polepszało – na południe [tj. do Włoch – przyp. M.S.] wróciłem"³⁰ [Yet *the climate* at that time was thus disagreeable with me that I *had to remain in confinement* for about two months, and finally seeing no improvement of health – I returned South [i.e. to Italy – M.S.]]. When advising medicine to help sleep problems, he referred to the example of Southern people, who practiced the noon siesta with good results³¹. Similar uses of that lexical dichotomy appeared also in much later texts by Norwid, from 1970s. One can find there both a juxtaposition of the images of the Northern sea and Southern sun³², and associations of the South with a warm, healthy and people-friendly climate³³. Even Norwid's description of Pope Pius IX (who received the writer at a private audience in 1848) referred to the "Southern" features of the Pope's personality:

²⁹ C. NORWID, Letter to Antoni Celiński (Berlin, November or December 1845; DW X, 51).

³⁰ IDEM, Letter to Maria Dowgiałło (Rome, 30th August 1847; DW X, 117).

³¹ IDEM, Letter to Maria Trębicka (Paris, August 1856; PWsz VIII, 283).

³² "Ku północy i morzu – ku południowi i jego słońcu, opór, jaki stawił Słowianin Chrześcijaństwu i ewangelizacji, zapewne był więcej stanowczym i wyraźniejszym" [Towards the North and the sea – towards the South and its sun, the resistance given by the Slav to Christianity and evangelisation was surely more resolute and clearer]. IDEM, "*Boga-Rodzica*". *Pieśń ze stanowiska historyczno-literackiego odczytana* (1873) (PWsz VI, 516). The round brackets give the date of creation of the quoted works as provided in the *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida* (vol. I-III, prep. by Z. Trojanowiczowa, Z. Dambek, E. Lijewska and I. Grzeszczak, Poznań 2007).

³³ "[...] drugi już marzec krwią pluję! – a wyjechać ku Południowi czy potrafię?" [it is the second March that I cough up blood! – and am I able to go southwards?"] C. NORWID, Letter to Jan Szwański (Paris, late March 1876; PWsz X, 72). "Pan Szermentowski powinien jeszcze dziesiątek lat żyć, siedzieć na południu i malować dla chwały Ojczyzny" [Mr Szermentowski should have dozens more years to live, sit in the South and paint for the glory of the Homeland]. IDEM, Letter to Jan Szwański (Paris, before 6th September 1876; PWsz X, 78).

W tych dniach się przedstawiłem Papieżowi. Jest to wielki XIX wieku człowiek. *Umie cierpieć*. Prosty, anielsko dobry, łagodny bardzo, ale w głębi zdaje się być hartu ogromnego, potężnego sumienia i – co jest rzecz szczególniejsza – przy prostocie prawie niemowlęcej jest w zatoczeniu ust i w słowie, i w spojrzaniu niekiedy, pewny odcień finezji włoskiej³⁴.

[In those days I was introduced to the Pope. He is a great man of the 19th century. *He knows to suffer*. Simple, of angelic goodness, gentlest, but deep down he seems to be of enormous fortitude, of a powerful conscience, and – a most particular thing – with all his nearly infantile simplicity, there is still in the set of his mouth, and expression, and eye a certain hue of Italian finesse.]

Second, in the 1840s and 50s, the South constituted for Norwid a special space of idyllic landscape, cloudless skies and mild sun, a land of love, history, poetry and art. Thus he wrote of Greece (a country “przeszłością bogatym niemają”³⁵ [rich with a considerable past]) and Italy (“przy zachodzie południowego słońca nad klasycznymi ruinami takie prozaiczne rzeczy piszę”³⁶ [I write such prosaic things at the sunset of the Southern sun over classical ruins]), he wrote to Maria Trębicka in a letter of 1848); he used such descriptions when referring to the countries of the Mediterranean Basin (which he called “południowymi monumentalnymi krajami”³⁷ [monumental Southern countries]). The light of the Southern countries was, in his view, an ally to true realism; “południowego słońca realizm”³⁸ [realism of the Southern sun] which meant a precise drawing, play of light and transparent composition³⁹. In the context of the art of the South, Norwid mentioned imitation,

³⁴ IDEM, Letter to Jan Skrzynecki [Rome, after 7th May 1848] (DW X, 154).

³⁵ IDEM, *Epimenides. Przypowieść* (1854) (DW III, 83).

³⁶ IDEM, Letter to Maria Trębicka [Rome, ca. 11th July 1848] (DW X, 162).

³⁷ IDEM, Letter to Adam Potocki [Paris, late 1855] (PWsz VIII, 243).

³⁸ IDEM, *O Juliuszu Słowackim...* (1860) (PWsz VI, 455).

