

Anna Marta Dworak, *Europe as an imagined space. Study of European awareness in the Polish writing under the partitions in the period between uprisings* – Abstract

The subject of the dissertation is an attempt to reconstruct the European awareness of the Polish society of the times between the uprisings under the occupation. The basic aim of considerations was to describe the way in which the image of Europe and everything that was European was functioning in the thoughts of the Polish people of that epoch. For that reason many literary, journalistic, scientific and others texts, as well as the private documents, were analysed. A variety of methodological inspirations were used for analysis the collected material. Among them were notions and categories taken from the history of idea (in particular the concept of „imagined communities” and “identity myths”), geopoetics (categories space and place, mental space and mental map, centre and periphery etc.), cognitive linguistic (concepts of metaphoric conceptualization of content of consciousness and lingual image of the world).

The results of the conducted researches were described in this dissertation which consists of six chapters. The first chapter named *Romantic mentality* included thesis that the main part of the society aware of their Europeanness was the Polish intelligentsia. It was also noticed that the intelligentsia was a class that had only just been shaping. Also the state of knowledge concerning Europe and other geographical concepts of the Polish people in the first half of the 19th century was presented. For the aim of that many available at that time geography course books, magazines concerning geography, etc. were analysed. The chapter also discusses the presence of the geography in the Polish curricula, the role of travelling in the process of cognition of the world as well as the importance of read books and even the overheard stories or known paintings and drawings presenting the European places and spaces. The conducted analyses let drawing conclusion that many times a book, a story or travels influenced the romantic imagination more significantly than the knowledge gained in schools, however it was also very important and necessary.

A crucial issue for the shaping of the European awareness were also the establishment myths. The second chapter *Genealogy* is introduced for their discussion. There, the most important European (Greek, Sarmatic, Japhetic, Trojan, Slavic) identity myths are presented. Then the traits of their presence are explained in the analysed texts of the Polish romanticists.

As the analyses showed, in the Polish writings the most common was the Japhetic myth, the source of which was a biblical story about Noah's three sons - Japheth, Shem and Ham. The reconstruction of the European myths became a base for showing the problem of symbolic genealogy of European peoples and nations. The second part of the chapter was devoted to the considerations of the scientific attempt of the European genealogy by the romanticists. Similarly to the texts connected to the mythical ideas, in the scientific and journalistic texts the authors claimed that the roots of the European civilisation are in Asia. Also the issue of the popular in 19th century theory about the common origin of the European nations is mentioned here, the proof of which was supposed to be the similarities of their languages that were to originate in one Indo-European language. The deliberation concerned also the problem of the European belonging of the Jews which is also present in the texts of that time.

The third chapter, called *Metaphors*, concerned the analysis of the metaphors by the use of which the Polish authors presented Europe. Among them there are various personifications of Europe as a woman (referring to the popular Greek myth about the kidnapping of the Phoenician princess Europe), the organic metaphors (e.g. showing the continent as a tree or a bush, the roots of which grow out of Asia) or the metaphors indicating the illnesses and weaknesses tormenting Europe, but also some completely different ideas, e.g. of Europe as a man. The metaphors used by the Polish writers of the period between the uprising showed Europe as a geographical, cultural, historical, religious and political category which creatively shaped the imagination used by the writers and journalists throughout the continent at the same time.

The fourth chapter, called *Borders*, discussed a problem of the imaginary European borders as well as its internal divisions. Contrary to the common beliefs, establishing the borders of the imagined Europe is not easy. The most significant issues were connected to the establishment of the eastern border which was not only culturally controversial but also difficult to trace because of the geographical constraints. The closer analysis of texts shows that the Polish romanticists imagined differently also the rest of the borders: some of them, like Łucja Rautenstrauchowa, perceived Italy as a separate part of the world, others indicated the strangeness of the Great Britain or did not consider the farthest northern parts of the continent as belonging to the European civilisation. The main problem was to determine the criteria based on which they made those divisions. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the internal European divisions. The authors of the analysed texts most often divided Europe into the eastern and the western and (what is characteristic also for the romanticists) into the southern and the northern. Those divisions did not have the clearly

geographical character, but a cultural - at those times they often indicated the differences in the character of people, traditions, religions connected to this very belonging to a given part of Europe. Apart from the mentioned east-west and south-north divisions we can also come across other ways of "dividing Europe": into the wooden and the stone, the agricultural and the industrial, etc. Also a Polish division was proposed - into the Europe of places and the Europe of spaces.

The chapter dedicated to the European borders concerned the problem of the mental diminishing of Europe. The better acknowledgement of the continent and the newest inventions (such as railway or telegraph) have improved the communication and diminished Europe in the imagination of the romanticists. Next to the mental phenomenon of diminishing Europe it is possible to notice also its increasing connected to the Europeanization of other continents. The last issue raised in this part of the dissertation was the problem of the so-called "small Europes" so giving the names of the known places in Europe to others places and spaces of lesser importance.

The fifth chapter was destined to the discussion of those places and spaces which, according to the conducted analyses, in the period between the uprisings were the centres of the Europe at that time. Surely the most significant was Paris which was known as the centre of Europe combining the cultural and social life as well as setting the fashion trends. That is why the Polish writers used to call it "the capital city of Europe", "the focus of Europe" and even "the capital city of the world". The authors of the analysed texts had many times exposed also the darker sides of the city - Paris seemed to them as a city which is rotten, materialized, turning against faith, that is why it was also called the modern Babylon. The city competing with Paris as the capital city of the world was, according to the analysed texts, London. However, its dominance concerned mostly the areas outside Europe. England seemed a bit left out of Europe, placing its main interests outside the European continent in numerous colonies. At the same time it played an important role in the European commerce and industry becoming their centre. The Polish writers did not seem to be fond of England, they many times described it as a foggy, rainy and cold city and in the same manner they described also the English people. Italy played a role of the European museum and the centre of arts. This country was visited mostly by the artists who were looking for the creative inspirations. While writing about Italy the Polish authors focused on the specific places and monuments. Among the places that were especially shaped in the mental map of this part of Europe, the distinguished and described were, among others: Rome, Venice, Genoa, Milan, Florence, Naples, Pompeii and Herculaneum, Vesuvius or Verona. There were also many

references to the stereotypical images of the beauty of the Italian landscape which was very often compared by the writers to their native ones. Among the spaces perceived as the European centres there were also Germany, which had an important function in commerce as well as a widely developed publishing market, and Switzerland which thanks to the beauty of its landscapes was perceived as the European “krajowid” (i.e. landscape in the old Polish).

The last chapter shows that the European imaginary space, apart from the centres, includes also the peripheries. They, as well as the centres, also had an individual character. The difference between them is the lesser political and cultural importance and that they did not have such strength of shaping other spaces as the centres. Greece, although ruined and collapsing, was still perceived as a birthplace of the European culture. The Scandinavian and the Iberian Peninsulas were functioning as the European borders many times defined as exotic. The Slavic culture was perceived as a candidate for the dominating role in Europe taking into consideration the depravity and the decadence of the nations of the Western Europe. Russia was often excluded from the European civilization being depicted as a threat for it by the Polish authors. Ireland was showed as one of the poorest places. Finland was used by the Polish authors as a pretext for describing the situation of the national captivity. In the space of the imagined Europe there were also the so-called white spots, so places mentioned occasionally by some of the authors in a way that it may be suspected that their image in the awareness of the Polish society was erased. Without any of these places, centres, peripheries and the “white spots” Europe would not be the same Europe. Only when combined together they could create its image. The conducted analyses show that the image of the Europe of that time consisted of many layers combined together, overlapping and creating different aspects.