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THE SPACES OF NORWID'S *ASSUNTA*. SOME INTERPRETATIVE REMARKS

Norwid's *Assunta* is a literary garden in which different spaces overlap. A garden of memory, a garden of nature, a garden of symbols blend together in a space of communication, intertextuality, the "in-between" space. The space traversed by the protagonist changes in an unstructured realistic way, governed by the laws of wandering with a route marked not so much by events as by symbols, the protagonist's thoughts. Thus, "spaces" of *Assunta* that lie at the centre of my interest have multiple fuzzy meanings. This, however, is congruent with one of the dominants of this text – movement and volatility¹. The first aim of this article is to analyse the mechanism through which Norwid creates space, contrast (salon / garden, mine / monastery), changes of space and the associated movement of the protagonist's thoughts. In fact, spatial orientation (up / down, between / beyond) is the interpretative key in *Assunta*.

In this article I leave aside the biographical thread and the potential relationship of literary props to real things and situations², I am more interested in intertextual connections as these expand the poem's space of meaning. The second

¹ In contrast to the specific perspective offered by Paweł SIEKIERSKI in his article „Poetyka przestrzeni w *Assuncie* Cypriana Norwida” (in: *Koncepcje słowa*, eds. E. Czaplejewicz and E. Kasperski, Warszawa 1991, pp. 31-57), in which the primary aim is to “characterise the main spatial circles of the poem” (p. 31).

² Cf. e.g. Juliusz Gomulicki's remarks on the motif of the gardener, ivy and the golden cross in his explanation of *Assunta* (PWSz III, p. 742), and J. Gomulicki, “Rzeczywistość i marzenie (glossy do dwóch poematów Norwida)”, in: C. NORWID, *Dwa poematy miłosne*, introduction and ed. by J. W. Gomulicki, Warszawa 1966, pp. 27-39.

aim of this article is thus to look at the space of the selected intertextual context. In the introduction to the work, the poet delineates the paths of connections by mentioning Part One of *Dziady* [*Forefathers' Eve*], *W Szwajcarii* [*In Switzerland*] and *Maria*. According to Norwid, the first two works are the only love poems in his contemporary literature. *Assunta* thus becomes another link in this chain. Contrary to appearances, however, the subject of these connections has not at all been exhaustively addressed in the literature of the subject. Marian Maciejewski once proposed a very frequently cited juxtaposition of the spaces of *Maria* and *Assunta*.³ *Assunta* has also been juxtaposed, but mostly superficially, with other works, including Słowacki's poem⁴. It is this "intersection" that interests me most – after all, Norwid as an interpreter reads Słowacki originally – in Norwid's terms⁵, hence it is worth looking at the dialogue between *Assunta* and the poem *W Szwajcarii*. Parabolic interpretation of *Assunta* has often involved juxtaposing it with the Platonic tradition, which I would like to analyse again while revising some claims⁶.

At this point, we have to enter the space of the poem and begin the journey alongside its protagonist.

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³ M. MACIEJEWSKI, *Poetyka – gatunek – obraz. W kręgu poezji romantycznej*, Wrocław 1977.

⁴ For instance, cf. H. ŻYCZYŃSKI, *Studia estetyczno-literackie*, Cieszyn 1924; A. KRECHOWIECKI, *O Cypryanie Norwidzie. Próba charakterystyki. Przyczynki do obrazu życia i prac poety, na podstawie źródeł rękopiśmiennych*, Lwów 1909; N. TAYLOR, „Norwid's feminina ideal: Assunta, high point of Polish Romantic love poetry,” in: *Cyprian Norwid. Poet – Thinker – Craftsman*, eds. B. Mazur and G. Gömöri, London 1988.

⁵ This is best exemplified in the lectures *O Juliuszu Słowackim* [*On Juliusz Słowacki*], which have been analysed many times – cf. e.g. M. STRASZEWSKA, “Norwid O Słowackim”, in: *Nowe studia o Norwidzie*, eds. J. Gomulicki, J. Z. Jakubowski, Warszawa 1961, pp. 97-124; J. F. FERT, “Nad-Słowacki, czyli Norwid jako wielbiciel, krytyk i komentator Juliusza Słowackiego, *Ethos. Kwartalnik Instytutu Jana Pawła II KUL*, 2009, Vol. 22, Issues 3–4, pp. 117-127; K. WYKA, „Norwid o Słowackim,” in: K. WYKA, *Cyprian Norwid. Studia, artykuły, recenzje*, Kraków 1989, pp. 267-284; E. CZAPLEJEWICZ, „O Balladynie”, in: *Cyprian Norwid. Interpretacje*, ed. S. Makowski, Warszawa 1986, pp. 186-196; M. STANISZ, ““Imaginarium” polskie. Norwidowska lektura “Anhellego””, *Studia Norwidiana* 37:2019, pp. 93-115.

⁶ As for the juxtapositions of *Assunta* and *W Szwajcarii*, they appeared, for example, in the publications by Adam Krechowiecki and Nina Taylor mentioned in Footnote 3, as well as in books by Henryk ŻYCZYŃSKI (*Studia estetyczno-literackie*, Cieszyn 1924), Henryk SIEWIERSKI (*Architektura słowa i inne szkice o Norwidzie*, Kraków 2012). However, all these juxtapositions were very limited in scope – only touching on selected issues in a superficial way.

The beginning of *Assunta* presents the protagonist waking up in a non-time⁷, on a day that, at its starting point in the morning, promises to be pointless. The idle morning begins with a sense of lack – a lack of activity or a desire to take some action, a lack of sensation. The impulse to interrupt this idle time is given by everyday objects: a travelling stick and a sun-worn hat. Like the Sand from *Garstkapiasku* [*A Handful of Sand*], they whisper of time, and more precisely of the past and the future – the time of the wandering, the structure of which is very telling. The reminder of an arguably repeated march becomes a motivation to give meaning to the passing of time:

Takowym świata zewnętrznego tchnieniem
 Poczulem duch mój zwrócony ku sobie
 I dzień mi przestał być szarym kamieniem.
 Wstałem – wyszedłem – czułem, że coś robię!
 Tak obraz ramy zyskuje pierścieniem,
 Tak zyskiwała myśl moja w tej dobie:
 Łany i góry, i rozsiane sioło
 Gdy uścisnęły ją – szedłem wesoło!
 (DW III, 324)

[Such is the breath of the outside world
 That I felt my spirit turn towards myself
 And my day stopped being a grey stone.
 I got up – went out – and felt I was doing something!
 This is how the framed image gains a ring,
 This is how my thought was gaining ground in this time:
 The fields and mountains, and the scattered countryside
 When they hugged it – I walked merrily!]

