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## CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ'S AND GILBERT DURAND'S STRUCTURES OF THE IMAGINARY

### KEYWORDS

the anthropological structures of the imaginary; imagination; image; myth; symbol

### Introduction

The search for permanent structures of the imaginary that are either concealed or openly manifest themselves in contemporary culture has long preoccupied many thinkers. In twentieth-century France, this problem was addressed by Sartre, Bachelard, Corbin, Cassirer, Souriau, and Gilbert Durand, the author of the renowned *The Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary*. In his research, Durand introduced a morphological classification of the structures of the imaginary, which includes two orders (Fr. *régimes*): the diurnal and the nocturnal. These vast constellations of images, which were durable enough to form homogenous structures of isomorphic symbols, have been the object of study of anthropological archetypology, a research area that seeks to find them in all products of human imagination.

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Still, it needs to be noted that the above-mentioned scholars and thinkers have mostly developed their unique theories of imagination, which determine their mythanalyses. Gilbert Durand is one of them. His now classical works are founded upon his own concept of imagination which helped create a practical classification of the imaginary.

Czesław Miłosz, a poet or, in other words, a practitioner of imagination, wrote many works that present theoretical deliberations. In fact, Miłosz, like Durand, was also a theoretician of the imaginary. With this in mind, in the first part of the article I will make a comparison between his and Durand's theories. For the sake of clarity, where need be, I will also take recourse to the arguments put forward by other contemporary scholars of imagination.

The second part of the article will focus on the practical implementation of the theories. I will present the anthropological structures of the imaginary in Durand's work and then offer a similar classification of poetic structures in Miłosz's texts. As will be shown, his poetry creates numerous magnetic fields of images, gravitating around static poetic symbols. I will attempt to delineate these fields in order to sketch a deep structure of Miłosz's poetic imaginary.

An uninformed reader may have the impression that Durand could have influenced the Polish writer, since some of the latter's poems seem to implement the main ideas postulated by the former. Such a hypothesis is, obviously, wrong since most of Miłosz's poems were written long before Durand conducted his research. Yet, the similarity between their works is a fact and it derives from a deep common source of experience. Thus, Miłosz's poetry can only be seen as evidence supporting Durand's theory.

At the same time, it expands the research of the French philosopher to a new territory. As noted, Durand differentiates between two orders of the imaginary: the diurnal and the nocturnal. The former stands in opposition to the latter and is described as schizomorphic or, in its radical version, schizophrenic. By contrast, the symbols coagulated in the nocturnal order are, as opposed to the diurnal order, negatively valorized. These ideas are clearly present in Miłosz's writing. Yet, his poetry also presents a reverse process, which can be described as the vulgarization of diurnal symbolism, and which Durand does not describe in his book.

### **Theories of Imagination**

The basic question asked by contemporary researchers concerns as much the ontological status of human imagination as that of reality itself. The contemporary metabolism of our thinking about imagination still seems to be

strongly dichotomous: that which is “real” is usually juxtaposed with all that is “imaginary”. This corresponds to yet another dyad: “the real, understood as that which exists” versus “the imaginary, i.e., that which does not exist”. However, even the most basic reflection on “existence” leads us into a labyrinth of ontological traps. Aristotle differentiates between “being as an act” and “being as potency”, and creates a theory of imaginary and future beings (Pleșu 2003: 52). Plotinus defines nine levels of being, arranged hierarchically according to their intensity. Kant mentions objective, subjective, affective, volitional, necessary, possible, a priori, a posteriori, phenomenal, and noumenal existence. Quoting from Hegel and Heidegger, a contemporary French theoretician of imagination, Étienne Souriau, expands this list by adding other forms of existence: oneiric, formal, explicit, implicit, universal, singular, inner, outer, physical, spiritual, present, future, contingent, and transcendent, i.e., those “which exceed the octave of the world” (Pleșu 2003: 52).

Considering the basic ontological question of existence, we can divide the philosophers of imagination into two factions. The first one, which includes Plato, Descartes, and Sartre, perceived the imaginary as a fantasy and juxtaposed it with reason and empirical experience. These thinkers believe that dwarves, Christ, the Holy Ghost, Michael Volodyovski, and Father Goriot represent the same mode of existence, as they are all seen as nonexistent.

The other faction, which juxtaposes the imaginary with fantasy, but does not see it as the opposite of reason, is represented by most poets, religious thinkers, and mystics, including Miłosz and, in some respects, Durand. They both accentuate that the dichotomy between imagination and reason is in fact groundless. As Miłosz puts it, “[W]e really do not know what it is »to believe« or »not to believe« in someone or something, [...] the human mind eludes a facile division into the »real« and »the imaginary«” (Miłosz 1984: 130). Before we delve deeper into his idea, which is central to my study, we can tentatively contend that, from the point of view of the thinkers who belong to the faction that supports the notion of “real imagination”, realistic or fantastic descriptions written by Balzac, Sienkiewicz, Houellebecq, or Gombrowicz are products of fantasy, while myths of all cultures, the Old and New Testament, the search for the Holy Grail, all mystical epics, and the problems of the brothers Karamazov are products of the Imagination (hereinafter capitalized). This also applies to most folk tales or even dwarves.

In short, what all products of the Imagination have in common is their connection with the spiritual world through symbols that function beyond history, morality, and society. Thus, the vision of the world put forward by the second faction is not dichotomous (the imagined vs. the real), but tripartite. In

other words, the world can be divided into: the empirical and sensual space (the concrete, the immanent), the space of pure Intelligence or Spirituality (logic, transcendence), and the space in between, created by the Imagination – a complex fabric, an intricate composition in which the sensual and the ideal intersect. It is a world of images, founded upon the old rule of analogy, in which “as above, so below”. It is a world in which every sensual object has its image that reflects its transcendental model. To use Miłosz’s turn of phrase, a sensual object overflows with a surplus of meaning and transforms into a symbol – “a multi-layered object” (Miłosz 1984: 211). Henry Corbin, a scholar of Islamic mysticism, put forward an accurate term to describe this intermediary space: *mundus imaginalis*, a world that lasts and expresses itself as an image (Corbin 1983: 48).

According to Miłosz, what serves as a perfect example of *mundus imaginalis* is Adam Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz* (*Master Thaddeus*). As he argues,

Despite appearances, despite even the author’s own conscious intent, *Pan Tadeusz* is at heart a metaphysical poem, its subject being one seldom perceived in quotidian reality: the world of existence as an image of pure Being. [...] A sunrise or sunset, such mundane acts as making coffee or mushroom hunting are both what the reader knows them to be and a surface bespeaking a sublime acceptance, one to animate and sustain the imaging[. W]e might declare the cucumbers and watermelons of the Soplica garden to be eminently worthy of the designation [of symbols] – as things that are both themselves, in the fullness of being, and not themselves (Miłosz 1984: 122–123).