³⁹ It is in that spirit that the main protagonist of the story *Menego* spins his thoughts: “To rzecz dziwna! nie mogę tu jeszcze dojść ładu z wyrozumieniem tych arcydzieł starej szkoły weneckiej. Zaniedbanie rysunku, którego by *Cornelius* nie przebaczył, dowolność w grze światła szczególniejsza, kompozycja jakby z ulic brana, a jednakże wielkie to są rzeczy! i niejeden *Cornelius*, ba! i zarozumiały sam *Kaulbach* uczyć by się z tego dobrze mogli. Kto wie? – dodał w następstwie – może nas na Północy uczą jakoś inaczej” [A strange thing indeed! I cannot come to terms with understanding those masterpieces of the old Venetian school. Neglect of drawing, which would be unforgivable by *Cornelius*, particular freedom in the choice of lighting, composition as if straight from the street, and yet there is a greatness about them! and many a *Cornelius*, bah! even the self-important *Kaulbach* could take a good lesson out of it. Who knows? – he added further – perhaps we are taught somehow different in the North]. (IDEM, *Menego*, 1850; DW VII, 37).

allegorisation and formal discipline⁴⁰. Such thinking echoes in the poem *Trylog* (with an opposition of the Romantic and the Greek, perhaps not lengthy, but expressed in clear terms⁴¹), as well as in *Promethidion* (not incidentally dedicated to reflection on Beauty and Form), e.g. in the following fragment:

O! Grecjo – ciebie że kochano, widzę
 Dziś jeszcze w każdej marmuru kruszynie,
 W naśladownictwie, którego się wstydzę
 Za wiek mój, w kolumn karbowanych trzcinie
 Opłakiwanej od wierzchu akantem,
 W łamanych wierszach na łkania zapału
 I w sokratejskiej sowie z ócz brylantem,
 I w całej *Filos* twojej – aż do szału!...

*

O! Rzymie – ciebie że kiedyś kochano,
 W kodeksie jeszcze widzę barbarzyńskim,
Którego krzyżem dotąd nie złamano,
 W akademickim języku łatyńskim,
 W pofalszowanych Cezarach i w słowie
Roma; to odwróć – *Amor* ci odpowie!
 (DW IV, 111-112)

It seems that Norwid respected those principles even when he deliberately created Italian landscapes filled with silence, lit up with millions of stars, shown at the moment “pomiędzy świtem a nocy zniknięciem” [between dawn and the disappearance of night] (like in *Quidam*; DW III, 131), with skies “chmurki nieświadomym” [untouched by the slightest cloud], lakes “nieświadomym zmarszczki” [untouched by a ripple], shade of laurel and rock “jak gzyms u gmachu starożytnego” [like a cornice on an ancient monument] (like in *Białe kwiaty*; DW VII, 65). Such was the character of the descriptions of Italian landscapes at the beginning of songs II, IV, XVI and XX of the poem *Quidam* (1856), which form a specific counterpoint for the dark “Northern” landscapes from Antoni Malczewski’s *Maria*. Here is one of Norwid’s idyllic landscapes:

W czas, gdy firmament ciemno-safirowy
 Wielością jasnych gwiazd oczy zawraca,
 A cały urok nocy południowej
 Łagodzi zmysły – iż pamięć ukraca,
 W obecność jakąś przenosząc nieznaną

⁴⁰ IDEM, *O rzeźbiarzach florenckich* (1845) (PWsz VI, 364-365).

⁴¹ IDEM, *Trylog* (1849) (PWsz I, 115).

Myśl, wrażeniami za dnia pomiataną,
 Lub daje wiary chwilę, przez znużenie,
 Nawet zbrodniarzom, w kajdanach wilgotnych,
 Że – jeźli nie kres – rytm ma ich cierpienie,
 Samotność że ma swoich współ-samotnych. –
 (DW III, 238)

Norwid's graphic imagination turned particularly often to Italian light and colours. Beside the already quoted fragments, they can also be found in the story *Menego* (1850), where the landscape motifs (calm sea, white sails of ships sailing away, silver glitter of waves lit with the moon's gentle light, rich, vivid colours of "*Veronese, Tintoretto, Titian...*"; DW VII, 35) were veiled in that kind of aura. It seems significant that similar descriptions frequently marked the beginnings of Norwid's works or their parts (as it was in *Quidam* and *Menego*), although they also appeared in other parts of the compositions – to quote just one fragment from the story *Białe kwiaty*:

...nadszedł po niewielu godzinach i on harmonijny wieczór włoski i księżyc za nim o chwili sobie właściwej wytoczył się na niebo, tylko że przesłoniony (pamiętam) chmurą wąską, jak kiedy prosty człek rękawem ociera czoło swoje – albo oczy przysłania... (DW VII, 66)

[...after few hours came that harmonious Italian evening, and the moon followed, rolling into the sky at its own right time, only obscured (I do remember) with a narrow cloud, as when a commoner wipes his sweaty brow with a sleeve – or covers the eyes...]