The change in mood is triggered not only by the abandonment of idleness, but also by the harmonisation of spirit and environment – the element of nature seems to shape the protagonist's thoughts. It is not so much a Romantic mental landscape as a mental experience shaped by the landscape. The vision of the blue spring and the ivy gives way to the mine landscape. If juxtaposed with the setting of love depicted in the poem *W Szwajcarii*, the beginning of the road in Norwid's poem turns out to be an allegory of the loss of the Romantic dream of Arcadia. Scholars have rightly pointed out that the miner becomes the personification of the disease

⁷ The day is compared to a "bez-napisowy" [inscription-less], non-historical stone. Its barrenness is rooted in its non-inscription in time.

of scientism. This ageing, declining world is a ruined and decayed nature⁸. The miner, with his alembics, appears to be a sorcerer (this perspective detracts from the miner's scientism) surrounded by a landscape of destruction. Krzysztof Trybuś states that in *Assunta*

Nature is [...] virtually invisible, quite like the processes and laws governing its development. The memory of it survives only in the garden, which the wandering poet reaches. Outside this sphere of the garden, nature disappears, or rather dies. This death of nature is combined with the image of an ageing world that becomes so disfigured that it is accompanied by physical degeneration⁹.

According to the researcher, the spatial arrangement in the work alludes to pre-Romantic imagery, and, when viewed universally, to religious lyricism as such¹⁰. *Assunta* and her upward gaze created a world of values that were, as Trybuś put it, "an asylum from ad hocness"¹¹. However, this is not so obvious. The researcher's statement describes the opposition "garden / mine site". Meanwhile, the protagonist of the poem feels the closest affinity to the strong nature, one dominating over the man, during the journey to the monastery, during the mountain trek, and therefore – outside the garden. Paradoxically, in the garden, nature does not determine the shape of the protagonist's journey, as the environment does during his march towards the monastery. Let me digress at this point – Słowacki's mountains are

⁸ Perhaps it would be worthwhile to give further thought to a question that I will merely outline here. In his *Introduction* to Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Wojciech Kunicki recalls in a footnote that Zofia Szmydtowa presented similarities between Norwid and Novalis in terms of their views on translation. Kunicki goes on to write: "Adam Pomorski suggested that the figure of the 'miners' leader' in Norwid's *Assunta* is an allusion to *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, which is hardly correct. Norwid's views on the essence of man: 'Człowiek jest gaz, ferment, wapno' [Man is gas, ferment, lime] (*Assunta*, IV, 15) can in no way correspond to either the miner or his master and father-in-law in the Chapter 5 of Novalis' novel" (*Introduction*, in: NOVALIS, *Henryk von Ofterdingen*, transl. and ed. by E. Szymani and W. Kunicki, Wrocław 2003, p. XCIV). There is, however, a serious error in the quoted statement: the quoted words ("man is gas, ferment, lime") are not Norwid's view – they are a reminiscence of a conversation with a miner. Thus, if taken as an allusion, Norwid's miner would be an inverted reflection of Novalis' miner. A separate issue is the question of the extent to which one could speak of an allusion. This issue has also been raised by Krzysztof TRYBUŚ, who doubts the possible influence, but sees in Norwid's miner a parody of Novalis' miner (*Stary poeta. Studia o Norwidzie*, Poznań 2000, p. 142). At this point, I will merely correct a factual error (pointed out above) in Kunicki's introduction, leaving the question of the affinity of these works open.

⁹ K. TRYBUŚ, *Stary poeta*, p. 143.

¹⁰ K. TRYBUŚ, pp. 144-145.

¹¹ K. TRYBUŚ, p. 150.

an idyllic, tame landscape. The journey depicted by Norwid is more akin to the sensual experience that accompany exertion, and the landscape in this passage is less conventionally depicted, a point to which I will return later. But let us look further at the climb described in the poem.

After leaving the mine site, the protagonist thus “ascends” (physically – he climbs, metaphorically – he walks towards the monastery, towards the metaphysical mountain). Already earlier “dzień przestał być szarym kamieniem” [the day has ceased to be a grey stone]¹², which not only refers to the inclusion of the day in the current of time consciously lived and ordered according to a chosen goal, but to the figurative and sensually understood play of heaviness and lightness. The morning heaviness of body and thought turned into lightness: “Wyszędłem wdzięczny, myślący I chyży, / Powietrze w piersi coraz lżejsze chłonać, / Śniąc? – nie wiem, płynąc? – nie wiem, czyli tonąc?...” [I went out thankful, thinking and lean, / Absorbing the air in my chest getting ever lighter, / Dreaming? – I don’t know, flowing? – I don’t know, or sinking?...] (DW III, 326). The shape of the protagonist’s thoughts and his mood are formed by the journey and the surroundings. The rest of the journey is shrouded by the darkness of the cypress path. The unmoving twigs, the stillness, the darkness (recall that the sunbeam was also afraid to enter the miner’s asylum, for fear that “go ujmie kto i w nic rozłoży!” [it would be captured by someone and spread into nothing!]) (DW III, 325)) and silence create labyrinths that are not destroyed by man – it is not man who gives shape to nature here, but quite the opposite:

A skoro szedłem dalej, chłód i cienie,
Zmieniwszy światłość i oddech, zmieniły
I myśl, i myśli widnokrąg – marzenie!
(DW III, 326)

[And as I walked on, the cold and the shadows,
Having altered light and breath, they have altered
Both the thought and the thought’s horizon – the dream!]

Finally, the sun creates the “Jacob’s ladder”, which the protagonist “climbs” amidst aromas and untamed greenery. Here “natura rzeczce człowiekowi-bratu” [nature tells man-brother] that its labyrinths are only apparent, man’s straying concerns a completely different sphere, the sphere of thought. Nature becomes a guide in the act of self-discovery, while reaching the monastery becomes the culmination of this act.

¹² This again contrasts with the non-historic, “inscription-less” paving stone.

The protagonist reads the entrance to the monastery allegorically, which prompts us to compare the scene he saw to a painting by Le Sueur. This is how he interprets the erasure of a man's trace by a monk:

U podrzędnego zastałem zajęcia
Mnicha, co z progów ścierał ślad człowieka
[...]
Lub – jakby szyć ocierał szeroką,
Około której staranność jest razem
I starannością o swe własne oko.
(DW III, 327-328)

[At the performance of an inferior task I found
A monk who was sweeping the trace of man from the thresholds
[...]
Or – as if he was wiping a wide pane of glass,
The diligence of which is simultaneously
the care of one's own eye.]