It should be underscored that a collection of “mundane objects and acts”, or, simply, the matter, is ontologically indispensable in the process of imagination. When approached from this perspective, some Romantic works represent a false – dematerialized and disembodied – symbolism. Miłosz notes:

[W]e become suspicious: the invention of astral spirits seems too facile, their ethereality too obviously the penalty of a revolt against matter [...]. And this ethereality is characteristic of Romanticism as a whole, a movement proliferating in works of “mist and ink”, with the result that *dreams are often confused with acts of the imagination* (Miłosz 1984: 115; emphasis M.R.).

In other words, he argues that Słowacki took recourse (only) to fantasy, while Mickiewicz – to the real Imagination which involves a “dualistic possession of the world” (Miłosz 1984: 164).

The “dualistic possession of the world”, which serves as an indicator of objective reality, plays a crucial role in this context. Russian theologian Sergius Bulgakov, whose works Miłosz knew and appreciated, defines the “revelation”, “myth”,

and “symbol” as the result of a relationship between the transcendental and the immanent. In his view, artists are similar to biblical prophets or the apostles from the New Testament in that they all (to a different degree) create myths. In all of these cases, the transcendental takes the initiative, imposes itself onto the recipient/creator who needs to “see and hear in a fitting manner and then to incarnate what was seen and heard in some form [since] a true artist is bound by the greatest artistic veracity, he may not fabricate anything” (Bulgakov 2012: 67). Bulgakov further argues that transcendence is multidimensional, and its deepest dimension consists in a religious revelation *sensu stricto*, and yet:

Diverse natural elements (wood-goblins, water-sprites, mermaids, elves, gnomes, etc.) reveal themselves in myth; popular fairy tales in their well-known sphere are these sorts of natural myths, which arise of course at a time of the greatest immediacy and sensitivity to the voices from the domain of what lies beyond the bounds of feelings (Bulgakov 2012: 67).

In his work, Bulgakov juxtaposes these transcendental dimensions embodied in immanent images with Kant’s, Hegel’s, and Descartes’s abstract speculations, and defends the idea that they are absolutely real: “If myth is an event, it must be thought especially realistically: to say it differently, in myth it is a question not of abstract concepts but of realities themselves” (Bulgakov 2012: 64–65).

I have quoted Bulgakov<sup>1</sup> because of the innovative character of his work. Curiously, the similarities between his and Miłosz’s works have not yet been studied. However, one could also make a reference to Oscar Milosz’s or Simone Weil’s words. Basically, they all claim the same: transcendence incorporated into immanence serves as a condition of reality and as such has nothing to do with subjective invention of beings. Following this line of thinking, Bulgakov goes even further than the other thinkers, as he juxtaposes scientific symbolism, perceived as subjective psychologism, with religious and artistic symbolism:

The opposite of this symbolism of conventional signs and pragmatic schemas is symbolism in religion and art, which equally make use of symbol (which marks their mysterious proximity). Symbolism [...] goes *a realibus ad realiora* [from the real to the more real], from *on* to *ontos on* [being to real being], and for that reason psychologism is foreign to it. Unlike the pragmatic-conventional character of scientific concepts, the content of symbol is objective and weighty [...]. It is impossible to lie artistically and it is impossible to act against one’s conscience mythopoetically: the human being does not create myth, rather myth is uttered through a human being (Bulgakov 2012: 69).

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<sup>1</sup> Because of the innovative way in which he analyzed myth and mythmaking, Bulgakov can be considered a precursor of mythanalysis as practiced by Durand, who is considered to be its founder.

A similar idea informs *The Land of Ulro*, Miłosz's systematic study of the imaginary, which completely reverses the Cartesian (scientific) dichotomy of the real and the imagined. Reflecting on the ontological status of the characters of *The Divine Comedy*, Miłosz puts forward an idea that he succinctly explains in the following words: "real *because* imagined" (Miłosz 1984: 145). His concept can be summarized in this way: the reality of matter and spatial-temporal relationships undergoes constant annihilation under the influence of time and can only be saved through the dual impact of memory and imagination. Miłosz asks: "From what does ecstasy come – in a poem, in a painting – if not from the detail recaptured" (Miłosz 1984: 11). However, memory in and of itself is not enough: "The past conceived as movement, as duration [...] is a realm where those who once lived are as shadows [...]. And what power can restore life to shadows?" (Miłosz 1984: 11). Memory needs to be complemented or supplemented by the Imagination. As Miłosz notes,

[I]magination becomes embattled with movement, on behalf of the moment, and whatever is restored to brilliance becomes, so to speak, a moment torn from the throat of motion, a testament to the durability of even the most ephemeral instant, to the trickery of the nullifying memory (Miłosz 1984: 11).

This is followed by a conclusion in which Miłosz defines images of the intermediary world: "So perhaps it is another, more bountiful memory, one twinned with Imagination, which is the mother of the Muses" (Miłosz 1984: 11). He describes the life-giving memory, or anamnesis, which is a recurrent topic of reflection for philosophers of the Imagination, as "[p]roto-memory, or latent memory [...] preserved in the blood", or "living cosmic matter endowed with spontaneous movement" (Miłosz 1984: 210).

In *The Land of Ulro*, Miłosz highlights the spatiality of the Imagination, which guarantees its realness and prevents ontic blurring. The Imagination builds a "verbal space" (Miłosz 1984: 151) because "[a] man must abide somewhere, a physical roof over his head is not enough; his mind needs its bearings, its points of reference, vertically as well as horizontally" (Miłosz 1984: 152). He elaborates on this idea by taking recourse to Oscar Miłosz and his spatial imperative: "the universal nature of the primary impulse [...] compels us to situate all things" and thus "the topography of the *Odyssey*, of Dante's *Hell*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*, the theory of evolution, and the second law of thermodynamics all spring from the same spatial imagination" (Miłosz 1984: 201). The poet ends with a conclusion: "man is above all an organizer of space, both internal and external, and that this in fact is what is meant by imagination" (Miłosz 1984: 245).