Idyllic and full of ruins, illuminated and transparent, but always aesthetically refined landscapes of Italy can also be found in many other works by Norwid. Such an aura veils the poems *Italiam! Italiam!* ("Dookoła morze – morze – / Jak błękitu strop bez końca: / O! przejasne – pełne słońca –" [The sea – the sea around – / Like an endless blue vault built / Oh! so light – sun-filled –], 1846, PWsz I, 77) and *W Weronie* (with motifs of "spłukanego deszczem" "łagodnego oka błękitu", "rozwalonych bram do ogrodów" [rain-rinsed gentle eye of the blue, broken gates to gardens], a lonely star and cypresses, 1847-1850, PWsz II, 22). The poem *W albumie* contains a similar description of an Italian landscape, located in the "Southern" poetics: with motifs of "słońca blasku", "liści lauru", "cudnych cyprysów", "słoneczności tej, co razi w oczy", "płaczącej brzozy" and "ziemi popiołów i gruzów" [sun's brilliance, laurel leaves, wonderful cypresses, the sunlight that dazzles, weeping birch and a land of ashes and ruins] (1851, PWsz I, 154).

In the quoted descriptions, Italian landscapes for the most part form clearly idyllic (or elegiac) patterns. There clearly echoes Winckelmann's concept of classical beauty, understood as "stille Größe und edle Einfach" [quiet greatness and noble simplicity]. At the same time, the descriptions are "picturesque" and "pictorial" (and Italy was, in fact, "kraj malarzów" [a country of painters], as sweetly advised by Telimena in her conversation with the Count in Mickiewicz's epic poem *Pan Tadeusz*)⁴². Light, blaze of colour, calmness of the elements, balm to the senses, monumental rubble, reflection over the past of European culture, poetic ruins, idyllic landscapes. Such is Norwid's Italy as a Southern land.

Interestingly, in later works one can still find the above mentioned motifs, but they are usually put in the quotation marks of irony. Such character echoes already in a reflection on a poet in the poem *Do Walentego Pomiana Z.* (1859), where the apparently idyllic scenery of the South has an ironic undertone to it:

Powiem Ci tylko, ani ukryć się poważę,
Co? myślą, gdy wyrzeczce kto słowo: P o e t a !
Im zdaje się, że dziewięć panien kałamarze
Noszą mu, a warkocze każdej jak kometa;
A wzrok? – jak nieba lazur, lub noc południowa;
Szaty? – jak obłok; poszept? – jak mgła porankowa;
Że j a w , że jawu złoty wół i lew miedziany,
I że niedoperz-dziejów, którego wciąż głowa
Dysze, a tułów bywa co wiek wypychany;
Że płowy lampart, tudzież innych bestyj stado,
Mijają go! – że łącno do stóp mu się kładą...
(PWsz II, 152)

In that context it is worth mentioning a fragment of the text *Interesa sztuki* (on the possibilities of establishing a Polish school in art), where Norwid wrote:

[Aby stworzyć szkołę narodową w dziedzinie sztuk pięknych – przyp. M.S.] Nie trzeba także wyjątkowego rajskiego nieba i oceanu światłości: u Holendrów ciemno, błotno, brzydko... a istotnie że s z k o ł a ! – w południowej Ameryce cuda natury i pieniędzy sporo, a sztuki nie ma. (1879) (PWsz VI, 576)

[[To establish a national school in fine arts – M.S.] You need not exceptional paradisiac skies and an ocean of light, either: the Dutch have it dark, muddy, ugly... and indeed they have a s c h o l ! – in South America, wonders of nature and plenty of money, but no art.]

In this and similar statements, Norwid clearly distanced himself from the North-South juxtaposition established in Romantic culture, along with the stere-

⁴² On the category of "picturesqueness" see J. WOŹNIAKOWSKI, *Góry niewzruszone. O różnych wyobrażeniach przyrody w dziejach kultury europejskiej*, Kraków 1995, pp. 153-191.

otypical meanings assigned to each of those two areas. In other works from a late period of his work (for instance in the story *Ad leones!*, 1883), in turn, he modelled Italian space still differently: in a manner increasingly less mythologised and far closer to ordinariness, replete with the realities of everyday life and modern civilisation. I shall return to that issue below.