This image, juxtaposed with the next event, poses a puzzle to the reader. Another monk falls to his knees, bowing his head before an unexpected visitor, because he sees a divine element in every human being. On the other hand, the monk encountered outside the door “wiped off the trace of man”. The above passage should, as suggested by the protagonist, be read allegorically. Thus, the act of sweeping was not so much a concern for physical order, but rather an expression of concern for the purity of one's own cognition, which should be free from temporality, from man in the sense of a merely accidental physical being. At this point, let us leave aside for a moment the chronology of the poem's events; we will return to the monastery after examining the question that demands to be analysed at this point. The way up, the attitude of the monks is linked to what can be called the Platonic space inscribed in the image of *Assunta's* world. The juxtaposition with the Platonic-Socratic context seems all the more obvious as it appears in Norwid's letter to Bohdan Zalewski of 30 November 1882, in which the poet asks him to read *Assunta*:

Wielce życzyłbym sobie, abyś był łaskaw przeczytać w rękopiśmie moje małe arcydzieło. Niech Cię to nie zraża, że to jest p o e m a m i ł o s n e (DWA są tylko w polskiej literaturze!) – trzeba z o b a c z y ć , jak Sokrates mówił idąc do pięknej damy (PWsz X, 191).

I would very much like you to be kind enough to read my little masterpiece in manuscript. [Do not be put off by the fact that it is a l o v e p o e m (TWO are only to be found in Polish literature!) – one must see how Sokrates spoke when going to a beautiful lady.]

Let us then ask a question concerning the poem's text: Is the protagonist in fact a figure of Socrates talking to a beautiful lady¹³? Not really. It is Assunta (who is not a lady) who is the midwife of truth. Let us recall at this point a passage from *Niewola* [*Enslavement*]: "To niegdyś Sokrat dowodząc Atenie, / Nie umarł!... skończył tylko dowodzenie –" [It was once Socrates who commanding Athena / Did not die!... he only finished commanding –] (DW IV, 50). By analogy – Assunta had to die in order to complete her commanding... However, the issue turns out to be more complicated. In the structure of the work, the protagonist-narrator is the "flawed" Socrates, who only completes himself with the presence of the silent Assunta; it is he who needs guidance. The structure of the Platonic dialogues is, after all, teleological. Socrates' interlocutor actually frequently spoke merely "yes", "no" etc. – it was Socrates who was the speaker, who guided the conversation. Assunta is... a silent Socrates. Similarly – the protagonist uses the elenctic method in his conversation with the Lady, but fails, constrained by the conventions of the salon etiquette. In contrast, in his contact with Assunta he becomes a student, the roles are reversed – it is Assunta who is the silent "midwife" assisting in the birth of the truth to come out from the hero. However, because, throughout its structure, the work is intended to project such a situation to the audience, a point to which I will return shortly, a Socratic function is also assigned to the protagonist-narrator. Assunta acts as a medium; however, one could also say that she is to some extent the hero's daimonion – after all, her "words" are in fact the hero's words, his inner voice, which, according to him, makes him see things as they are.

Coming back to the fact that the whole work is a Socratic question addressed to the reader, it should be recalled that already Arcimowicz, responding to Krechowiecki's commentary, stated that it is impossible to read *Assunta* as a love poem only – from the psychological and aesthetic perspective it would then be really improbable, therefore a parabolic reading is necessary¹⁴. Leaving aside the whole argument of the researcher, which raises many doubts today, it should be emphasised that *Assunta* actually becomes a parable, which is supposed to make

¹³ Of course, in the letter Norwid might not necessarily refer to the hero of the poem but simply himself. It is not the intention, however, but the textual relationship that interest us here.

¹⁴ W. ARCIMOWICZ, "Assunta" C. Norwida – poemat autobiograficzno-filozoficzny, Lublin 1993, pp. 1-2. For Arcimowicz, *Assunta* was an allegory of art. Ryszard Przybylski, in his essay on the gardens of the Romantics, also writes: "Since Romanticism was a kind of panpoetry, some kind of poetic mysteries should take place in the gardens of the Romantics. Since the garden was the theatre of the poet's soul, then among its trees and arbours the very essence of poetry, its 'divine energy', in a word – Lady Poetry – had to be revealed" (R. PRZYBYLSKI, *Ogrody romantyków*, Kraków 1978, pp. 115-116). However, Norwid's garden is not only Romantic, it is post-Romantic.

a certain truth “obvious” to the reader¹⁵. On the other hand, according to Zofia Szmydtowa, *Assunta* is a poem about educating love, understood in the Platonic spirit¹⁶. The researcher also states that “Plato in *Timaeus* proves that only an artist who has his gaze fixed on the essence of things can create perfect things”¹⁷. This corresponds to the idea of the gaze turned towards heaven, the monk’s perspective on man. For Norwid, however, the Christian perspective is fundamental – the Platonic context is mediated hereto some extent, which is not to say that the details are not important. We shall look at it from a slightly different angle.

Writing about Romantic gardens, Ryszard Przybylski emphasised that they were a kind of text, the exegesis of which fulfilled the function of psychotherapy (the walker was to soothe the soul tired of “the hustle and bustle of the world”), while in the case of the Polish Romantic garden, frequently entangled in the search for a trace of Polishness, it was also “a quiet corner of ordinary human happiness”¹⁸. The march of Norwid’s hero is indeed tantamount to a reading of the world and an act of self-discovery, while *Assunta*’s garden hiding a beloved being is an earthly paradise. Interestingly, Przybylski emphasises that among the Polish Romantics only Norwid found God in the garden. However, the researcher does not mention *Assunta*, he only has *Zwolon* in mind, writing: “it is thus the garden of the epiphany of God’s will, which is revealed by a child, an innocent messenger of God, and explained by a prophet who knows how to read transcendent signs”¹⁹. *Assunta* is overlooked, and yet it becomes an example of a quite extraordinary Romantic garden. Romantic – because the Mistress of the Garden reigns in it (as in other Romantic gardens, albeit *Assunta* adopts a specific form of her, as I explain further on), and she – as the scholar rightly stated²⁰ – radiates a noumenal light. The ray of love is the Platonic idea²¹. There is, however, a fundamental difference

¹⁵ One should recall at this point Michał GŁOWIŃSKI’s article *Ciemne alegorie Norwida* (“Pamiętnik Literacki” 1984, Issue 3). Norwid’s parables, which are part of the element of allegory, are also polyphonic, multi-perspectival. Magdalena WOŹNIEWSKA-DZIAŁAK believes that the notion of parable proves too narrow for the description of *Assunta* and therefore proposes the notion of parabolic aesthetics (M. WOŹNIEWSKA-DZIAŁAK, *Poematy narracyjne Cypriana Norwida*, Kraków 2014, p. 204).