Yet, Miłosz mostly accentuates the temporality of the Imagination, largely because its primary function is to fight against transience, nullifying time, and death. The Imagination immobilizes physical time by imposing a mythical form of time onto it. This helps us to see its passage not only as a change, but mostly as a cumulation. Alluding to Blake, Miłosz explains this idea:

Los [the name of one of Blake's mythical characters, who collaborates with Urthona, i.e. the Imagination], time, has a redemptive function; it is not absolute but man-related, humanizing time [...]. I am inclined to see Los as rhythm, born of the heart's pulsation; as a cosmic poet who saves, by embodying in rhythm, the most infinitesimal moment and object from irrevocable loss, who forges them into incorruptible shapes (Miłosz 1984: 172).

Rhythm combines spatiality and time and, according to Miłosz, it may be the most important aspect of the Imagination, the quintessence of its metaphysics and poetry. The author of *The Land of Ulro* quotes René Guénon, a French mystic and historian, who claims that the first human language was rhythmical and, to this day, rhythm, which has many different functions, has been the main method used by humans to connect with higher forms of existence (Miłosz 1984: 202–203).

Miłosz calls this type of the Imagination, which is based on rhythm and combines time and space, the religious Imagination (Miłosz 1984: 60). It may be seen as synonymous with *imaginatio vera* (Corbin 1983: 125) and the “divine” Imagination described by Blake, Swedenborg, Oscar Miłosz, and the mystics and alchemists of various cultures and epochs. It serves as a category of reality whose images include both the sensory concreteness of that which can be seen and the essence of bodiless beings – the models of the physical world. As Miłosz puts it,

The visible world is merely a reflection of the spiritual world, everything perceived on Earth by the five senses is a “correspondence”, an equivalent of a given state in the spiritual realm. [...] That some flowers, beasts, trees, landscapes, human faces are beautiful and others ugly derives from the fact that they are spiritual values; shapes, colors, and smells, by supplying the stuff of human speech, fulfill a function analogous to that of words (Miłosz 1984: 143).

At the beginning, I have explained that the real Imagination does not oppose reason or the scientific vision of the world. Both visions, the scientific and the imaginary, are “constructively antithetical, in the sense of issuing from the power of the intellect, whereas man's spiritual needs are better satisfied by the »naive« imagination” (Miłosz 1984: 179). Yet, the Imagination has much more than a pragmatic function that is limited to satisfying one's needs – it transforms reality

itself. According to Miłosz, “Nature viewed in Urizenian<sup>2</sup> terms is a dominion of death, Ulro; but Nature perceived as vision, Nature viewed as it ought to be viewed – in the Imagination, in the Holy Spirit, in Jesus – is paradise” (Miłosz 1984: 218).

A dualistic perception or possession of the world does not cancel one vision to corroborate the other, but rather uses the first one – “»vegetative« Nature” (Miłosz 1984: 210) – to reach out to an “»imaginary« Nature” (Miłosz 1984: 210). Miłosz elaborates on this quote from Blake by confessing:

I can state it more concisely. When my guardian angel (who resides in an internalized external space) is triumphant, the earth looks precious to me and I live in ecstasy [...]. I feel within me the rush of a mighty rhythm [...]. When the devil triumphs, I am appalled when I look at trees in bloom as they blindly repeat every spring what has been willed by the law of natural selection [...] and I feel excluded from the world's rhythm (Miłosz 1984: 246).

Let us again emphasize the fact that this type of the Imagination is not synonymous with fantasy, and the inability to find a difference, other than that of degree, between Balzac's *The Human Comedy* (a subjective fantasy) and Dante's *The Divine Comedy* (a product of the objective Imagination) is an example of hermeneutic incomprehension, an inability to discriminate between two clearly different categories of texts. Thus, the world seen in the Imagination is not a subjective world, a singular delirium, a product of individual invention, or a psychological incident. Of course, every vision is a vision experienced by a given subject: Swedenborg, Blake, or Miłosz, but all of these poets and mystics meet in a common, transsubjective space where they share a vision composed of symbols that they immediately comprehend. Reflecting on Blake's Imagination, Miłosz underscores “the consistency of its correspondences (not to be confused with symbols, randomly and capriciously bestrewn)”, which makes them similar to “the books of Scripture” (Miłosz 1984: 165). He further accentuates this resemblance by adding: “poetry and religion [...] are synonymous, provided they be authentic, i.e., eschatological” (Miłosz 1984: 181), since “[o]nly one language can do justice to the highest claim of the human imagination – that of Holy Writ” (Miłosz 1984: 268). As Oscar Milosz argues, the language of symbols is understandable to those who have retained the Memory preserved in the blood. Examining his work, Czesław Miłosz asks an important question – “What [ditto] do we remember?” (Miłosz 1984: 210) – to which he then replies: the archetypal world. The same answer is provided in almost all mystical treatises since: “The

<sup>2</sup> Urizen is an equivalent of Blake's pure reason, a prototype of a scientist.

language of religious cults and myths evokes in us such a strong response because we recognize in them what is known unconsciously” (Miłosz 1984: 210).

The language of religions and myths and, in particular, its deep structure are central to Gilbert Durand’s research. Even though his taxonomical work mostly organizes the elements of the language of the Imagination – its syllables or, in other words, symbols – Durand wrote a long introduction to the practical part of his study in which he compared different concepts of the imaginary and explained his own vision.

His study opens with a description of a dualistic perception of the world<sup>3</sup> by our consciousness. The first, direct perception is related to empirical impressions; the other, indirect perception covers impressions that

cannot manifest themselves in flesh and blood; [...] these include childhood memories, the way we imagine the planet Mars or the orbits of electrons inside an atomic nucleus, and all that can be found after death (Durand 1964: 8).

The symbolic imagination belongs, of course, to the intermediary function of human consciousness. What serves as its foundation is the symbol – a concrete sign that evokes the absent or the invisible. Its first, perceptible component – the signifier – is burdened with utmost concreteness (Durand 1964: 13). Every authentic symbol has three dimensions:

Cosmic (i.e., its shape draws heavily on the visible world that surrounds us), oneiric (i.e., it is rooted in memories [and dreams]), and, finally, poetic i.e., which means that the symbol refers to language [...]. The other half of the symbol [is] invisible and inexpressible (Durand 1964: 13).

The symbol thus communicates an immanent transcendental message. It is “the epiphany of a mystery” (Durand 1964: 13). It is an analytical equivalent of Miłosz’s concrete object.