Such characterisation of Italy was further enhanced in Norwid's writings through frequent references to the other pole of the North-South axis – the axis which for the poet had a real effect of differentiating two different civilizational models in Europe. Thus, the author of *Quidam* frequently referred to the contrasting images of “the Northern world”, “Northerner”, “Northern nations” and “peoples”⁴³, and the presentation of the lands and their inhabitants was emphatically unlike his descriptions of the South. Interestingly, on his imagined map of Europe, Norwid in fact situated Poland and Poles in the North (“północne my syny” [Northern sons we are], he wrote in the poem *Żydowie polscy*, 1861, PWSz I, 339). At times, he placed Russia there, as well – quite according to the influential tradition of the Romantic thought⁴⁴.

There are no two ways about it: the North-South axis defined significant poles of Norwid's geopoetics. It formed a convenient framework for many of his reflections, but still was not able to provide space for all the philosophical venues of the writer's works.

IV

Norwid associated Italy not only with the South. It was also a symbolic centre of the world, *axis mundi*. In particular Rome played such a role, as the capital of the Roman Empire and at the same time of Christianity, the centre of Christian and pre-Christian Europe⁴⁵. Norwid wrote of the central role of Rome (and indirectly – Italy) among others in the treatise *Zarysy z Rzymu*:

⁴³ Cf. e.g.: *Promethidion* (1851) (DW IV, 133); *Sztuka w obliczu dziejów jako Syntetyki księga pierwsza* (1850) (PWSz VI, 279); *Do obywatela Dmochowskiego – rzeźbiarza* (1849) (PWSz VI, 370); “*Boga-Rodzica*” *pieśń ze stanowiska historyczno-literackiego odczytana* (1873) (PWSz VI 513, 518); *Sfinks* (1874) (PWSz VI, 531); *Milczenie* (1882) (PWSz VI, 243).

⁴⁴ For instance, Russia's location in the symbolic North was presented in the scene of *Widzenie Ks. Piotra* [Fr. Peter's Vision] from A. Mickiewicz's *Dziady* part III, and in J. Słowacki's *Grób Agamemnona*.

⁴⁵ Cf. Z. KUBIAK, *Rzym romantyczny*, [in:] IDEM, *Nowy brewiarz Europejczyka*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 182-188; O. PŁASZCZEWSKA, *Wizja Włoch w polskiej i francuskiej literaturze okresu romantyzmu (1800-1850)*, Kraków 2003, pp. 269-281; J. BOROWCZYK, *Rzym drugiego pokolenia romantyków. Podmiot i przeszłość w pismach Norwida, Lenartowicza oraz Klaczki (z Krasińskim w tle)*, [in:] *Emigranci, wygnańcy, wychodźcy...*, I. Węgrzyn, G. Zając (eds.), Kraków 2007, pp. 91-114.

Ten Rzym, miejsce tak mało, tak prawie wcale nie mające zmysłowego miejsca charakteru – Rzym to środek, punkt prawie w matematycznym rozumieniu – Rzym to owa kolumna na starożytnym forum, na której były zapisane odległości miast państwa, czyli świata ... I tak już było przed Chrystusem [...]. A potem stało się podobnie, ale przez człowieka niebiańskiego, przez Krzyż, prawdę, męczeństwo [...]. Nie Rzym przez Rzymian postawiony, ale Rzymianie przez Rzym z różnych zbudowani są plemion. I jak przez Zbawicielem przez ideę wszechmocy, tak po Zbawicielu przez Wszech-Miłość społeczeństwo się utworzyło. (1848; PWSz VII, 11, 12)

[That Rome, the place which has so little, nearly no character of a sensual place – Rome is the centre, the point in nearly mathematical sense – Rome is that column on the ancient forum on which one wrote the distances of the cities of the state, that is, the world ... And thus it was even before Christ [...] And then it happened alike, but through a heavenly man, through the Cross, truth, martyrdom [...]. It is not Rome that was built by the Romans, but Romans are built by Rome from various tribes. And as it was done before the Redeemer through the idea of omnipotence, thus after the Redeemer that society was built by Omni-Love.]

And yet there was another “centre” on Norwid’s map, placed between the North and the South. That was the Slavic area, which – against the tradition of some writers of the previous generation – the author of *Quidam* did not assign to the family of the classical South (like Kazimierz Brodziński), or the Romantic North (like Maurycy Mochnacki or Antoni Malczewski). The Slavic discourse, present so strongly in the Romantic era (in the thought of Zorian Dołęga Chodakowski, Adam Mickiewicz, Józef Bohdan Zaleski, Wincenty Pol, Juliusz Słowacki, Ryszard Berwiński, Teofil Lenartowicz, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski and many, many others⁴⁶), found a new articulation with Norwid. In the framework he suggested, locating the Slavic area between the North and the South constituted a good starting point for political, cultural and aesthetic reflection of various directions:

A Słowieńszczyzna to *Geist* jeszcze młody,
Co za obrębem wielkiej konwersacji
Duchowej leży! – jak cedrowe kłody,
Geologicznej godne dysertacji...
(PWSz I, 127⁴⁷)

⁴⁶ On the topic, cf.: A. WITKOWSKA, “*Ja, głupi Słowianin*”, Kraków 1980; G. HALKIEWICZ-SOJAK, *Norwidowski wariant tematu słowiańskiego na romantycznym tle*, “*Studia Norwidiana*” 31(2013), pp. 17-39.