¹⁶ Z. SZMYDTOWA, *Platon w twórczości Norwida*, in: eadem, *Poeci i poetyka*, Warszawa 1964, pp. 302 and 303.

¹⁷ Z. SZMYDTOWA, p. 293.

¹⁸ R. PRZYBYLSKI, *Ogrody romantyków*, pp. 13 and 27.

¹⁹ R. PRZYBYLSKI, p. 114.

²⁰ Of course, not referring to *Assunta*, but to the figure of the Mistress of the Garden.

²¹ R. PRZYBYLSKI, p. 146.

here. Assunta acts as a medium, the glitter of an object – the golden cross around the heroine's neck – becomes a symbolic noumenal ray. In the garden, in Assunta – her upward gaze – the hero finds pure faith, finds God. Starting from his *Promethidion*, the thought of the poet afraid of “upiorowego myśłem myślenia” [ghostly thinking of thinking] has not changed, repeating that “Kto kocha – widzieć chce choć cień postaci” [He who loves – wants to see at least the shadow of a figure] (PWsz III, 441 and 442). Norwid's path is an inverted Platonic path²². The idea must be an embodied idea. Undoubtedly, however, this Platonic-Christian clue makes one see the space of the garden parabolically – hidden within it is an idea that surpasses its physical being. Similarly, the space depicted in the poem should be read parabolically, thus let us return to the monastery.

The stone hall is another space of silence – no longer the silence of nature, but of human space – which is emphasised by the only sound resounding in the refectory – the sound of a wall clock. This instrument for measuring the passage of time becomes a kind of *memento mori*, but at the level of sensation it emphasises the silence of the monastery hall, just as the single bird emphasised the stillness and tranquillity in the cypress avenue. The passage quoted above comparing the sweeping of the threshold to the wiping of the glass, corresponds to the clear water, the transparent crystal of the glass. The recurring motif of transparency and the backdrop of silence (previously of the cypress path, now of the monastery's stone hall) are metaphors of undisturbed cognition, learning with the inner eye (another Platonic theme) that looks into another reality through things and the senses. Let us recall at this point Marian Maciejewski's juxtaposition of *Maria* and *Assunta*. Malczewski's work is a metaphorical look “around”. *Maria's* space is limited by the horizon delineated by the despair of this wandering gaze. “I w górę patrzę... nie tylko wokóło” [And up I look... not just around] (DW III, 354), we read in Norwid's poem, which for the researcher is a confirmation of the dialogue with *Maria*²³. However, it should be added that – perversely – the structure of *Assunta's* story includes a look around, but everything around hides what belongs to the vertical axis, what needs to be read, hermeneutically understood. In fact, there is a certain split of the protagonist. The events and the way they are presented lead us to believe that it was Assunta who taught the protagonist to

²² Zofia SZMYDTOWA has already written about other differences, cf. Z. SZMYDTOWA, *Platon w twórczości Norwida*, pp. 278-303. In the context of the “inverted” Plato, see R. GADAMSKA-SERAFIN, *Imago Dei. Człowiek w myśli i twórczości Cypriana Kamila Norwida*, Sanok 2011, pp. 51-62. I wrote more on this subject in: P. ABRISZEWSKA, *Ciało w literaturze, literackie, literatury. Trzy studia o romantyzmie*, Toruń 2018, pp. 205, 206.

²³ M. MACIEJEWSKI, *Poetyka – gatunek – obraz*, p. 164.

look upwards. However, his character is heterogeneous – in the introduction of the work, he is affected by boredom and driven by impulse, but his gaze embraces the world “around him” precisely with this hermeneutic sensibility. Anyway, the monastery, although it becomes a point of reference for the protagonist, is not the target space – it is Norwid’s characteristic “in-between”²⁴, in this case – the garden.

The protagonist looks around and sees through things. It is a game of obscuring and revealing, of opening and closing:

O! wy, którym się roiło, że nagle
Poezja znikła, lub się kałem plami,
Bałwan wasz cisnę w wodę – nad nim żagle
Rozepnę – na twarz stąpię mu nogami,
Gdzieś wyląduję – założę Heraklę!... –
Ani obejrzą się na ruch wasz mrowi!...
Dajcie mi pokój i bywajcie zdrowi – –
(DW III, 328-329)

[O! you who deluded yourselves that suddenly
Poetry has disappeared, or has stained itself with faeces,
I will hurl your idol into the water – above it I will unfurl
The sails – I will step on its face with my feet,
I will land somewhere – I will found Heraclae!... –
I will not even look at your antsy movement!...
Give me peace and be well – –]

The protagonist says that poetry seems to be hidden in the world. Norwid’s hermeneutic, so characteristic of the writer’s attitude, makes us look at the whole journey as a text. The encounter with the miner (and, in the background, with Darwinism and materialism) is an allegory of the perception of a world devoid of poetry, an allegory of mundane toil, of clinging to the “faecal level”. Hovering above human affairs, the monastery is merged with human reality in the act of drinking water, which is presented analogously to the Eucharist, becoming a confirmation of the act of unification; however, the monastery is an inaccessible space. The protagonist seeks an “in-between” space, a space where the realm of ideas/divinity and the realm of concrete image intermingle. He finds it in Assunta’s circle.

²⁴ Cf. *Idee i prawda [Ideas and Truth], Promethidion*. The figure of the cross, the intersection of two axes, is for Norwid a metaphor of cardinal epistemological, ontological and anthropological truth (cf. G. HALKIEWICZ-SOJAK, *Wobec tajemnicy i prawdy. O Norwidowskich obrazach “całości,”* Toruń 1998).

The first song shows us thus two levels, the second song describes the connecting, metaphorical “in-betweens” – Assunta’s garden and Assunta herself, because the space of the garden is defined by her presence. Drawing the actual topography does not seem possible or necessary in the case of Norwid’s poem – however, the garden is not situated on a plain, but between rocks, albeit below the monastery, as mentioned in the fifth octave. But the actual space proves not so much important as symbolic. The garden is a human Garden of Eden that survived the Flood, there are traces of destruction both literal (the rampant heather that the gardener has been fighting since the Flood) and symbolic (Assunta’s silence). The destructive flood is also part of nature. But is it only destructive? The gardener speaks of different floods – some fertilise the soil, others merely take everything away – it was one that destroyed the garden and made the heroine an orphan. However, throughout the structure of the piece, the flood is a creating force. The terrible image – of animals, cradles, coffins swept away and smashed on the rocks by the river – is contrasted with Assunta, whose silence is not, in the eyes of the protagonist, a disability but an extraordinary skill. However, the first conversation with the old man ends rather unexpectedly, summed up by the reflection: “O! mowo ludzka, nie twe wszystkie prądy / Obraca człowiek, jak chce lub mniema!” [O! human speech, not yours are all currents / Man twists as he will or thinks!] (DW III, 334). Speech described by the word “current”, analogous to an untamed river pouring out of its bed, is not an element over which man has obvious control. It destroys and builds. Just as the fight against the heather that has been colonising the garden since the flood is doomed to failure, so is speech a fight for order on the one hand, and the very act of fighting is in some sense important, edifying on the other. The metaphor of the flood embraces the protagonist himself – the protagonist “roz-pacza” [despairs] after the loss of Assunta, but at the same time “re-shapes” himself. However, it was not the conversation with the gardener that was the purpose of this expedition. The eye, the gaze of the protagonist is constantly pursuing every detail to finally grasp “ta czarownica” [that witch] (DW III, 330).