Durand also describes Western thought as dichotomous (true vs. untrue, real vs. unreal) and iconoclastic. The symbolic imagination stands in opposition to Western pedagogy. Durand summarizes iconoclastic philosophy, from Plato to Sartre (reaching its height in Descartes’ ideas), which identifies imagination with fantasy and considers both to be equally unproductive. The eighteenth century witnessed a reaction against Cartesian thought. Here, we can list the names that are mentioned on almost every page of Miłosz’s *The Land of Ulro*: Goethe, Swedenborg, and Blake. According to Durand, however, this period is only a short episode in history, after which imagination was denounced as: a “sin

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<sup>3</sup> An equivalent of Czesław Miłosz’s “dualistic possession of the world” (Miłosz 1984: 164).

against the spirit” (Brunschvicg), the “confused childhood of the consciousness” (Alain), “nothingness”, and a “phantom object” (Sartre) (Durand 1964: 25). We find ourselves in the spiritual land of Ulro, governed by: the dogma of literality, the empiricism of direct thinking, and the semi-logical scientism (Durand 1964: 40), which results in “a gradual extinction of the human ability to enter into a relationship with the transcendental, the loss of the natural symbolic mediation” (Durand 1964: 41).

Durand enumerates contemporary anti-Cartesian reactionists: Cassirer, Jung, Bachelard, and himself. Each of them defends the symbolic imagination in his own way. Cassirer sees mental illness as caused by the deficiency of symbols and replaces *homo sapiens* with *animal symbolicum* (Durand 1964: 64). Jung presents a symbolic theory of archetypes. Bachelard describes two “noumenotechniques” – two equivalent methods of transforming the world so that it will better match human needs. One of them consists in “the objectivization of science which gradually masters nature”, while the other – “the subjunctivization of poetry” – “adjusts the world through poems, myths, and religion to the human ideal, in order to increase the ethical wellbeing of the human species” (Durand 1964: 73). Subsequently, Durand paraphrases Bachelard’s idea of alienation understood as a world without imagination: “science without poetics, pure intelligence without symbolic comprehension of human goals, objective knowledge without expression of the human subject [...] are nothing but human alienation” (Durand 1964: 78).

However, none of these philosophers of imagination was able to fully abandon his rational bias, and Durand points to the weak spots in their theories. In each of them, imagination has its origins outside of itself, while attempts to explain it by referring to childhood experiences or the historical evolution of societies offer a limited and reduced idea of imagination. This is because each explanation involves reduction – it reduces a phenomenon to an epiphenomenon, a syndrome:

the sociological or psychoanalytical motivations given as explanations for the structures or genesis of symbolism are often inadequate because of an underlying metaphysical narrowness. Some theorists attempt to reduce the motivating process to a system of elements which are external to consciousness [...], while others concentrate exclusively on the drives, or what is worse, on the reductive mechanism of censure and its product, repression. This is an implicit return to an explanatory linear framework in which the epic of the Indo-Europeans or the metamorphoses of the libido are described and recounted (Durand 1999: 40–41).

Like Miłosz, who uses very similar phrasing, Durand opposes reduction and advocates the amplification of symbolism. In other words, he opposes archeology and advocates eschatology (Durand 1964: 109). What best explains this difference is Ricoeur's well-known reinterpretation of the myth of Oedipus, whose self-blinding can be interpreted (much like Freud did) as a medical syndrome – morbid self-mutilation – or, following Ricoeur, as a symbol. In fact, for Ricoeur, Oedipus's impairment corresponds to the blindness of Tiresias, a prophet who sees differently, who sees better, and who sees other things – the spiritual world (Ricoeur 1970: 517).

Durand concludes with his own theory of imagination, which, again, is similar to Miłosz's vision. It is based on the long tradition of mysticism, poetry, and alchemy. All in all, for him, symbolic imagination is a negation – a negation of nothingness, death, and time:

All who have studied the domain of the imaginary from an anthropological point of view, that is, with scientific humility and poetic empathy, acknowledge the metaphysical power of the imagination, in all its manifestations (religious, mythic, literary and aesthetic), to combat “the decay” of Death and Destiny (Durand 1999: 389–390).

In one of his poems about Orpheus, Miłosz directly addresses this issue. He states: “He [Orpheus] sang [...] of having made no rhyme in praise of nothingness” (Miłosz 2006: 261).

Durand also states:

By confronting death with life and psychosocial disorder – with the sense of equilibrium, by confirming the catholicity<sup>4</sup> of myths and poems, and by defining the human being as *homo symbolicus*, the symbol confronts the positive entropy of the universe. To this aim, it creates the domain of the *highest value* and counterbalances the transient world with a timeless Being which encompasses the eternal Childhood and the eternal dawn. The symbol thus gives access to a theophany (Durand 1964: 116).

Miłosz presents “the domain of the *highest value*” as the final restoration of renewed time and space, i.e., as apocatastasis inhabited by the Child. This brings us back to the field of poetry and universal mythology, where *Puer Aeternus* is part and the centre of regenerated spacetime (Corbin 1983: 72).

These important statements about temporality (and the fight against time and death), spatiality (and the establishment of the space of Being), and the unifying force of symbolism, i.e., God (theophany), show the affinity, or even identity, of the visions of the Polish poet and the French theoretician of imagination. There is, however, an important difference between the two.

<sup>4</sup> In this context, catholicity (Fr. *catholicité*) means universality.

Durand clearly advocates the amplification of imagination, accentuates its openness to the horizon of transcendence, and criticizes his predecessors, who probably subconsciously surrendered to the lure of scientific reductionism. When reading his comprehensive book on the imaginary, every now and then we come across reflections on ontogenesis. Ontogenesis, as such, does not negate ontology or transcendence. However, when we approach this problem from a purely quantitative perspective, we will find ontogenetic explanations on almost every page of Durand's monograph,<sup>5</sup> and only few references to epiphany, theophany, and transcendence in the final part of the monograph. In Miłosz's texts, these proportions are reversed, which is significant. Let me illustrate this with a few examples. When Durand analyzes, for instance, the symbols of the Fall, he sees them as a way of recovering from the postnatal trauma – the shock of being pushed out of the uterus. He sees the rich symbolism of rhythm and dance as the extension of copulatory movement, the Eucharist – as the euphemization of the process of digestion, etc. Miłosz, by contrast, seems to repeat Northrop Frye's question "why do flood dreams become flood myths?" which he asks in connection to the idea put forward by Freudians, who suggest "that deluge myths originate in urethral dreams designed to prevent the sleeper from deluging his bed" (Frye 1982: 36).