⁴⁷ C. NORWID, “*Confregit in die irae suae... (Psal.)*” (*Fraszka*), (1850). Noteworthy is Norwid’s note under the poem: “*Pisałem w Europie, 1850*” [Written in Europe, 1850].

The Slavic area, different in spirit from other European countries, still not fully developed, but close, native, was a significant complication on Norwid's map, not only because it indicated a new centre. Paradoxically, it was also a peripheral area, and even a specific "non-place" (in the words of Marc Augé⁴⁸), a sphere of nonfinite existence, "an area torn with inner conflicts"⁴⁹, "a vast space at broadly understood crossroads: between remoteness and expansive technical civilisation, between activity and inaction, between hope and doubt"⁵⁰. Thus was the situation in the poem *Słowianin. Do Teofila Lenartowicza*, where the title hero, Teofil, experiences the above described state of unstable identity:

Jak Słowianin, gdy brak mu naśladować kogo,
 Duma, w szerokim polu, czekając na siebie –
 Gdy z dala jadą kupcy gdzieś żelazną-drogą,
 Drżą telegramy w drutach i balon na niebie;
 Jak Słowianin, co chadzał już wszystkiemu w tropy,
 Oczekiwa na siebie - samego, bez wiedzy – [...].
 (1882; PWSz II, 254)

It is worth noting that the texts quoted above defined the scale of changes in Norwid's understanding of the Slavic area – from a hopeful optimism in the 1850s down to the critical scepticism of his mature works.

The centre in Norwid's work had thus this peculiar tendency to shift. To use a less metaphoric expression, one may say that it depended on the ideological perspective adopted by the writer. And that is not the only problem with Norwid's imagined map. There was also the idea of ethnic individualisms which the poet found of import; the idea which in a sense partitioned European space (the global space, in fact, as he wrote also of the ancient Babylonians, Egyptians and Israeli, as well as of the Persians, Indians, Native Americans, Mexicans and Chinese) into smaller civilizational organisms and effectively dismantled simple geographical and cultural dichotomies, giving priority to the ethnic specificity of particular nations. One could see that already in the 1840s (perhaps the clearest, too), when in the Epilogue to *Promethidion* Norwid gave a detailed illustration of the thesis that "każdy naród przychodzi inną drogą do uczestnictwa w sztuce" [each nation

⁴⁸ I refer to the M. Augé's concept as presented in the book *Non-Places: An Introduction to Anthropology of Supermodernity* (Le Seuil, 1992).

⁴⁹ G. HALKIEWICZ-SOJAK, *Norwidowski wariant...*, p. 32.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

comes to participate in art *on a different path*] (DW IV, 130)⁵¹. The same is also visible later.

On Norwid's imagined map, one more axis played a key role: the one determined by the poles of the East and the West. The North-South opposition determined mainly the area of cultural, climatic and ethnic differences, whereas the other one had a completely different dimension – civilizational and political. Norwid did not invent it – it was used by Romantic orientalism, it was also used by the then political thinkers, among them Adam Mickiewicz (as the author of his Paris lectures), August Cieszkowski or Zygmunt Krasiński. The East-West axis was uncommonly significant for the Romantic geopolitics (and therefore also for the then geopoetics). It determined and expressed the differences in political systems, systemic and economic models, authorities-citizens relations. It juxtaposed the developed West to the backward and autocratic East. In Norwid's thought, the axis gained particular significance in the 1860s. The writer activated it in the context of the January Insurrection outbreak and fall and the power of the Russian Empire which he found terrifying, as well as the unprecedented pace of civilizational development of Western Europe. In that spirit, he reflected in his then correspondence, articles and many poetic works, to mention only such poems as: *Wielkość*, *Na zgon śp. Jana Gajewskiego*, or *Do wroga*⁵².

The East-West opposition was also important later, as proven by two stories of Norwid, their action taking place in Italy: *Ad leones!* and *Tajemnica lorda Singelworth*. The former shows Italy (Rome, to be more precise) as a country of civilizational and ethnic changes taking place under the influence of foreign capital. The latter (happening in Venice) presents, among others, a discussion of an international company on the relation of aeronautics to hygiene, meteorology to politics, and science to morality (the occasion for the dispute given by the daily balloon flight undertaken by the title protagonist; what is worth mentioning, balloon was for Norwid one of the symbols of civilizational progress)⁵³.