The moment of the first sighting of Assunta can be juxtaposed with an analogous one in the poem *W Szwajcarii*. This is exactly what Adam Krechowiecki did in a study that is now over a hundred years old. He juxtaposed many passages from both poems, concluding that their imposing similarity makes one involuntarily compare them, and that this convinces one of *Assunta*’s apparent intention “not only to match, but perhaps even to surpass the prototype”²⁵. The author does not analyse but instead confines himself to quoting long passages from both works in order to ultimately pronounce the superiority of Słowacki’s poem: “*Assunta*

²⁵ A. KRECHOWIECKI, *O Cyprianie Norwidzie*, p. 310.

cannot stand in the row of love poems in Polish literature if only for its very form, devoid of softness and appropriate panache”²⁶. Some of the passages cited by Krechowiecki are adequate – their resemblance does indeed impose itself²⁷. Here, however, Krechowiecki fails to capture the essence of Norwid’s poem, reading it “normatively” – Słowacki’s diction became the model. Certain patterns, such as the first glance, the impression it leaves or the touching of the heroine, the peeping (intentional or brief, unintentional), the justification, the unclear ending – the departure of the lover – are similar. “Odtąd szczęśliwi byliśmy i sami” [Henceforth we were happy and alone] (603)²⁸ – we read in *W Szwajcarii*; seclusion in the garden space becomes just as important in *Assunta*. However, in every similarity lies a difference. Norwid’s protagonist praises marriage and emphasises the importance of the social dimension of love. In Słowacki’s poem, the lovers’ abandonment of the shack, their solitude, in search of a hermit who will bless their relationship, becomes a foreshadowing of the end. Therefore, bearing in mind how very different these works are, I would like to look at two planes of intertextual connections. The first is the world of detail, of decoration, of minutiae, of moments when the poems meet/diverge in the ways in which the space of the garden is created together with its central figure – the Mistress of the Garden. The second point that interests me is the answer to the question of how Norwid probably interpreted *W Szwajcarii*.

The scene of the heroine being peeped at during bathing in Słowacki’s poem corresponds to the scene when Norwid’s protagonist is peeping, not yet knowing what he is seeing, at *Assunta* while reading. The differences are indisputable, the first protagonist is deliberately dragging out a situation the eroticism of which is obvious, while the second immediately reveals itself. Two props or symbols play a key role here – the cross and the lily. In *Assunta*, the cross draws attention by becoming a guardian of purity of intention and innocence as well as a symbol of love understood as the intersection of the horizontal and vertical axes. In Słowacki, the lily, also a symbol of innocence, is part of an erotic game. Symbolic props were (apparently) used similarly as justification. In *Assunta* we read: “Assunto! – jeżeli Ci to nieprzyjemnie, / Wiedz, iż krzyż jasny zatrzymał pielgrzymą” [Assunta! – if

²⁶ A. KRECHOWIECKI, pp. 314-315.

²⁷ Here, I agree with Magdalena Woźniewska-Działak who states that Krechowiecki’s belief that it is possible to juxtapose almost any fragment of *Assunta* with Słowacki’s poem is a “reading error” (M. WOŹNIEWSKA-DZIAŁAK, *Poematy narracyjne Cypriana Norwida*, p. 185).

²⁸ Quoting *W Szwajcarii* I am using the following edition: J. SŁOWACKI, *Poematy. Nowe wydanie krytyczne*, Vol. 1: *Poematy z lat 1828-1839*, eds. J. Brzozowski and Z. Przychodniak, Poznań 2009. Each quotation is followed by the page number in brackets.

it makes you uncomfortable, / Know that the *bright cross* has stopped the pilgrim] (DW III, 335); and in *W Szwajcarii* the following words are spoken to the lover: “Z sercaś mi wszystko odpuścić powinna; / Lilija jedna wszystkiemu jest winna” [From your heart you should forgive me everything; / Only the lily is to blame for everything] (610). There is an important difference due to the choice of the props, though there is also a similarity – the motif of the unconscious agency of both heroines²⁹. Above such trifles grows the difference of the further plane. The space of Słowacki's garden sparkles with rainbows, shimmering rays, icy walls, drops of water, etc. Norwid captures this predilection brilliantly:

[...] do tragedii własnej [*Balladyny*] stawił zarazem Juliusz teatr jakoby przenośny, w okładkach, że tak rzekę, książki schowany. Są tam dekoracje z liści rosami mokrych uwite – rzutami pstrego światła ozłacane – malin woni i konwalij pełne. Rozpruj książkę i przeciągnij po stole, pionowo karty jej stawiając, a okaże ci się gajów zielonych i chat, i baszt połamanych perspektywa, ojcowskiemu i piskowo skalnemu podobna wąwozowi. A to wszystko jasności planu pierwotnego i, że tak rzekę, harmonii zasadniczej szkieletu samego nie uwidomia – osi dramatycznej nie okazuje – typów nie uwydatnia – owszem zamglewa rysy główne i unieczystnia rzecz, lubo w sposób dziwnie powabny. (PWsz VI, 465-466)

[...] in his own tragedy [*Balladyna*], Juliusz has at the same time inserted a seemingly portable theatre, concealed, so to speak, within the covers of a book. There are decorations of leaves wet with dew – gilded with mottled light – full of the scent of raspberries and lilies of the valley. Rip open the book and drag it across the table, placing its pages vertically, and you will see green groves and cottages and broken towers in a perspective similar to that of a paternal and dog stone ravine. And all this does not make visible the clarity of the original plan and, so to speak, the fundamental harmony of the framework itself – it does not show the dramatic axis – does not highlight the types – rather it blurs the main features and renders the thing illegible, albeit in a strangely alluring manner.]