Ontogenesis and euphemization are fundamental to Durand's theory. He divides the symbolic field into two basic orders: the nocturnal (lower) order and the diurnal (upper) one, and mostly focuses on the former. In the process of imagination, the symbols coagulated in the nocturnal order are radically transformed. These transformations are referred to as euphemization. In other words, euphemization serves as the main function of imagination. Thus, copulation becomes euphemized into rhythm and digestion – into the symbol of the Eucharistic meal. The very choice of the term to describe this process seems telling – the word euphemization suggests the act of hiding, putting a cover on an object that evokes repulsion or fear. After all, Durand derived his theory from the biological concepts of Bergson and Lacroze. Bergson describes fabulation as "a defensive reaction of nature against the representation, by intelligence, of the inevitability of death" (qtd. in Durand 1964: 117; Bergson 1974: 121). In his systematic analysis, Lacroze confirms the "biological role" of imagination and calls it "an escape from harsh reality" (qtd. in Durand 1964: 117). Although Durand highlights the fact that euphemization is more than just "a negative opium", "a mask with which the consciousness covers on the hideous figure of death" (Durand 1964: 118), the biological role is fundamental to his theory.

<sup>5</sup> Durand (over)uses the telling expression "*ce n'est rien d'autre que*" ("it's nothing but"). The repetition of the reductive phrase makes it similar to a painful tick.

In *The Land of Ulro*, Miłosz, by contrast, criticizes Jacques Monod's theory of molecular ontogenesis and rejects the so-understood euphemization. He states:

By "animism" Monod means the projection of our human need for order and design, a function of our nervous system, onto a Nature governed entirely by chance and necessity, whereby we surrender to the anthropocentric "illusion" (Miłosz 1984: 56).

Whenever they tackle religion, myths, and poetry, Miłosz's essays can be read as a collection of arguments against ontogenesis. His vision is similar to that put forward by Leszek Kołakowski, who writes:

The most obvious answer to the first question – that human idea of immortality results from the fear of death we apparently share with all animals – is the least credible. [...] If fear of death were a sufficient condition for the human concept of immortality, why have the sharks – who avoid death as much as we do – failed to create their own images of hell and heaven? (Kołakowski 1982: 152)

It is more than a provocation. Posing such radical questions sometimes reveals the absurdity of a seemingly logical answer.

For Miłosz, what serves as the main function of imagination is traditional analogy. Transformed by imagination, that which remains in the symbolic depths – birth, copulation, digestion – is not so much a mask but a mirror that reflects something absolutely different: apokatastasis, *hieros gamos*, the cosmic rhythm of the light. The descending movement of the immaterial light that reflects itself in matter plays an important role in this process.

This theory directly influences the internal dynamics of the structure of the imaginary. Assuming the ontogenetic perspective, in his research, Durand focuses on the ascending movement, euphemization. Miłosz does not reject ontogenesis and yet he also accepts the other possibility – theogenesis. In other words, in addition to the ascending movement, he also introduces the descending movement, which I call "vulgarization".<sup>6</sup>

### Practices of Imagination

Established by Gilbert Durand on the basis of his study of hundreds of literary works, the diurnal and nocturnal orders are either antithetical or antiphrastic. In the former case, diurnal symbolism serves as an abstract model, and the opposite, nocturnal symbolism – as its pejorative negative. Positioned antithetically, both

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<sup>6</sup> The term stands in opposition to Durand's "euphemization". Yet, it needs to be mentioned that the descending movement in Miłosz's poetry has a strong theological edge. It resembles kenosis: the belittling and humiliation of God who descends into material creation.

orders are in fact non-poetic since they drastically reduce the symbolic imagination. Antiphrasis, by contrast, is a result of the euphemization of nocturnal symbolism. Durand sees this process as the poetic work of imagination, which transforms empirical experience into myths, poetry, and dreams.

In the **diurnal order**, understood as the antithesis of the nocturnal order, movement has ascending vectors, and the central symbolism of light and the eye forms the nucleus in which the whole set of isomorphic symbols is concentrated. Sight is the dominant sense (Durand 1999: 45). What serves as an ideal spatial form is a mountain and its variations: a ladder, stairs, a tree, a post, a standing stone, or a wing. Eternity is as an ideal temporal form. In his comprehensive work, Durand mentions the following isomorphic elements: day, light, azure, sky, a ray, brightness, a vision, grandeur, and purity (Durand 1992: 42). These in turn branch into a great number of subcategories connected with light – various sparks and glitters, starting from the sun and stars, and ending with a lamp and a candle. The Divine brings together the symbolism of light. A bird that loses its animalistic features and is identified with an angel (in a modern version – an airplane [Durand 1999: 128]) is the main theriomorphic symbol, and what serves as the main anthropomorphic symbol is the man and his avatar: the father. The sword and its equivalents – a spear, an arrow, a plow, the phallus, a sceptre, and a laser – are the main symbolic objects. The diurnal order is dominated by the vertical position, which has many overtly or covertly aggressive (military and sexual) implications visible in the manual and visual spheres. The conqueror, the magician, and the warrior are ideal role models. And what serve as ideal rites are “the rituals of elevation and purification” (Durand 1999: 58). The structures typical of diurnal symbolism are schizomorphic and aim at idealization, schematization, symmetry, and polemical antithesis. The ideal manifests itself in the homogenization of existence, which eliminates diversity and individuality.

The **nocturnal order**, understood as the antithesis of the diurnal order, has a strongly negative character. It is associated with the descending movement and dominated by various spatial forms of lowness: a chasm, a cave, a hole, a vagina, or the bottom of a lake or sea. Time is presented as movement, destruction, or Chronos’s hungry mouth. What serve as the nucleus of the nocturnal order are night and various forms of darkness that cause blindness, the lack of sight being central to diurnal symbolism. The main focus is on the sense of touch. The major theriomorphic symbols are: a snake – the opposite of a bird – as well as other beings characterized by *fourmillement* (swarming): insects, spiders, larvae, crabs, mice, and rats. The nocturnal order is associated with anarchical movement which reveals a form of animality that has negative connotations (Durand 1999: 71). “The snake, in its slithering, twisting aspect, that is, perceived as

rapid movement” (Durand 1999: 71) belongs to the same category of repulsive swarming. Repulsion, according to Durand, is an expression of fear of the change suggested by chaotic movement which may at any moment transform into violence, into “dental sadism” (Durand 1999: 82). “By transference, the jaws come to symbolise all animality, and become the devouring archetype” (Durand 1999: 82). However, as Durand notes, this symbolism can only be attributed to “the mouth [that] is equipped with sharp teeth, ready to crush and bite”, rather than “the swallowing, sucking mouth” (Durand 1999: 82). The terrifying jaws, sadistic and destructive, are naturally connected with the negative symbolism of time – the archetype of Chronos/Thanatos who devours his own children. When approached from the diurnal perspective, the animal world present in nocturnal symbolism comes down to swarming movement, usually performed in a cave or dirty water, and to aggressive crushing, devouring, and digesting. Night, as the symbolic centre of the nocturnal order, determines the isomorphic unity of all these symbols. It is a natural time to devour, since “[d]arkness is always chaos and the gnashing of teeth, »the subject reads in the black spot [...] the disorganised agitation of larvae«” (Durand 1999: 89–90).