And finally: the above listed categories and oppositions appeared independently of each other, but they also co-organised the symbolism – so important for Norwid – of the four parts of the world: East, West, North and South, which

⁵¹ The issue of Norwid's reflection on nation is discussed e.g. in W. Toruń's *Norwid o Niepodległej* (Lublin 2013, pp. 195-209).

⁵² In that last poem, Norwid spoke to the enemy from the title (a Russian) e.g. thus: "Czyż nigdy z siebie ty nic, własną siłą / Nie poczniesz nigdy: boś wszystko zabierał [...]" [Will you never with your own might and will / Ever beget anything: for you always took] (PWsz I, 373).

⁵³ Obviously, only selected motifs of the works are referred to here.

frequently meant that the poet took a new observational point: a global perspective. That point of view was not well determined in 19th-century narrations, but gradually grew in popularity and use⁵⁴, and was also applied by Norwid in various periods of his work. It is easily noticeable in the ballad *Rozebrana* (1881), in the poem *Marionetki* (1861) or in *Pieśń od ziemi naszej* (1850). It was present in Norwid's work nearly since its very beginning, as proved by the poem ending the treatise *Krytycy i artyści* (1849):

Od wschodu gmachu wiara z krzyżem wielkim stanie,
A od zachodu miłość (na puszczy wołanie!),
A od południa Paweł z Piotrem w pojednaniu,
A od pół-nocy wolność w gromnym zmartwychwstaniu.
I będzie to jakoby świątynia-przymierza,
Gdzie mąż kapłana uczci, a kapłan rycerza –
Gdzie głosy będą chórem latać po sklepieniach,
Co legend-tęcze noszą w pęczła przedstawieniach [...].
(PWsz VI, 597)

Undoubtedly, “Pan przemawiał” [God spoke] to Norwid “przez wszystko” [through everything], also “Przez całą Ludzkość z jej starymi gmachy, / Łukami, które o kolumnach trwają, / A zapomniane w proch włamując dachy, / Bujnymi z nowa liśćmi zakwitają” (*Modlitwa*; PW I, 135) [Through the whole Mankind with its ancient buildings, / Arches resting on columnal sleeves, / And forgotten, ceilings into ashes yielding, / Suddenly blooming with plenty of new leaves]. He also spoke through the figure of the Eternal-Man (in *Promethidion*) and a nameless representative of humanity (in *Quidam*). The vast variety of perspectives might be expressed in the fullest in the latter poem, where different directions of Norwid's geopoetics met: the North-South opposition, the East-West axis, questions of the centre and the peripheries, and finally the universal, “global” historical reflection.

⁵⁴ To mention just the Goethean concept of “world literature”, used nearly immediately by Polish Romanticists (e.g. Edward Dembowski). The same perspective was also visible in some of the memoirs of that time (by Ignacy Domeyko or Seweryn Korzeliński), or in reviews of the works by Zygmunt Krasiński, in whose works critics saw universal meanings and a global dimension. On the topic, cf. e.g.: P. CZAPLIŃSKI, *Literatura i świat. Od “Weltliteratur” do “World Literature”*, [in:] *Romantyzm w lustrze postmodernizmu (i odwrotnie)*, W. Hamerski, M. Kuziak, S. Rzepczyński (eds.), Warszawa 2014, pp. 268-292; M. STANISZ, *Europejski wymiar literatury polskiej według Wincentego Pola*, [in:] *Obrazy natury i kultura. Studia o Wincentym Polu*, M. Łoboz (ed.), Wrocław 2015, pp. 531-549.

Thus emerged one more set of variables in Norwid's system of geographic coordinates, although not the last one. One must remember the dense network of individual symbols, which gave a three-dimensional feel to the identity of Norwid's protagonists and lyrical personae⁵⁵. Additionally, Norwid's imagined map had also a temporal dimension: it covered antiquity and Middle Ages, the 16th and 17th centuries, the Enlightenment and the 19th century – contemporary to the writer. It thus transformed from an imagined map into an imagined space-time continuum, a multidimensional code, readable only after considering all its vertical and horizontal dimensions.

The multidimensionality of Norwid's thinking is well illustrated by many of his works, clearly representative of which are undoubtedly his lectures *O Juliuszu Słowackim*, containing e.g. reflections of the poet on Christian epic poetry. The meaning-forming function is performed by both all four parts of the world (East, West, South, North) and by temporal categories (dawn, beginning, noon, "momenta wczasu" and "przesileń" [moments of rest and of solstices], midnight)⁵⁶:

Gdybym miał otworzyć zdanie moje o epopei, wtedy co do epopei chrześcijańskiej postąpiłbym tak, jako gdyby wszystkie pejzaże, jakie kiedykolwiek malowano, przyszło w całość ułożyć. Można by zaś tego dokazać pod czterema warunkami światła: wschodu, zachodu, północy i południa, je ustawiwszy.