The space of the drama is very different from that of the poem, but Słowacki's “painterliness”, as Norwid describes it, shapes the scene in the poem as well. Norwid contrasts this breadth and almost frenetic exuberance not so much with realism as with asceticism, with precision. If Słowacki paints without sparing colours and forms, Norwid sketches by emphasising detail. He contrasts roses, nightingales and cherry trees with the ubiquitous ivy and heliotropium. The symbolic space

²⁹ The prop in the form of the book was also used differently – in Słowacki's case, it enabled shared reading and was a pretext for physical intimacy, while Assunta leans over the book, her eyes remaining invisible, and the whole posture allows both a glimpse of her voluptuous lips and neck, but above all, it sets in motion a loosely hanging golden cross, the glow of which catches the eye of the beholder.

of nature is linked in both works only by the cypress motif. However, even here the difference will be significant. Słowacki's cypress scent is associated with an elegiac tone falling into melancholy, while in Norwid's work, the cypress leaf (an allusion to Part Four of *Dziady*is undoubtedly equally important here³⁰) is a memory, a stimulus for a cheerful, trusting look upwards.

Sensuality present in *W Sz wajcarii* is mainly a visual, erotic experience. Słowacki writes about his heroine: "Płonęła wonna jak kadzidło mirry, / I widać było, że niewiedząc płonie" [She was burning fragrant as the frankincense of myrrh, / And one could see that she was burning without knowing] (611). Norwid dispenses with the erotic literalism of the senses, writing that it was the heliotropes "woność oblała nas"[that fragrantly doused us] (DW III, 336). Heliotropes are not flowers as culturally "exploited" as the rose or the lily. They refer more to their physical reality than to cultural meanings. Their scent is exceptionally strong and sweet. This tangibility of scent is reflected in the use of the word "oblała" [doused]³¹. "Mniemałem słyszeć bzy rozkwitające / Z motylem sennym lub zieloną muchą" [I thought I heard lilacs in bloom / With a dreamy butterfly or a green fly] (DW III, 337). The gradation applied here is striking – from a powerful sensory impression (the overpowering scent) to the subtle, or rather almost imagined, sound of lilacs in bloom, the fluttering of butterfly wings and finally the more real buzzing of the green fly³². However, the garden itself loses its reality – linked to the protagonist's consciousness, it becomes part of his mood, his thoughts. "Choć lśniły kwiaty stronami obiema – szedłem...był ciennik przede mną zielony, / Ogród był – – nie wiem! – byłem zamyślony" [Though the flowers shone on both sides – I walked...before me there was a green arbour, / There was a garden – – I don't know! – I was thoughtful] (DW III, 334). What was there? Was there anything at all? The garden melts into a thought that absorbs sensory experience. The force of the Romantic existential landscape returns here – we read further: "Ciemna myśl cieniów pożąda – zbłądziłem, / To jest znalazłem, co mi trzeba było" [Dark thought desires shadows – I strayed, / That is, I found what I needed] (DW III, 334). The shape of the garden is determined by the hero

³⁰ Furthermore, another justification for Assunta's departure/death emerges – it becomes a link in the chain of the four works, a very significant link – Norwid's model of coming to terms with loss, of looking up with confidence, is a modification of the attitudes of earlier literary characters.

³¹ An identical sensitivity to scents is shown by Słowacki in his early poem *Godzina myśli* [*The Hour of Thought*].

³² Here again, it is worth recalling *Godzina myśli*, whose characters listened to the sound of growing flowers. This whole passage from *Assunta* can be juxtaposed with what the protagonists of *Godzina myśli* imagine sitting on a school bench.

and heroine – her presence or absence³³ (similarly in Słowacki's poem – when the abandoned valley seems to be a coffin). The darkness of thought, the uncertainty, make an arbourcasting a shadowappear. Assunta's appearance is a light, a flash.

Nevertheless, the link between the garden space and Słowacki's nameless heroine seems stronger. She is part of the image of Swiss nature, garlands of rainbows adorn her, processions of fish follow her, deer do not shy away at the sight of her but sink their gaze into her. The Swiss idyll is a description of the Garden and the heroine is an integral part of it³⁴, she seems to be woven from rainbows and mist. As an erotic object she gains a reality, but an illusory one – dressed in the splendour of pearls, crystals. As scholars have pointed out, she dissolves into nature, whose exuberance becomes her own feature.

The Swiss space is a Garden, a stage of imagination and props, a conventional Eden. The place where Assunta rules is a garden where flowers are grown for sale, a space for work. It is Assunta who radiates in the environment, her presence gives it another dimension in the eyes of the protagonist. The heroine of the poem is the mistress of the hero's imagination. She, too, is adorned by fish, but those from the Lady's aquarium, which is only evoked by the protagonist's associations, while Assunta's garlands are wreaths of ubiquitous ivy. Therefore, in Norwid's garden, it is not the breadth but the detail that is important – looking through the leaves, a single leaf and a tear: "I tylko ten liść ze łzą i ja byłem / Na świecie całym, jak wielki i błogi" [And only this leaf with a tear and I was / In the entire world, how great and blissful] (DW III, 337). This concentration on the detail is not at all a focus on a sensual phenomenon – it is a self-reflection, a contemplation of a moment, an impression.

If the heroine of *W Sz wajcarii* is given the title of the Mistress of the Garden, Assunta, the gardener, can be called the embodiment of Eternal Girlishness³⁵. Both heroines are worshipped, albeit in different ways. To Słowacki's heroine the lover addresses his prayers, but the exclamation "Ave Maryja"[Ave Maria] (606) is accompanied by a love act. Assunta, meanwhile, is "społeczność Ducha z Ideałem" [a communion of the Spirit and the Ideal] (DW III, 279), a character who blends the earthly with the heavenly³⁶. Both seem magical, unreal. But the creation of the

³³ Cf. P. SIEKIEŃSKI, *Poetyka przestrzeni w "Assuncie"*, p. 38.

³⁴ Cf. J. TRETIĄK, *Juliusz Słowacki. Historia ducha poety i jej odbicie w poezji*, Vol.I, Kraków 1904.

³⁵ Cf. R. PRZYBYLSKI, *Ogród romantyków*, pp. 146-148.

³⁶ Dominika Wojtasińska writes about the symbolic dimension of the colours accompanying Assunta, treating this figure as Norwid's ideal of the "complete woman", a combination of the biblical Mary and Martha (D. WOJTASIŃSKA, *O koncepcji kobiety "zupełnej" w pismach Cypriana*

Mistress of the Garden is built on the mystery of the ontic unity of the heroine and nature. Słowacki's heroine seems to be the Mistress of the Garden in the objective sense of the word. She is the ruler of nature, she even melts into it, she is the garden. The other heroine, compared to a bustling witch, seems to hide in the midst of the garden. Assunta completely rules in the protagonist's mind and it is in his subjective vision that she is the Mistress of the Garden.