Dark water, black and dangerous, occupies an important place in this set of symbols. Durand quotes Bachelard, according to whom black water, *mare tenebrarum*, “is death”, “the »symbolic substance of death«,” or “a direct invitation to die, moving from its Stymphalian to its Ophelia aspect” (Durand 1999: 94). The symbolism of time is self-evident. Water is Ophelia as well as Heraclitean, as it is “the aquatic symbol of change” (Durand 1999: 94). Running water is a bitter invitation to a journey from which there is no return: “one never bathes twice in the same river” (Durand 1999: 94). What serves as the anthropomorphic symbol of this space is a woman. In ancient Greek mythology, it is the female sea monster, Echidna, the mother of other monstrosities: Chimera, Sphynx, Gorgon, Scylla, Sirens, and Hydras; in Judeo-Christian mythology, it is the “Beast emerging from the sea” (Durand 1999: 96). A woman is the lady of waters and, particularly, of the most repulsive, specifically female water – menstrual blood. A water nymph with seaweed hair, whose wavy movement evokes the passage of time, inhabits the centre of the isomorphic space occupied by similar symbols: water, a mirror (seen as an extension of the natural function of water), night, and the moon. The space is also populated by animals with symbolic jaws, ready to dismember a human intruder – like in the myth of Actaeon. According to Durand, this myth is strongly saturated with symbolism; it features all isomorphic spatial symbols of the nocturnal order (Durand 1999: 98–99).

Having comprehensively analyzed each of these symbols (focusing mostly on water, the moon, and blood), Durand writes about misogynistic imagination,

which identifies the passage of time with “lunar death” (Durand 1999: 101), the menstrual cycle, and the danger related to sexuality, as well as the process of digestion. This connects with “[t]he Terrible Mother [who] is the unconscious model of all witches [and] hags” (Durand 1999: 101). The mater/matrice/materia serves as a concept that encapsulates the identity of a woman and nature in its most dangerous form – the nature that devours and is devoured (Durand 1999: 102). This combination of nocturnal symbols manifests itself most fully in the myth of the Fall into matter, time, corporality, sexuality, and sin, caused by Eve/Pandora/Kali.

When we examine Miłosz’s entire poetic oeuvre from this perspective, the conclusion is simple and evident: his vision mainly bears the characteristics of the diurnal imagination, while the nocturnal imagination serves as its negative shadow. Miłosz explains this in a clear, didactic manner in one of his programmatic poems:

Comprehension of good and evil is given in the running of the blood. [...]
   
Yes, good is an ally of being and the mirror of evil is nothing,
   
Good is brightness, evil darkness, good high, evil low

(Miłosz 2011b: 803; Bill 2021: 98)

His poems are dominated by light: “I love the light too, perhaps the light only” (Miłosz 2003b: 218), and day: “Only this is worthy of praise [...]: the day” (Miłosz 2006: 62). Sight is the dominant sense: “I stare and stare. It seems I was called for this” (Miłosz 2006: 213), and “eyes” are the main organs: “a pack of royal hounds” “with whom I would set forth in the early morning” (Miłosz 2003a: 126). Ecstasy is related to seeing and light: “From childhood till old age ecstasy at sunrise” (Miłosz 2003b: 193), as well as to flying, gliding, and ascending, i.e., activities that are mostly associated with childhood (Miłosz 2003b: 193). Miłosz accentuates all these elements in his Nobel Lecture. Mentioning his favourite childhood book, Selma Lagerlöf’s *The Wonderful Adventure of Nils Holgersson*, he offers his own definition of a poet: “He is the one who flies above the Earth and looks at it *from above* but at the same time sees it in every detail. This double vision may be a metaphor of the poet’s vocation” (Miłosz 1980). Miłosz implements the principle of seeing in all aspects of his artistic work, describing it as “avidity of the eye” (Miłosz 1980). For him, seeing stops time and neutralizes its destructive force. What serves as an ideal symbol of time that has been stopped, the eternal moment, is “a gleam”, the light that is captured “on the current of a black river” (Miłosz 1990: vii).

If one were to count all the theriomorphic symbols in Miłosz’s oeuvre, the bird, sometimes identified with an angel, would be the most common one.

Of all botanic symbols, the tree is most frequently used. The bow and arrow are the most privileged symbolic tools. The male speaker is, particularly in Miłosz's early poetry, a shaman, a guide in the ritual of purification, or a disciple who rebels against the natural order of the world. His openly religious poems usually centre on Christ and rarely on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The nocturnal order is carefully separated from the diurnal order. These two orders oppose and negate one another. Miłosz uses such symbolic elements as darkness, a hole, and devouring. Water is omnipresent in his poetry but often has negative connotations – it is black water that haunts. The same can be argued with regard to the woman. She is often presented as a terrifying creature that is dangerous to her male partner. Miłosz's poetry also features the motif of swarming larvae, insects, and crabs, which is related to the woman and Mother Earth, and has pejorative connotations.

His earliest works, written before 1937, show a strong antithesis: the positive, diurnal symbolism is contrasted with the pejorative, nocturnal one. The poems best exemplify Durand's theories. A thorough analysis of these texts is far beyond the scope of this article, which offers a general introduction to this problem. Thus, I will only examine a few of them – those that connect with the symbol of femininity.

The young Miłosz identifies the woman with the mechanisms of nature, with the earth in its most primitive form – omnideavouring and swarming. The woman is seen as nature, or the concentration camp of the world. Miłosz exclaims: "Dachau of grasshoppers! Ants' Auschwitz! / In vain you are masking the crimes by a green wig" (Miłosz 2011a: 289). The Woman-Earth-Nature, who transforms the man into her tool, is waiting for "the plow" (Miłosz 1982: 27). Her sundewy glance from under the eyelashes is objectifying – it turns a person (always a male) into an object. The woman herself is a tool or a trap set up by nature or, to be precise, by genetics. She thus pulls the man downward – into a hole, the vagina of death:

The night a child is conceived, an obscure pact is concluded. [...]

A hideous pact, an entanglement in blood, an anabasis of vengeful genes arriving from swampy millennia.