Tak samo też i epopeje, które mają za przedmiot ciąg chrześcijańskiego żywota i cywilizacji, można by w cztery ułożyć postacie. I oto najpierw *Jerozolima wyzwolona* poczynalaby się o świcie dziejów [...].

Drugą w następstwie epopeją, odpowiadającą pierwszej, lecz jak zachód odpowiada jutrzni i wschodowi, jest *Don Kiszot*. [...]

Oto więc wschodowy i oto zachodni blask wszelkiej epopei – ale że dziejów całość nie tylko ma twórczość żywotną i rozstrój kryty blichtrzem łatanego naśladownictwa, ale że ona ma jeszcze i momenta wczasu, wypocznienia prozy, które by południem nazwać można, w te więc czasy wakacji, i bohaterem takiej epopei nie byłby już Godfryd, nie Don Kiszot, ale poczciwy chłopiec jaki dzielny i szczery – Pan Tadeusz – i oto jest t r z e c i a epopeja w toku chrześcijańskiego życia.

⁵⁵ A collection of such three-dimensional identity symbols can be found e.g. in the poem *Do Józefa Bohdana Zaleskiego w Rzymie 1847-o*, to quote the lines: "A jam chłopię zza ogrodu, / Gdzieś u szpary drzące wschodu, / Gości – strach mnie bierze" [And I am a boy from beyond the garden, / Shaking for the sunrise at some crack, / Guests – I am scared]; and further: "A jam chłopię z dróg krzyżowych, / Zza trzęsawisk o l s z y n o w y c h, / Gdzie mdłe jęczą cienie –" [And I am a boy from the crossroads, / From beyond the alder swamps, / Where faints shadows moan] (PWsz I, 86).

⁵⁶ In Polish, the same words are used for parts of the world and times of the day: East-sunrise, West-sunset, South-noon, North-midnight. Norwid's text draws heavily on that double meaning [translator's note].

Co zaś do c z w a r t e j, której światłem nie byłby ani zorzy promień, ani zachodu czerwoność, ani południowego słońca realizm, tę musiałby oświecać księżycowych przesilenie moment lub godzina północy; takiej to epopei początkiem zdaje się być *Król-Duch* – miała to być, zdaje się, epopeja fenomenologiczna, jakiej dotychczas jeszcze nie ma żadna literatura. (PWsz VI, 454-455)

[If I were to give my thoughts on the epic poem, then I should deal on the Christian epic poem same as if all and any landscapes ever painted were to be put together. And that could be achieved by placing them under four conditions of light: East, West, North and South. In the same manner, poems which treat on the subject of the course of Christian life and civilisation could be arranged in four shapes. And thus *Jerusalem Delivered* would start at the dawn of time [...].

Next in succession is an epic poem corresponding to the first, is like the West corresponding to sunrise and the East: *Don Quixote*. [...]

Thus you have the eastern and the western shine of any epic poetry – but since the whole of history has not only lively creation and breakdown covered with the tinsel of patchy imitation, but it also has moments of rest and relaxation of prose, which could be called a noon, or South; in those times of vacation, the hero of such a poem would no longer be Godfrey, or Don Quixote, but a worthy boy, brave and honest – *Pan Tadeusz* – and that be the t h i r d epic poem in the course of a Christian life.

And as to the f o u r t h, whose light would not be the ray of aurora, nor the redness of sunset, nor the realism of Southern noon, that one would have to be lit with the moment of moon solstices or the Northern midnight hour; the beginning of such an epic seems to be *Król-Duch* – to all appearances, it was to be a phenomenological epic, of the kind that any literature has yet to see.]

An equally expressive, albeit completely different example of such universal thinking on human history and creation is Norwid's *Album Orbis*, which according to the author's intention was supposed to contain "zbiór motywów, obejmujący od początku cały przebieg cywilizacji świata"⁵⁷ [a collection of motifs, covering the whole course of world civilisation from the very start]. That global perspective included the Italian motif.