Both heroines are depicted according to the poetics of the initial portrait. Apart from the colour of the eyes, no detail (apart from, for example, the conventional coral of the lips) is given. They are simply beautiful. The beauty of Słowacki's heroine is transposed into the space of the garden (and vice versa), and is very sensual. Assunta is not depicted with such splendour. Norwid abandons the allure of painterliness in favour of creating a different type – a gardener working the soil and at the same time (at least in the protagonist's eyes) a mystic. Her beauty stems from something else – Assunta's subtlety, her lightness are physical, not unearthly, as in the case of the Mistress of the Garden. They are revealed in the allegorical subtlety with which she touches the cross hanging around her neck:

– Podjęła rękę, jak postać, co ima
Wonny liść krzewu, lub skrzydło motyle,
Wzięła krzyż – do ust przywarła na chwilę
(DW III, 335)

[– She stretched her hand, like a figure that is holding
A fragrant bush leaf or a butterfly wing,
She grasped the cross – pressed it to her lips for a moment]

The gesture we find in a later piece – “*Ad leones!*”, when the hand touches the symbol – is revealed here in all the naturalness of girlish movement. For Norwid, posture, gestures were very important. Assunta is contrasted with “zmarmurzone” [marbleised] ladies. Her lightness and her surroundings make her, as I have already written, the epitome of Eternal Girlishness. Norwid wrote of Mickiewicz's Zosia that she was a mere under-age girl, hence she could not be the voice of a woman. Assunta seems to be older, but the creations of both characters are strikingly similar. Zosia, who seems almost to be flying through the garden, flitting like a wild bird (similarly to Assunta), surrounded by light, is similar to Assunta, who is walking through the garden. Unlike Zosia, however, Assunta becomes a fulfilled woman who simultaneously retains the attributes of girlishness. Nina Taylor wrote that the works mentioned by Norwid in his introduction to *Assunta* became, to

Norwida, Toruń 2016, p. 353).

a greater extent, not models but “anti-models”, to which the poet wanted to respond and which he wished to rectify³⁷. As for *W Szwajcarii*, as presented above, the space of Norwid’s dialogue with this work is complex. Norwid was undoubtedly making a correction, but I think it may have been mainly to present a more expressive type. In his commentary on *Balladyna*, quoted above, he complained about an excess of decoration that obscured the thing and the types, but at the same time he acknowledged that this “unieczytelnienie” [rendering of the text more obscure] had great allure. For the author of *Assunta*, it is not decoration that is the goal, but the “thing”, the type – to be made visible, foregrounded and... perhaps similar to the heroine of *W Szwajcarii*, who “jako gołąb, co w strumieniu pije, / Do nieba jasnym wzlatywała okiem” [as a pigeon that drinks in a stream, / Flew up to heaven with a bright eye] (610). Let us recall at this point a passage from the introduction to *Lilla Weneda*:

As many times as I have been with you, it seemed to me that all people have Raphaelian eyes, that it is enough to show them a beautiful spiritual figure with a single-word outline, that it is not necessary to take care of visual impairment, but to guard against mere excess; I have thought that all men are endowed with Platonic and Attic attention; that by adding to the world already created by the poets one such figure as a nymph crowned with swallows [...] – one can make these Athenians turn their eyes to the sky³⁸.

Without doubt, it was not exactly the upward gaze Norwid had in mind, but the direction was right. Perhaps this is how Norwid read *W Szwajcarii*, perceiving Słowacki’s *Mistress of the Garden* as one who “do nieba jasnym wzlatywała okiem” [Flew up to heaven with a bright eye]. Magdalena Woźniewska-Działak believes that just such lines “have often prejudiced the claims about the alleged inspirations by Słowacki’s poem. Heavily overestimated”³⁹. In my opinion, however, by showing the intertextual dialogue I do not search for inspiration, but rather want to show a dialogue that is not necessarily intentional. In Norwid’s eyes, the heroine of Słowacki’s poem may have been a “type” of *Assunta*, whom the hero of *W Szwajcarii* did not understand, did not notice, whose essence he did not see. Therefore, the literary space created by the dialogue of these texts offers many interpretative possibilities, and the poetic dialogue Norwid – Słowacki can be called, in the language of Harold Bloom, a kind of *clinamen*⁴⁰.

³⁷ N. TAYLOR, *Norwid’s feminine ideal*, p. 111.

³⁸ J. SŁOWACKI, „Lilla Weneda,” in: J. SŁOWACKI, *Dramaty*, ed. J. Kleiner, Wrocław 1959, pp. 427-428.

³⁹ Magdalena WOŹNIEWSKA-DZIAŁAK, *Poematy narracyjne Cypriana Norwida*, p. 191.

⁴⁰ See H. BLOOM, *Lęk przed wpływem. Teoria poezji*, transl. A. Bielik-Robson, M. Szuster.

At this point I will turn to the final juxtaposition of two spaces that further describe the character of Assunta by way of contrast. As I wrote earlier, Assunta is located in the space “in between” the poles centred around the mine – the miner and the monastery – the monk. Equally important in defining the uniqueness of the garden and the gardener is the space of the Lady’s salon. It presents a double agon – of place and of character. As far as the contrast of the heroines is concerned, it is obvious and it demonstrates a difference that is pivotal for Norwid. In the social space, in the salon, the woman is not a cultural mediator in the positive sense; on the contrary, she destroys the protagonist’s fundamental standards of decency. The silent Assunta in the midst of the flowers, working the soil, fused with natural space, is a medium in the positive and supreme sense, for she combines the vertical and horizontal dimensions, weaving a metaphysical dimension into the world “around” her. Regarding the contrast of space, I would like to recall the findings of Maria Kalinowska, who, writing about *Assunta* and *Pierścień Wielkiej Damy* [*The Noble Lady’s Ring*], juxtaposes the two works in the context of space and communication. The researcher’s conclusions are as follows: space in *Assunta* is “as if empty or rather – free” which results in freedom of action not constituting “a violation of the other person’s space of existence”⁴¹. This should be elaborated here – this understanding of space in *Assunta* is the result of the juxtaposition with *Pierścień Wielkiej Damy*, and this juxtaposition is troublesome since both works have diametrically opposed literary forms. “The density of space”⁴² results from the dramatic structure. In *Assunta* we also have different spaces – the one separated from the collective is intertwined with the salon-like communicative space. As a side note, it should be added that the “salon” section of the poem is dramatically structured. It bears the leitmotif of Norwid’s work – the salon becomes the space of a game of empty social form that defines the participants like figures in a game. In this situation, the protagonist withdraws into himself. The rupture of the communicative space between the participants in the conversation becomes tragic, but the act of renouncing one’s identity, of suppressing the word, also becomes tragic. The salon is a place where one “talks, not speaks”. It is a dramatic rupture between the space of inner thought and outer form.