(Miłosz 2003b: 384)

The woman/mater/matrice/matter is both erotically fascinating and repulsive, like "[b]eautifully fetid lilies" (Miłosz 2003b: 251). In Miłosz's poetry, water and its symbolic equivalent – the mirror – always serve as her attribute. This element is often connected with menstrual blood, a sign of the female belonging to nature and genetics which is ontically rooted in transience, the monotonous

cycle of birth, copulation, and death. One of the early poems, written in 1942 (Miłosz 2011b: 128–131), presents an almost complete set of truly Durandian, nocturnal (misogynistic) symbols. These include water (ocean, menstrual blood, and a mirror), the moon, night, a hole, swarming, devouring jaws (of crabs), and the moisture and stickiness of the female vagina. All these nocturnal symbols gravitate around the woman, who remains at the centre as their common denominator.

In *With Trumpets and Zithers* (Miłosz 2003b: 225–231), Miłosz uses the same elements and strongly accentuates the motif of the fall and its cosmic dimension: the woman, or rather her sex is described as “[a] coelentera, all pulsating flesh, animal-flower”, which “breathes in the center of a galaxy, drawing to itself star after star” (Miłosz 2003b: 230). He also compares the man to a star that falls into the pit of the cosmic vagina. The so-imagined woman belongs to the lower, nocturnal order, and thus, in social terms, she represents low culture:

Female humanity,  
 children’s snot, legs spread apart,  
 snarled hair, the milk boiling over,  
 stench, shit frozen into clods.  
 And those centuries,  
 conceiving in the herring smell of the middle of the night  
 instead of playing something like a game of chess  
 or dancing an intellectual ballet.

(Miłosz 2003b: 218)

The man, who plays chess, accumulates symbols of the diurnal order, and belongs to high culture, is her opposite. He rebels against the natural order and looks down from above. His gaze miniaturizes all that is below, which seems nothing but repulsive “swarming” (Miłosz 2003b: 263).

The 1932 poem *Teatr pcheł* [*Flea Theatre* (Miłosz 2011b: 39–41)] features a male character. His distinctive assets include his brain, which is juxtaposed with the rest of his body, and the fact that he looks from above, which transforms humanity into a theatre of fleas. In another early poem *List 1/1 1935 R* [*Letter 1/1 1935* (Miłosz 2011b: 52–53)], the speaker accentuates male solidarity based on friendship and the poetic will to transform and transgress the natural order, which also leads to the depreciation of the “other”, the lowly ones. In *Hymn* (Miłosz 2003b: 13–15), Miłosz shows a young man with clearly Nietzschean features, who presents himself as a partner of some unnamed God. He has a certain “strength”, which “tears the world apart” (Miłosz 2003b: 13). It is openly masculine and militaristic (“if I am a soldier”), civilizational (“if I am

a farmer”), and related to leadership ambitions (“the one who dreams of power” [Miłosz 2011b: 69]).<sup>7</sup> What serves as the common denominator of these poems is an aggressive aspiration to transgress the natural order, a contemptuous look from above onto the repulsive material world, the transformation of the rest of humanity (mostly females) into a swarming “rabble” (Miłosz 2003b: 19) which is being crushed, a desire for a cosmic catastrophe, and a belief in one’s own strength that can “tear the world apart”.

Miłosz’s early poems seem to show an antithesis of the symbolic order, which is strong enough to be called a schizophrenic antithesis, a term coined by Durand. Even though such an interpretation remains to some extent true, it is rather insufficient – synchronic and superficial. A careful analysis of the deep structure of Miłosz’s imaginary accentuates its dynamics, shows the vectors of ascending and descending movement, and sheds light on the changes, transitions, fractures, and transformations of symbols in both orders – the upper (diurnal) and the lower (the nocturnal). On the one hand, we witness the process of euphemization, which is almost identical to the one described by Durand. The woman transforms from a monster that devours, digests, and brings death into the mother of God: “As the Christian tradition suggests, if evil came into the world through the female sex, it is because woman has power over evil and can crush the serpent” (Durand 1999: 114). The same concerns the remaining symbols – digestion transforms into the eucharist, night blazes with colours, and the passage of time is stopped by the power of the Imagination. All in all, as Durand puts it, the euphemization of death

suggests quite a different Order of imaginary representation from the one we are studying here: the erotic euphemisation of Destiny is a verbal attempt to control the perils of time and death, and is already a step towards a radical reversal of the values of the image (Durand 1999: 114).

The euphemization of the nocturnal order in Miłosz’s works, which cannot be fully examined in this article due to the limit of space, transforms the woman into an equal partner of the man. In this process, she is not deprived of any of her nocturnal attributes or characteristics, as they are also euphemized. *A Beautiful Stranger*, a poem written in 2002, features almost the same female character as the one presented in one of his earlier works. She stands in front of a mirror naked, with “a black tuft” under her belly (Miłosz 2005: 18). Yet, in this poem, she is attributed with the wisdom of a real Being. As Miłosz puts it,

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<sup>7</sup> The excerpts come from the stanzas that Miłosz did not include in the English version of his poem [the translator’s note].

To know for yourself, not to tell anybody  
 And from the nothingness of their words,  
 To protect the wisdom of your mocking body.

(Miłosz 2005: 18)

The poem refers to an almost mystical partnership of a man and a woman who “[t]ogether [...] depart for eternal meadows” (Miłosz 2005: 19). What concludes the process of transformation is the highest mystical symbol. In *Apprentice*, for instance, it is “[t]hat deepest arcanum, the union of a man and a woman”, which symbolizes “the incomprehensible Love of the Creator for creation” (Miłosz 2005: 88). The woman transforms from Mother Earth to Eve, Shekhinah, Wisdom – Sophia, Magdalene, Mary, “the Mother of God” (Miłosz 2005: 56). As noted, in Miłosz’s oeuvre, euphemization is accompanied with “vulgarization”, the dynamics of the descending movement, which I will now briefly describe.

The topos of the diurnal order starts to change after 1938. A bright male character can still be found in *Song of a Citizen* (Miłosz 2003b: 57–58), but his aspiration to tear the natural order apart is negated and his vision of lowly humanity is contaminated with helpless compassion: “I, poor man, see a multitude of white-bellied nations / without freedom. I see the crab feeding on their flesh” (Miłosz 2003b: 57). In *Song of Adrian Zieliński* (Miłosz 2003b: 67–71), Miłosz introduces the same lonely artist who is isolated from the rest of the humanity and who tries to reach the metaphysical centre. And again, the speaker’s compassion slowly transforms into pessimistic solidarity and the lonesome artist undergoes a process of miniaturization, together with the rest of the world:

First, people and trees: very big.  
 Then, people and trees: not so big. [...]  
 You cannot even see yourself.