V

Cyprian Norwid sketched his own map of the European continent in various manners, incorporating manifold meanings in it and defining the changeable

⁵⁷ C. NORWID, Letter to B. Zaleski [Paris, ca. 1st July 1872], (PWsz IX, 513). On the topic cf. P. CHLEBOWSKI, *Romantyczna silva rerum. O Norwidowym „Album Orbis”*, Lublin 2009 (especially chapters III: "Kolekcjoner w muzeum wyobraźni..." and IV: "...czyli cały przebieg cywilizacji świata", pp. 197-353).

directions of political, civilizational, cultural and literary transfer. His system of geographical and cultural coordinates was not expressed merely in the North-South opposition; it was much richer, covered also the East-West axis, categories of centre and peripheries, and referred to a universalised global and temporal perspective. Each of the oppositions and perspectives discussed above helped build a complex and constantly evolving system of geographic and cultural relations, which contained the semantics of specific places. Each of the presented oppositions and perspectives was important, as they situated the described spaces both in a real and in a symbolic order. From all of those, Norwid constructed his own cultural, historiosophic, anthropological and aesthetic reflection.

And as concerns Norwid's Italy, it was not solely a specific place, but became a space replete with signs, subject to the influence of the above indicated symbolic poles. In part, Norwid's Italy fits the images associated with the Southern lands, in particular in his early works. Yet the evolution of his work can safely be viewed as a constant overcoming of a hegemony of one axis or one perspective, as an attempt to place each issue or problem considered – including Italy! – within a complex system of coordinates.

It could be said that Norwid engaged in a very productive game with traditional images of Italy as a Southern land and the stereotypical meanings associated with that area. In some situations, he strongly emphasised that perspective; in other ones, he marginalised it. Although he never forgot the "Southern" charms of Italy, he constantly shifted Italy in the symbolic realm – either towards the centre, or into modernity, or into the realm of everyday life; into the ancient remoteness of the Latin empire, into the historical time of modern Italy, or into a Christian "eternal now".

Translated by Anna Maria Gernand

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KRAINA POŁUDNIA? WŁOCHY CYPRIANA NORWIDA W PERSPEKTYWIE GEOPOETYKI

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Tematem artykułu jest refleksja nad Norwidowskim dyskursem o Italii w kontekście jego narracji o Europie. Symboliczne usytuowanie Włoch na Norwidowskiej mapie wyobrażonej było wypadkową kilku perspektyw: opozycji Północ-Południe, osi Wschód-Zachód, kategorii centrum i peryferii, wiązało się także z uniwersalizującym spojrzeniem z perspektywy globalnej oraz temporalnej. Każda z tych perspektyw prowadziła ku innym zagadnieniom (antropologicznym, kulturowym, politycznym, ekonomicznym, cywilizacyjnym, estetycznym). We wczesnym okresie twórczości Norwida pozycję Italii wyznaczała głównie przynależność do przestrzeni Południa (akcent padał wówczas na jej właściwości klimatyczne, kulturowe i estetyczne). Z biegiem czasu pozycja Włoch coraz silniej zaznaczała się na osi Wschód-Zachód (związanej głównie z zagadnieniami cywilizacji i polityki). W wielu utworach Norwida Włochy stanowiły symboliczny środek świata (z obrazem Rzymu jako centrum chrześcijaństwa). Zdarzało się i tak, że były elementem pejzażu uniwersalnego. Ewolucję twórczości Norwida można zinterpretować jako nieustanne przewyciężanie hegemonii jednej osi czy jednej perspektywy, a co za tym idzie, jako próbę wpisania obrazu Włoch w skomplikowany układ współrzędnych wyznaczających jego symboliczną mapę wyobrażoną.

Słowa kluczowe: Norwid; geopoetyka Norwida; Włochy; Północ-Południe; Wschód-Zachód; centrum i peryferie; mapa wyobrażona.

SOUTHERN COUNTRY? CYPRIAN NORWID'S ITALY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GEOPOETICS

S u m m a r y

This article offers a reflection on Norwid's discourse about Italy in the context of his narrative about Europe. The symbolic position of Italy on Norwid's imagined map was a resultant of several perspectives: the North-South opposition, the East-West axis, the categories of centre and peripheries, and it was linked to the universal view from a global and temporal perspective. Each of

these perspectives led to other issues (anthropological, cultural, political, economic, civilizational, aesthetic). In the early period of Norwid's work, Italy's position was mainly defined by its belonging to the South (at that time its climatic, cultural and aesthetic qualities were stressed). Over time, Italy's position was increasingly marked on the East-West axis (related mainly to civilizational and political issues). In many of Norwid's works, Italy was the symbolic centre of the world (with a picture of Rome as the centre of Christianity). Sometimes it was even part of a universal landscape. The evolution of Norwid's work can be interpreted as the continuous overcoming of the hegemony of one axis or perspective, and consequently, as an attempt to inscribe the image of Italy onto an intricate system of coordinates representing his symbolic imagined map.

Key words: Norwid; Norwid's geopoetics; Italy; North-South; East-West; centre and peripheries; imagined map.

Summary translated by Rafał Augustyn

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