Meanwhile, the interior of the gardener’s house is depicted as follows:

Kraków 2002.

⁴¹ M. KALINOWSKA, *Mowa i milczenie. Romantyczne antynomie samotności*, Warszawa 1989, p. 217.

⁴² M. KALINOWSKA, *Mowa i milczenie*, p. 217.

Trudno napotkać przyjemniejsze wnętrza:
 Bez-przymusowo owdzie wszystko czyste,
 Zza ściany przyszedł bluszcz i się wypiętrza
 W leniwe wieńce, w siatki przezroczyste,
 Których latorośl jedna drugiej krętsza –
 Aż ledwo oko do białych ścian trafia,
 Gdzie malowana świeci litografia...
 (DW III, 335)

[It is difficult to encounter more pleasant interiors:
 Without compulsion all clean there,
 From behind the wall came the ivy and is rising
 In lazy wreaths, in transparent nets,
 Whose vines are each curlier than the previous –
 Until the eye barely reaches the white walls,
 Where a painted lithograph is shining...]

In the midst of the garden, meanwhile, there is Assunta “rozczochranym włosom, / Rączęta mając ziemią zawalane” [with dishevelled hair, / With hands swamped in the soil] (DW III, 351). The naturalness, the simplicity of the gardener and the place contrast with the posed Lady, surrounded by chic props. The silent communication with Assunta, the conversation without words, becomes this “empty space” of possible meanings⁴³. The protagonist’s conversation with the Lady is just a “talk” and an exchange of empty gestures:

[...] Dama, wsparta na atlasie
 Kozetki swojej, usunęła nogą
 Skórę lamparta z oczyma szklannemi,
 Jakby szukając, co leży na ziemi?...
 (DW III, 340)

[[...] The Lady, supported on satin
 of her couch, removed with her foot
 Leopard skin with glass eyes,
 As if searching for what lies on the ground?...]]

⁴³ However, Henryk Siewierski writes that even Norwid’s theory of silence does not change the fact that the communication between the lovers is in fact not so much a supplement as a “projection of expectations”, and “thus the hero of *Assunta* creates the personality of his beloved to a much greater degree than, for example, the hero of Juliusz Słowacki’s *W Szwajcarii*, of which he himself is aware: ‘Patrzyłem jako Fidias na Dyjanę, Gdy kamień pierś jej obejmął i biodro’ [I was looking as Phidias at Diana, When a stone embraced her breast and hip] (IV, 10)” (H. SIEWIERSKI, *Architektura słowa*, p. 231).

The Lady is constantly preoccupied with her attire, her posture. All these gestures are unnecessary. Correcting her dress, playing with her ring, arranging herself on the couch. In this “condensed space”, the protagonist first makes a dodge, does not express his opinion, but begins to stroke the head of the panther. However, when the subject begins to touch him directly, he stands up, delivers a monologue that is by no means salon-like in its form, emphatic, interrupted by coughing, and ending in frenzied laughter. The Lady throws a perfumed handkerchief at him in anger. The hero, who has momentarily made his thoughts known, withdraws, once again assuming an attitude of salon coolness, and indifferently puts the handkerchief back on the table, thus failing to take up the salon challenge to the duel. The conversation ends. The words of truth have passed unnoticed; in the salon, “łatwo prawdę przetrącać wachlarzem” [the truth is easily trumped by a fan] (DW III, 343). Two kisses: on Assunta’s hair and on the Lady’s long finger. Two props: a golden cross and a fragrant handkerchief. Two spaces that are alien to each other. By the power of contrast, Norwid presents these two figures unequivocally valuing them. This is why it is so striking and painful for the protagonist that the Lady can dispose of Assunta’s fate, that these two worlds, separated from each other – as spaces of communication – remain in a mutual relation of subordination and superiority. Thus it is not without “s-krzypnięcia wstecz ironii” [a squeak back of irony]⁴⁴ that the different spaces in *Assunta* intermingle.

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⁴⁴ *Ironia* [Irony], PWsz II, 5.

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PRZESTRZENIE *ASSUNTY* NORWIDA. UWAGI INTERPRETACYJNE

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest aspektową analizą poematu *Assunta* Cypriana Norwida. Pierwszym z celów analizy jest przyjrzenie się sposobom kreowania przestrzeni, mechanizmom ich kontrastowania (ogród / salon; kopalnia / klasztor) i powiązania zmian, różnorodności przestrzeni z ruchem myśli bohatera. Drugi cel to zbadanie przestrzeni rozumianej metaforycznie – jako kontekstu intertekstualnego – w tym głównie zestawienie z poematem Juliusza Słowackiego *W Szwajcarii*. W ogólniejszej perspektywie istotne jest przedstawienie, w jak oryginalny sposób Norwid jako interpretator czyta Słowackiego. Na marginesie powracam również do kwestii pojawiającej się w literaturze przedmiotu – zestawiania *Assunty* z tradycją platońską – rewiduję niektóre sądy, pokazując, iż rolę Sokratesa pełni zarówno bohater (wobec odbiorcy), jak i Assunta (wobec bohatera).

Słowa kluczowe: Norwid; *Assunta*; Słowacki; *W Szwajcarii*; Sokrates; przestrzeń; romantyczny ogród; intertekstualność.

THE SPACES OF NORWID'S *ASSUNTA*. SOME INTERPRETATIVE REMARKS

Summary

This article offers an aspectual analysis of the narrative poem *Assunta* by Cyprian Norwid. Its first goal is to examine ways of creating space and contrasts (garden / salon; mine / monastery) as well as to link the changes and varieties of space with the protagonist's course of thoughts. The second aim is to study these spaces in metaphorical sense, i.e. as an intertextual context, primarily in order to compare Norwid's work with *W Szwajcarii* [*In Switzerland*] by Juliusz Słowacki. In a broader perspective it becomes vital, however, to demonstrate how Norwid ingeniously interprets the poem by Słowacki. Incidentally, the article also revisits one question that recurs in many studies, namely that of similarities between *Assunta* and the Platonic

tradition. In this area, the article revises certain claims, demonstrating that the role of Socrates is played not only by the protagonist (in relation to readers) but also by Assunta (in relation to the protagonist).

Keywords: Cyprian Norwid; *Assunta*; Juliusz Słowacki; *W Szwajcarii [In Switzerland]*; Socrates; space; Romantic garden; intertextuality.

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