(Miłosz 2003b: 68)

While the poems show helplessness, sorrow, and a reluctant surrender to fate, the gradual abasement of the elevated masculinity eventually leads to self-compromise. This is conspicuous in *Siegfried i Eryka* [*Siegfried and Erica*] (Miłosz 2011b: 245–246), in which the Nietzschean poet presents himself as a pilot of a Nazi plane. The ecstatic flight of the Nazi raider is the ultimate contradiction of male angelicalness, which will later always be presented with a dose of irony, such as in the depiction of an ill shaman who can no longer fly, even if – unlike the woman – he has two souls.

Descending from the heights of the diurnal order is accentuated even more in Miłosz's concept of light. To examine it closely, one would need to write a whole monograph.<sup>8</sup> Thus, in this article, I will only offer a brief sketch.

In the poems that I have mentioned, the man, proudly isolated from the rest of the world, is accompanied by some lighting effects: usually, a white flame – dangerous and deadly. In *Siegfried i Eryka*, it is represented by clean sparks of the machine gun which destroy the dirty matter of the chaos swarming below. It is destructive, clearly Manichean, white light from above. In fact, very early, in the volume *The World (A Naïve Poem)*, the elevated light literally descends into the earth. Yet, it does not bring the threat of destruction, but – to the contrary – it reveals the ecstatic beauty of the world. In the final poem of the cycle, Miłosz presents his poetic programme, whose basic elements did not change in his later works:

And anyone who wants to take his brush and try  
To paint the Earth must not look straight up at the Sun  
Or he will lose the memory of all he's ever seen,  
With only a burning tear to fill his eye.

Let him kneel down and press his cheek in grass and then  
Look till he sees the beam the Earth reflects back upwards.  
There he will find all of our lost, forgotten treasures:  
Stars and Roses, the setting and the rising Sun.

(Miłosz 1996: 446)

In one of his later poems, *City without a Name*, a similar idea is expressed:

Light, universal, and yet it keeps changing.  
For I love the light too, perhaps the light only.  
Yet what is too dazzling and too high is not for me.  
So when the clouds turn rosy, I think of light that is level  
In the lands of birch and pine coated with crispy lichen,  
Late in autumn, under the hoarfrost when the last milk caps  
Rot under the firs and the hounds' barking echoes,  
And jackdaws wheel over the tower of a Basilian church.

(Miłosz 2003b: 218)

The descending dynamic of the elevated light, represented by the universal symbol of the sun, is complemented by the ascending dynamics of a search for light and eventually leads to *coincidentia oppositorum* – apocatastasis or, for example, the resurrection:

<sup>8</sup> This problem has been partly discussed by Kris Van Heuckelom (2004). Also cf. Renouf 2019.

The resurrection. All tangible or, as they say, material things change into light, and that is where their shape is preserved. After our time ends, in meta-time, they return as concentrated light, even though they do not return to the previous material condition (Miłosz 2011b: 874).

In one of the last texts, an untitled poem written shortly before his death, Miłosz returns to the symbolism of the sun, which he can now look straight into without the fear of losing the world:

Turning our faces to Him  
we were granted new eyesight, able  
to look into the Sun.

Wasn't it always  
our greatest wish  
to live and to dwell for ages in brightness?

(Miłosz 2006: 322)

### Conclusion

Miłosz's early poems are based on the schizomorphic model, a classic anti-thesis of two orders described by Durand. This division is gradually blurred in his later works, starting from the volume *Trzy zimy* [*Three Winters*]. These poems show what Miłosz himself called a concurrence of the opposites, *coincidentia oppositorum*. This can be achieved in two ways: the ascending way, which Durand describes as the euphemization of nocturnal symbolism, and the descending way, which I have called the vulgarization of diurnal symbolism. The lowering of the position of the male speaker, his descent from the elevated light, is just one of many variations of this dynamic. The process of euphemization, the ascending movement from ontogenesis to apocatastasis, which is clearly and consciously presented in Miłosz's poetry, is thus complemented by the process of vulgarization in which elevated, diurnal symbols are transformed into lower, nocturnal ones. It is only this two-directional movement that can lead to *coincidentia oppositorum* and its basic symbol – apocatastasis. The initial juxtaposition of the woman (nature) and the man (the spirit) is annulled in the hermaphroditic character of the Child who inhabits a renewed space and time.

To conclude, let us return for a moment to the basic difference between the two theories of the imaginary, which are also in many ways similar. Based on ontogenesis, Durand's theory of imagination is authentically anthropological, while Miłosz's imagination is, in fact, theological and stimulated by external impulses. What serves as its keystone is the Divine. It is located outside the

human mind, which is the source of reality, both upper and lower; it is “[a] nother, higher reality, which is not unknowable because through intuition we are given access to the archetypal world” (Miłosz 1984: 210). When Durand reaches beyond the human mind and opens his theory of the imaginary to the possibility of theophany, he also ventures outside the realm of anthropology. This happens because when we see a reflection of a non-human reality in a myth, symbol, or an image, we renounce absolute human primacy: the structure of the myth or symbol is no longer purely human. In other words, it is no longer only a human creation. This connects with the question of the genesis of imagination, which recurs in Miłosz’s texts: “only in the mind or, in spite of everything, outside the mind as well?” (Miłosz 1982: 20). In time, the poet supports the latter (“outside”) hypothesis with more and more evidence. Durand suggests such a possibility when he writes about the horizon of transcendence. However, he does not elaborate on this idea. To do so would mean that he has to abandon the anthropological foundations of his study.

*Translated by Katarzyna Ojrzyńska*

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*Magdalena Lubelska-Renouf*

## CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ'S AND GILBERT DURAND'S STRUCTURES OF THE IMAGINARY

(abstract)

Gilbert Durand, the author of the classic *The Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary*, initiated a new area of research in the humanities, first in France and then worldwide. He proposed a morphological classification of broadly conceived structures of the imaginary, which includes symbols, images, and myths that are specific to a given author or culture. Drawing on various disciplines, Durand's work can be seen as a vast undertaking aimed at rehabilitating the imaginary. He sees the imaginary is an art of human intellectual life and an essential aspect of human nature. Dreams, symbols, and images together constitute a kind of "transcendental fantastic", without which a human being cannot experience wholeness or completeness. The article argues that the works of Czesław Miłosz, in which images form veritable magnetic fields gravitating around a number of central poetic symbols, can be read as a practical implementation of Durand's theories.

### SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

antropologiczne struktury wyobraźni; wyobraźnia; obraz; mit; symbol